Volunteer Recruitment and Retention Strategies

Tutoring/mentoring is a simple concept: it connects caring adults with children and youth who need extra adult support to help them grow to reach their full potential in life.

This is a Tutor/Mentor Connection Presentation. This can be found in the Tutor/Mentor Institute Section of http://www.tutormentorconnection.org
Making it work is not so simple

Building a volunteer-based tutor/mentor program is a process. Your best volunteers are the ones you already have. They are also your best recruiters.

The purpose of this workshop is...

- to share skills and experiences that have worked at Cabrini Connections...
  - to provide a path to on-going learning
  - to draw participants into collaborative actions
Agenda

- Introduction and overview

- Planning for Success

- Building a Communications program

- Tips for Recruitment

- Training and Retention Strategies

- Collaboration

- Process Improvement/ On-going learning

- Recommended Web sites

- Summary
The Case for tutoring/mentoring

Many leaders, including the President of the United States, already support the concept of mentoring.

You can learn about the various forms of tutoring/mentoring, why such programs are important, what makes them an important business strategy, and where such programs are needed by browsing the various sections of the web sites listed below:

http://www.tutormentorconnection.org
http://tutormentor.blogspot.com

Contact the Tutor/Mentor Connection at 312-492-9614 or email the T/MC at  tutormentor2@earthlink.net
Innovative strategies are needed to assure availability of tutoring/mentoring programs

At this time the biggest obstacle to participating in a tutor/mentor program in Chicago or in most other major cities is that

- there are not enough programs,
- there are not enough good programs,
- there is a poor distribution of programs in big cities like Chicago, and
- there is no funding stream to support a process of constant improvement at hundreds of individual tutor/mentor locations.

The shaded areas are where poverty is concentrated in Chicago. The black dots are locations of non-school tutor/mentor programs. In many areas there are almost no tutor/mentor programs.
Tutor/Mentor Programs are not available in all places where they are needed

- There is a perception that many organizations offer tutoring/mentoring or youth development services.

- In reality, in many neighborhoods there are few programs that offer tutoring and/or mentoring.

- When the availability of programs is looked at by age and time of day segments, it is obvious that a contributing factor to the high drop out rate of teens is the lack of programs to mentor them to careers.
Not all Tutor/Mentor Programs are equally effective

There are wide differences between the type of tutoring and/or mentoring programs that are available.

- number and age group of children served
- number of volunteers involved
- quality of staff available to support youth or volunteers

As the T/MC builds its database of programs, it is building an understanding of the various types of programs, dividing them by age served, time of day services is provided, and type of tutoring/mentoring offered.
The same summary applies to organizations where uses of technology are the defining purpose.

As leaders of CTC Net or others focused on the Digital Divide, we encourage them to use T/MC strategies to build an understanding of what services are available, where they are needed, what works, etc.

We also encourage them to build an on-going advocacy that helps each CTC type organization get the resources each needs to do its work better and better every day.
Our history

Between 1970 and 1974 one hundred pairs of youth/volunteers were starting the tutoring year at a program hosted by Montgomery Ward, but only half were still with the program at the end of the school year

• By 1992 more than 400 2nd to 8th grade Cabrini-Green youth and 500 workplace volunteers were enrolled by late October and 85% of these were still active in May

• Attendance of youth averaged nearly 85% each week and 1/3 of youth had perfect attendance through the school year

• Attendance of volunteers averaged nearly 80%, although volunteers came from more than 100 companies. Some of these companies were located 10-15 miles away

• The actual size of the program grew from the beginning of the year to the end of the year, meaning that as volunteers left the program, more volunteers were joining to replace them
Our history

In January of 1993 Cabrini Connections launched a new program for 7th to 12th grade teens, starting with seven volunteers and five teens

• By June 2006 more than 490 teens had participated for one to 7 full years along with more than 600 volunteers

• Some of the volunteers who joined this program as tutors/mentors have volunteered extra time to help us create the Tutor/Mentor Connection

• Volunteer leaders from more than 60 other tutor/mentor programs in the Chicago area now give time each year to offer workshops in the May and November Tutor/Mentor Leadership Conferences, and to help organize the Annual August/September Tutor/Mentor Volunteer Recruitment Campaign

The Strategies that we Share in this Presentation we apply every day.
While we operate a single tutor/mentor program in one neighborhood...

We created the Tutor/Mentor Connection (T/MC) in 1993 to help programs like Cabrini Connections grow in every poverty neighborhood of the city and suburbs of Chicago.

Using the Internet, the T/MC is now connected to organizations throughout the world, and is helping tutor/mentor programs, and citywide networks grow in Chicago and other cities.

In 2005 a new interactive web portal was created for the T/MC by IUPUI in Indianapolis as part of an partnership intended to help a T/MC strategy grow in Indiana. This demonstrates a growing ability to find needed resources and partners beyond the Chicago region for actions that support programs in Chicago.
Planning For Success

- Vision “a few people can change the world”

- Structure - “don’t try to put a square peg in a round hole”

- Delegate - “volunteers are needed as talent and leaders, not just tutors & mentors”
“A few people can change the world”

Make your vision large enough and long enough that it will be important for volunteers to get involved, stay involved, and help you succeed.
Expand the Vision: Help inner-city youth reach Careers.

To SUCCEED
We must recruit business leaders who will use their resources in PULLING Youth to Careers

To SUCCEED
We must help tutor/mentor program leaders, volunteers, schools and parents be more effective in PUSHING Youth to Careers

School-Time Programs
- Pre-K
- K - 5th
- 5th - 6th
- 6th - 8th
- High School
- Career Track

3-5 PM Non-School Programs
After 5 PM and Weekend Programs

Give Volunteers Reasons to Stay with you longer
Not everyone can volunteer time as a tutor/mentor...

- **volunteers** are needed to use their TALENT for planning, communications, technology, leadership, fund raising

- **business partners** are needed to develop strategies—using employee volunteers, company assets & dollars — to PULL youth from poverty into jobs & careers.

- **people and organizations** are needed to organize and provide curriculum, training, and ideas, to help educate all stakeholders in the movement.
Recruit from all Industries

- Insurance
- Healthcare
- Arts, Culture, Religion
- Government Education
- Science, Math Engineering
- Manufacturing Transportation
- Retailing Wholesaling
- Built environment Engineering
- Finance, Personal & Business Services
- Hospitality Recreation
- Natural Resources Agriculture
- Technology Communications
Structure for Success

Don’t try to “put a square peg in a round hole”. Volunteers won’t participate if your program does not work for them. Consider the following as you design your program.

- time of day
- location
- safety
- transportation
- facility
- support
Structure for Success

If you want to recruit business volunteers and keep them involved for many years, you need to offer services at times and in locations where it is probable volunteers will participate

- **time of day** - 5-8 p.m./ weekend

- **location** - at business site, or near access route

- **safety** - good parking, safe facility. Perceived safety is important
- transportation- encourage car pooling. Some companies may provide bus transportation to bring volunteers to a program site

- **facility** - try to find donated space; costs of renting will cut into funds for staff/programs

- **customer service** - treat volunteers as customers and remember that your students and your donors are also customers
Tips for Recruitment

Your best source of new volunteers are the ones you already have

• Volunteers can be the heart and backbone of any tutor/mentor program.

• They provide a range of role models for students, a support system for other volunteers, and are a source of leadership, ideas and dollars.

• Therefore, while an effective recruiting strategy must be aimed at recruiting new volunteers each year, it must also be designed to retain volunteers and convert them into leaders.

• It must also be able to find new volunteers to replace those who leave during the year.
Commit to Communications

• **Use your technology strategically.** Building and maintain a web site that shows who you are, where you are located, why you are needed, what you do, how volunteers and donors can help you, and how they can contact you.

• **Engage youth and volunteers in communications strategies.** Teach youth to use desk top publishing, web sites, writing and research activities, etc. to evangelize the work your program is doing to help them have brighter futures.

• **Communicate regularly** with your volunteers, your donors and potential sources of volunteers, using a newsletter that tells why you are needed, what you are accomplishing and in what ways they can help. Build an email contact list and communicate to your volunteers and support group weekly.

• **Enlist your volunteers, church, business friends,** etc. to place “good news” stories about your work in their organization’s newsletter on a quarterly frequency.

• **Constantly show your volunteers how important they are to you and your program.** You can never say “thank you” too often.
Blogs, YouTube, Social Networks

Small organizations now have technology that enables them to tell their story in innovative ways, reaching people who can be volunteers, and donors. Organizations that teach youth to use this technology as leaders and advocates, are teaching problem solving and communications skills that youth can use the rest of their lives.

- **Do You Blog?**
  At [http://tutormentor.blogspot.com](http://tutormentor.blogspot.com) and [http://cabriniblog.blogspot.com](http://cabriniblog.blogspot.com) you can see how we use blogs to tell our story in innovative ways.

- **Do you use YouTube?** Here are links to videos we have put on line:
  Cabrini Connections Music Video on [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuPfJcCEpsk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuPfJcCEpsk)
  Tutor/Mentor Conference Video - [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vv_khWZSf4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vv_khWZSf4)

- **Networking sites** – which ones do you use?
Tips for Recruitment

• **Involve veteran volunteers.** As you invite them to return for another year encourage each to bring one or two friends.

• **Get your program listed with local and national volunteer referral organizations** (servenet.org, volunteermatch.org, www.idealist.org)

• **Recruit college students.** Many local colleges have volunteer placement centers and service-learning requirements.

• **Organize your volunteers into teams.** Encourage them to meet at their work site to review strategies and reinforce each other. NOTE: Teams of corporate volunteers can also be your number one source of financial support.
Tips for Recruitment

- **Learn to recruit the older adult volunteer.** Target nursing homes, retiree communities and retiree newsletters published by corporations and associations that support retirees.

- **Recognize that there are needs in your organization for volunteers who might not be tutors or mentors.** Develop job descriptions for your newsletter, fund raisers, office help, training manager and volunteer contact/recruiting team.

- **Include your students in your volunteer plan.** Student videos, newsletters, magazines tell your story better than most materials you can produce, and they serve as teaching tools at the same time!

- **Collaborate.** Work with other volunteer-based organizations in your community to create events, and advertising, that increases the number of people who want to volunteer. Point them to web sites where the can choose where to volunteer, based on where they live or work, and what type of service they want to do.
Tips for Recruitment

• **Help the volunteer succeed.** Volunteers who are satisfied with the time they commit will usually stay with you longer, grow more committed and sometimes become your most important leaders. Find ways to make volunteer roles flexible to fit busy work schedules, travel and vacation.

• **Never stop recruiting.** Even if you have a full complement of volunteers, you should not shut down your recruiting and recognition effort.
Set Goals

Unless you set goals and measure progress toward goals you will never see year-to-year growth in the success of your volunteer recruitment strategies. Here are goals we use at Cabrini Connections:

- Start the new year with 65% of the volunteers who were active at the end of the previous school year;
- You end the year with more volunteers than you started with;
- Weekly attendance of youth and volunteers exceeds 80% and improves each year; and
- A growing percent of veteran volunteers rejoin the program every year.
### Keep Records. Sample attendance sheet

#### Wednesday Kids' Connection Students 3rd Quarter 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
<th>Volunteer Name</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>6-Feb</th>
<th>12-Feb</th>
<th>18-Feb</th>
<th>24-Feb</th>
<th>3-Mar</th>
<th>Third Quarter Attendance</th>
<th>1st Quarter Attendance</th>
<th>2nd Quarter Attendance</th>
<th>3rd Quarter Attendance</th>
<th>YTD Total Attendance</th>
<th>Percent Present (YTD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Total Student Attendance Possible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total Possible</th>
<th>6-Feb</th>
<th>12-Feb</th>
<th>18-Feb</th>
<th>24-Feb</th>
<th>3-Mar</th>
<th>Third Quarter Attendance</th>
<th>1st Quarter Attendance</th>
<th>2nd Quarter Attendance</th>
<th>3rd Quarter Attendance</th>
<th>YTD Total Attendance</th>
<th>Percent Present (YTD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>736</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Number that Attended</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Present (of total students)</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Training Volunteers

Training is not a one-shot workshop. Every volunteer is different. Every youth is different. Both are constantly changing.

A good volunteer training system must be ongoing. Every tutor learns more with each tutoring session.

The learning is enhanced by talking regularly with staff and with other volunteers.

The Internet offers unlimited learning opportunities and connects your volunteers with peers in similar programs throughout the country. Links Library at http://www.tutormentorconnection.org offers extensive ideas on volunteerism, tutoring, mentoring, and uses of technology in learning.

Setting up opportunities to talk is critical. A lot of discussion can occur just in a few minutes during start-up; after sessions, during transportation times, at social events.
Training Volunteers

Just as one must look for "teachable moments" in kids, there are "trainable moments" in volunteers when you just sense that tutors need to talk about their experience and have the extra time to do so.

Your availability and responsiveness to those opportunities are part of helping volunteers be better tutors, mentors and leaders.

Survey volunteers periodically where the problem areas are and be prepared to discuss training points and model if necessary.

Volunteers need more than strokes when they have a tough session. They need specific tips. Show me a frustrated tutor and I'll show you one that needs a little additional training.

Tutor meetings don't need to be frequent, but they do need to happen. Sure, meetings are a good time to praise everyone and feed them some cookies, but they also serve a training function.

Never Stop Teaching. Use your web site, your newsletters, your daily contact, and your network to share tips, recognize progress, promote learning.
Training Manuals

There are some manuals on tutoring out there, but it's worth it to write your own specific to your program. This a time investment, especially with lesson plans and grants to write too. However, if there is a structure to your program, it's best to have everyone on the same page. It helps tutors to have something to refer to. They might be thinking about that day's lesson that evening, and having a manual to look at can help them reflect.

Borrow from the Training Manuals that others have already created. The Tutor/Mentor Conference, the T/MC Web sites, and the T/MC Library at 800 W. Huron, provide contact information for hundreds of tutor/mentor programs and intermediaries. Scan these for programs and resources that mirror what your program wants to be, then contact programs to see if you can have copies of their training manuals to borrow from. Some will share. Some might not.

The Cabrini Connections manual can be found in the Volunteer Section at http://www.cabriniconnections.net/volunteers/resources.asp. Feel free to borrow. Just give credit in your printed materials for where you got your information (including a web site link).
Collaboration

Tutor/Mentor Chicago Program Locator

In the Program Locator section at http://www.tutormentorconnection.org the T/MC maintains an on-line database listing most of the organizations in the Chicago region that offer various forms of volunteer-based tutoring and/or mentoring. We also maintain web links to those programs which have web sites. Any organization in the Chicago region can add their own program to the LINKS or Program Locator.

Duplicate this concept.

If you are an arts or technology program, you can duplicate this concept by building a web site with links to other arts, technology programs in your own community. You can also partner with the T/MC to create a version of the Program Locator for tutor/mentor programs in your community.

Such a database encourages volunteers to look at all neighborhoods where such programs are needed, which leads to a better distribution of volunteers and donors in all neighborhoods. If you are listed in a program locator, or similar collaborative portal, be sure to put a link to this resource on your own web site, and in your own media.
Collaboration

Tutor/Mentor Volunteer Recruitment Campaign
While we all compete for the same resources, especially operating dollars, there will be more of these resources for all of us if we collaborate in activities that draw visibility, volunteers and dollars to all tutor/mentor programs, or all youth technology centers, in the Chicago region, or in other cities.

The T/MC leads a year-round strategy that peaks in August and September as school starts. The National Mentoring Partnership leads a January Mentoring Month. Other organizations, such as the Afterschool Alliance, lead special events at other times of the year that draw attention to places where volunteers are needed. Find ways to participate in these activities and use them to draw resources to your own programs.

Links to the Chicago Recruitment Campaign web site:
http://www.tutormentorexchange.net/Partner/CC/RecruitmentCampaign/recruitment.asp
Use your network. Be an active network builder

The World’s Largest Ping Pong ball table.

Every action of the T/MC or a member of a T/MC Learning Network Member, causes a chain reaction that moves every other ball.
Each year the T/MC helps programs recruit volunteers in Aug/Sept. and helps programs train those volunteers and convert them into leaders as each program moves through the School year. As each program ends the year it has more people helping it build capacity and quality for the following year.

By repeating this call to involvement each year for the past 14 years, we create greater public awareness of tutoring/mentoring, and greater traffic to web sites of the Tutor/Mentor Learning Network.

YOU and your volunteers and your students can be the RED ball in this picture.
Collaboration

On-Line Forums.
The T/MC hosts e-group forums focused on Volunteer Recruitment, the Leadership Conferences, and similar collaboration. The T/MC web site also provides links to other forums, hosted by the National Mentoring Partnership, CTC Net, The National Mentoring Center, etc. Join in and be an active participant in these forums. You can learn and network with hundreds of people each day in just the few minutes you spend on line. You can never connect with this many people via traditional face to face meetings.

Multiple Organizations Linked together can increase visibility and draw more volunteers and donors to each organization in the network. The organizations that host this strategy, act as intermediaries, and draw even more attention to their own efforts.
AND each group needs to be connected to each other, in an on-going learning process.
Process Improvement

**A commitment to excellence** requires an organizational commitment to a continuous process of evaluation, challenge and improvement that seeks always to better the organization and is never satisfied to remain at past performance levels. This requires

- **Research & Development** - through the Tutor/Mentor Connection (T/MC), members are given continuous access to examples of successful practices of other tutor/mentor programs in Chicago and nationally. Regular review and comparison of these programs to our own programs is intended to identify opportunities to improve the work being done by ourselves.

- **Evaluation of current programs/structure and results**. We must find ways to quantify our results in ways that week-to-week, month-to-month and year-to-year comparisons can be made. This allows us to challenge our premises and practices and provides focus on areas which are working well and might to be duplicated and areas not working as well as hoped which need to be improved or restructured.
Process Improvement

- **What if.../Proposal of new solutions/programs.** New ideas should be encouraged, whether they be for small changes, major overhauls or additions and/or subtractions. However, those which are presented in a written format that has been thought through and challenged by the presenter, as if he/she were the organization's CEO and the person responsible for implementing them, have the best chance of acceptance and implementation. This process also allows a good idea, that is not immediately accepted, to be stored and shared and perhaps resurrected at a later date when need and/or resources are more favorable to its acceptance.

- **Articulation.** We must be able to clearly state any job/goal/idea within these guides. This is the only way others can be recruited to help achieve the goal.

- What is our mission?
- How do we define success?
- How do we get there, step by step?
- Define policy, where appropriate, to determine how we get there?
Process Improvement

Capacity/Resource Building. Your ability and commitment to recruit volunteers from within and outside of the organization will ultimately determine your success.

Each individual has limited individual capacity to help the organization meet its goals, defined by time, other responsibilities and financial limitations. Each person who is able to recruit additional people and delegate responsibility will leverage his/her own capacities over and over again.

Your Volunteer Recruitment, Training and Retention Strategy must seek to convert volunteers into leaders who will help your organization achieve its long-term goals.

Your Technology Strategy must be designed to draw constant attention to your organization, and to keep volunteers connected to your organization and its vision, even if they no longer are active participants.

The work you do with youth and community members should integrate them into this process of leadership and evangelism.

The result will be a constant increase in the flow of volunteers and other needed resources to your organization.
Use T/MC web sites for on-going learning and training

The Links and Training Sections of T/MC web sites offer many additional resources that programs can draw from on a continues process of learning and innovation.

The T/MC Conferences and Discussion Forums offer opportunities to network and learn from peers

- www.tutormentorconnection.org
- http://tutormentor.blogspot.com
- www.tutormentorconference.org

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Make sure your program is listed in the T/MC Database of Chicago Area Programs

Since 1993 the T/MC conducted on-going surveys to create a database listing more than 400 locations where various forms of tutoring and/or mentoring are offered. This database is used by parents, social workers, prospective volunteers and potential donors. It can be seen in the Program Locator section of www.tutormentorconnection.org
Advertising and Public Awareness

Enlist leaders from business and faith communities who will create and lead a call-to-involvement. At http://www.lend-a-hand.net you can see how members of the law community in Chicago support ALL tutor/mentor programs in the city.

If business leaders and celebrities use their visibility, and communications tools (advertising, web sites, point of purchase) to point to all youth serving organizations in a city, this strategy will reach thousands of people in every business, social and faith sector many times each day with a variety of messages that encourage people to be volunteers, leaders, donors and business partners of tutor/mentor programs located in Chicago and other cities.

If a business only points to one or two programs supported by their CEO, or their foundation, they miss an important leadership opportunity, and most programs will continue to struggle to find volunteers and donors.

Build a WE strategy. Make this part of your own strategy and help increase visibility for all tutor/mentor programs.
Get informed. Get involved.

Visit the following web sites to learn more about tutoring, mentoring and the Tutor/Mentor Connection.

www.tutormentorconnection.org
www.tutormentorconference.org
http://tutormentor.blogspot.com

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Chicago, Il. 60622
Ph: 312-492-9614
Fax: 312-492-9795