About Us: Tutor/Mentor Connection

Local/Global mission – Cabrini Connections was started by seven volunteers, as a commitment to help teens living in the Cabrini-Green area connect with adult volunteers who would help these teens move through school and into jobs and careers. While launching this tutor/mentor program, the organizers also created the Tutor/Mentor Connection (T/MC), to provide leadership to efforts that would help programs like Cabrini Connections get the resources they need to thrive in every poverty neighborhood of a big city like Chicago. Through the Internet, the T/MC is now connecting with mentoring and career development program organizers throughout the world.

Areas of high poverty and poorly performing schools are where tutor/mentor programs are needed. Light gray areas have poverty concentrations of 20% or higher. Dark gray areas have poverty levels of 40% and above. Black dots are schools on the 2002 No Child Left Behind poorly performing schools list.

If you would like to become a partner or volunteer, you may contact us at (312) 492 - 9614 or visit us online.

www.tutormentorconnection.org
www.cabriniconnections.net
Q – What is the mission of the Tutor Mentor Connection (T/MC)?
A – The mission of the T/MC is to provide an organized framework that empowers and encourages adult volunteers to contribute their time, effort, ideas and advocacy toward creating life-changing solutions for children in educationally and economically disadvantaged areas. Through the T/MC we seek to gather and organize all that is known about successful non-school tutor/mentor programs and share that knowledge to expand the availability and enhance the effectiveness of these services to children in inner city Chicago and other high poverty areas.

Q – How is our mission accomplished?
A – We use a four part strategy. First, we collect knowledge from key stakeholders about volunteer-based tutor/mentor programs: how programs succeed, where programs are located, and where more programs and resources are needed. Then, we aggressively share this knowledge through marketing and public awareness campaigns. We continually seek to facilitate understanding of this information and collaboration among stakeholders. This leads to a better understanding of the long-term, integrated actions needed to help children and youth move from a birth in poverty to jobs and careers. The result is a more consistent flow of volunteers, dollars, and other needed resources to Cabrini Connections and every other tutor/mentor program in the Chicago area.

Q – What impact can you have in your community?
A – We are helping to expand the network of adults supporting children living in high poverty areas, as a strategy to improve education outcomes and help prepare youth for jobs and careers. Tutors and mentors are helping these children until they graduate. Programs that keep volunteers connected to kids, also help kids have a network of adults who can provide access to jobs and help with careers, as youth reach this stage in their lives. By helping these kids, we are helping the community by providing safe places for youth to gather during non-school hours and keeping them from making the wrong choices that a lot of these kids are tempted to make.

Q – What do we do to attract businesses and professionals to become mentors?
A – We recruit volunteers from Chicago area companies and give them support so many will stay with the program for two or more years. Many then become leaders who recruit other volunteers. Through this strategy, we aim to recruit “champions” in every industry who will use their advertising and visibility to encourage employees, customers, and suppliers to become involved in tutor/mentor programs throughout the region. We also organize events throughout the year that promote visibility and encourage volunteers to join tutor/mentor programs. We also have a large email database that we use to let business and professional people know how they can impact Chicago area communities by volunteering to be a tutor/mentor and how they can develop relationships with the students over several years to become key employees for their business.

Q – How do the businesses/professionals benefit from participating?
A – A company develops public good will by giving something positive to the community. They help underprivileged children become successful in their education and guide them towards a better future. In return these children may end up working for the tutor/mentor’s company. Volunteering enriches the life of a mentor as much as that of the child. Many companies recognize that volunteer involvement enables employees to build leadership skills and develop new talents. As volunteers learn new skills and network with others in their companies and industries, they become more valuable employees.

Q – How long should businesses/professionals commit to mentoring the students?
A – The Tutor/Mentor Connection focuses on building strong, long-lasting programs or places in a neighborhood where youth and volunteers can connect and where many other learning and enrichment activities can be offered. Such structures support longer term involvement of youth and volunteers. They also enable youth to have a sequence of tutors over the five to ten years in a program and make it possible for volunteers who may only be active for one or two years to stay involved with the youth and the program for a lifetime. This structure expands the network of adults who can help youth finish high school or college and look for job interviews and career support. Companies who understand the role of long-term programs will reap greater benefits.

Q – How is the Internet used to support the work of the Tutor/Mentor Connection?
A – The T/MC uses the Internet as a library to support innovation and process improvement, as well as a meeting place for networking and collaboration. The T/MC links library includes information that shows why and where tutor/mentor programs are needed, how volunteers can be more effective tutors and mentors, and shows program models that provide effective support to youth in various parts of the world. This information is intended to be used to benchmark programs against other programs, and to stimulate on-going efforts that lead to a constant improvement of the quality of every tutor/mentor program in the Chicago region. By hosting this information on the Internet, the T/MC makes it available to millions of users, including business, media, philanthropy, and education leaders. By using the Interent as a meeting place, the T/MC connects leaders from many parts of the city and the world with each other in an on-going process of learning and collaboration which enables greater resource sharing and increases problem solving capacity.