Linking Non-Profit Tutor/Mentor Programs and Volunteers

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A 501 c (3) non profit organization
MISSION: Provide organized structure that connects workplace adults as change agents in the lives of youth living in poverty or near poorly performing schools.

- Mentors, tutors, friends
- Leaders, advocates
- Donors
- Internships, apprentice programs, scholarships
We seek to engage business as partners who use their resources to PULL youth to jobs and careers.

**T/MC Goal:**
Help inner-city youth reach Careers.

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

...we use computer graphics to illustrate where, when and how business and industry volunteers can connect with at risk kids.
Good programs, and support resources, need to be in every poverty neighborhood of a city/

T/MC uses computer generated maps to show where poverty and poorly performing schools are most concentrated.

...by adding tutor/mentor locations to this map we help volunteers and donors connect with programs in every part of the city.
This is a Service-Learning Strategy: volunteers learn from their experience each time they meet with kids.

A) volunteer hears about tutor/mentor program
B) volunteer meets with youth
C) volunteer learns from youth and program
D) volunteer shares with co-workers, friends and relatives

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As this process repeats, volunteers become leaders who recruit additional volunteers to be tutors/mentors:

- **F)** Volunteer friends become donors, volunteers, etc.
- **G)** Group of volunteers learn
- **H)** Group of volunteers influence business support of tutor/mentor program
- **E)** Volunteer’s friends become involved
- **D)** Volunteer’s friends become involved
- **B)** Group of volunteers learn
If business and professional groups support on-going involvement in tutor/mentor programs....

Companies, churches universities, etc. can support group learning at this stage

The learning in a tutor/mentor program influences the learning and actions at the other end of the service learning loop

...volunteers will better understand the needs of youth in poverty, and will become leaders in actions that pull kids to careers.
The Tutor/Mentor Connection has been building a four-part tutor/mentor leadership strategy since 1993 which includes:

- **Research**
- **Public Awareness and Communications**
- **Resource Development**
- **Training**
We seek to know everything there is to know ...

**RESEARCH**

The Tutor/Mentor Connection will be the most valuable resource for any stakeholder interested in mentoring youth to careers.

- Database of tutor/mentor programs.
- Web site library of tutor/mentor program information.
- Use of computer maps to show location of programs and potential resource providers.
- Links to information sites throughout the world.
Repeat T/MC “call for involvement” as often as fast food stores talk about hamburgers, pizza and tacos

PUBLIC AWARENESS

Every adult in the Chicago region will be reminded daily of where they can get involved, why they should get involved, and how they can help.

- By drawing attention to all programs we create more frequent media attention.
- Seasonal events make the T/MC message timely
- Use of the internet reaches millions.
- Business, trade group, faith and social network communications that increase reach and frequency.
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Every tutor/mentor program must be a best practice. Each must have a consistent flow of dollars, volunteers, training, technology, etc.

- Sequenced events, starting at the beginning of each school year, draw programs together, build visibility, generate resources for each program.
- T/MC strategy enlists organizations, businesses, hospitals, churches, etc. as partners.
- Directory points resource providers to programs.
- Resources distributed to all poverty areas.
The Internet connects learners and enables anyone to find information when they are looking for it.

**TRAINING**

We cannot teach everything. However, we can make it possible for any youth, volunteer, program leader, business partner or donor to learn ANYTHING.

- Newsletter to 13,000 people – three per year.
- Web sites serve as library of information.
- Directory points resource providers to programs.
- Conferences attract 500 per year.
- Internet forums connect more than 200 stakeholders.
- Email forums connect T/MC with thousands more
What have we accomplished since 1993?

- More than 100 tutor/mentor leaders now work together to build capacity. Most did not know each other in 1993.

- Created annual recruitment campaign that now mobilizes volunteers for more than 100 agencies.

- Created May and November conference that now draws more than 500 leaders together to share ideas, network and build capacity.
What have we accomplished since 1993?

- Created Internet strategy that connects programs, volunteers, donors and knowledge on an on-going basis. More than 90,000 visitors have shopped at T/MC sites.

- Created public awareness strategy that has generated dozens of media stories and built a greater awareness of the needs of tutor/mentor programs.

- Created a Lend A Hand Program with the Chicago Bar Association that has generated more than $275,000 for one-on-one programs.
T/MC is demonstrating the power of a few people to change the world.

- Tutor/Mentor Connection offered these services, in the 3rd largest city in America, at a cost of less than $250,000 in 2002 (starting with no money in January 1993).

- Volunteers, from Chicago and beyond have helped build the Tutor/Mentor Connection.

- We’re still a whisper in the wilderness – much to do to impact flow of resources to all programs.

- As groups in other places duplicate the T/MC their actions will draw more volunteers and donors to us.
Computers enable a few people to shape a professional looking message that can reach anyone in the world.

What technology do we use? T/MC uses same tools as for-profits use to advertise and marketing goods and services

- Desk-top publishing, MS Word, Quark Express
- Internet - based publishing, Front Page, Dreamweaver, Internet hosting services
- E-mail and traditional print mail
Interactive databases and decision support technologies enable more people to be involved

T/MC uses FileMaker Pro database to manage contact information for 13,000 people

- Interactive databases enable people to load information on web sites

- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) enable people to “view” information as pictures, rather than words (we use donated ESRI software as well as open source software)

- Discussion groups hosted by Yahoo and other services enable partners to meet more frequently and at less cost (time and dollars)
Who uses the T/MC database, web site, etc.

These tools are designed to be used by anyone who wants to help kids move from poverty to careers.

- T/MC staff use database to target information to specific groups of people
- Parents, social workers, volunteers, media and potential donors
- Leaders of existing programs and people starting new programs
- OHATS (Organizational History and Tracking System) database enables us to share our actions via an Internet database (www.tutormentorexchange.net)
Who maintains Tutor/Mentor Connection technology

We’re a small organization that relies on a patchwork of donors and volunteers.

- Volunteers created T/MC web sites and currently maintain most of them. We communicate via email.

- The goal is to make the data interactive so that programs can maintain their own data.

- Web sites were set up so that T/MC staff can updated content quickly and from remote locations.
How did T/MC gather and share information prior to the Internet?

The T/MC is based on Total Quality Management and Business Research and Development principles.

- Web technologies enabled the T/MC to reach more people and to engage volunteers from locations beyond Chicago.

- However, the functions are no different than what the T/MC was doing prior to going on the Internet.

- T/MC leaders started adopting computers to workplace efficiency and communications programs in 1980 as Montgomery Ward began to downsize.
The Internet is just the “latest” tool to help us work smarter and accomplish more in less time and at less costs.

• We were using paper based surveys created with computers prior to building web based databases.

• We were using computers to create professional looking publications which we mailed to a growing list of stakeholders

• Internet technologies enable us to tell the story to more people, using video, audio, animation and sophisticated graphics, without the costs that would be incurred if we tried to create movies and distribute them via traditional means
How was the transition to the new technologies accomplished?

Need has been the driving force of innovation in new technologies. A VP of a large company once told me, “Non profits need to be more creative. You don’t have the money we have.” He was right.

- We learn from our volunteers - who used these technologies every day in the workplace
- We learn from the people we meet on the Internet
- We constantly reinvest any resources we have (time, volunteers, dollars) to improve our products and services
A few suggestions........

- Devote time to networking learning from others so you can innovate better ways to serve your customer on a continuous basis
- Never reinvent a concept that you can borrow and improve
- Find ways to draw business volunteers, skills and technology to your organization
- Share what you do in ways that others want to learn from you
This is the beginning, not the end of a journey.

We are at the beginning of a revolution in communications and collaboration; the T/MC is just scratching the surface of our potential:

• None of our technologies is yet functioning the way we hope they will at some point in the future
• Like all small non profits and entrepreneurs, we constantly search for investors to help fund our work
• Progress is measured in inches, yet each year we look back and see miles of accomplishment
• Never be satisfied with where you are today. There is always need for improvement.
The T/MC is a concept that started 30 years ago.

Daniel F. Bassill began tutoring and mentoring in 1973 when he joined Montgomery Ward’s national advertising department’s Chicago offices as a copywriter. He became the volunteer leader of the Wards tutoring program in 1975. Since then more than 3,000 workplace volunteers have connected with Cabrini Green children and teens in programs he has led. Bassill believes that if other programs follow similar strategies they can have similar long term growth in volunteer participation. While he has received many awards and much public recognition, Bassill will be the first to testify that “mentoring enriches the volunteer in as many, or more ways, than it does the youth. As Jonathan Kozal said in his book “Amazing Grace”, the Amazing Grace is what youth share with adults, not what they get from us.”

The Tutor/Mentor Connection is a project of Cabrini Connections, a Chicago non profit formed in 1992 to mentor Cabrini-Green teens. The organization operates a site-based program, called a Kids’ Connection. This is where Bassill and T/MC leaders get their passion, and where they learn how difficult it is to sustain mentoring relationships over multiple years. It is also where they recruit volunteers for the Tutor/Mentor Connection. By understanding the needs of a single small program, Bassill is able to understand the common needs of hundreds of small programs. He uses the T/MC to try to create products and services that help all tutor/mentor programs be more effective at mentoring kids to careers.

Visit these web sites to learn more:

- Http://www.tutormentorconnection.org
- Http://www.tutormentorexchange.net
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- Email: tutormentor2@earthlink.net