Starting a tutor/mentor program is simple. Making it work is a bit more difficult. It takes 12 years to help a first grader finish high school. It could take another 5-10 years until he/she is launched in a career.

--Daniel F. Bassill, President of Tutor/Mentor Institute, LLC and the Tutor/Mentor Connection
At this time, the biggest obstacle to involving more children and caring adults in tutor/mentor programs is the need for more of the programs themselves, as well as the need for a more consistent flow of resources (dollars, volunteers, training, technology, etc.) to existing programs.

Visit the Links Library at [http://www.tutortutorconnection.org](http://www.tutortutorconnection.org) to learn more about poverty mapping.
Statement of Purpose

Every child who is helped by a volunteer-based tutor/mentor program to become a tax-paying adult represents a savings and an investment. We are offered with the choice of a 12 to 16-year investment as a child becomes and adult and becomes a taxpayer, vs the potential lifetime costs of public services associated with children who live adult lives that are a drain on social resources, and who raise future children who re-enter the cycle of poverty.

Volunteer-based tutoring/mentoring programs can not-only help individual inner-city children have a wider range of possibilities for long-term personal fulfillment, but they can also engage adults who don’t live in poverty, and educate them to become more personally involved as they build their bonds with the kids they connect with in tutor/mentor programs.

These programs enrich the lives of the volunteers, as much as they support the growth of youth skills and aspirations.
In *The Kindness of Strangers*, originally published in 1993, Mark Freedman writes about the potential and the difficulties of mentoring and suggests that without infrastructure and support for mentors and mentoring programs, the movement will never reach its potential. Freedman listed a number of ways mentoring was falling short of its potential:

- missing infrastructure
- poor program models
- missing follow-up

- emphasis on marketing and recruitment instead of program support
- poor or no coordination
- matches made and then abandoned by program
Ways mentoring programs fall short of its potential:

- conducted in isolation
- few programs with resources to serve mentors as well as mentees
- missing operational expenses
- missing knowledge regarding effective practices
- little appreciation of how hard it is to put mentoring into action

In a 1994 survey of Chicago area tutor/mentor programs 120 responded, with 54% saying they have “little or no contact with peers.” The Tutor/Mentor Connection was established to help bring programs together to learn from each other, and to create events that attracted public attention, and drew dollars and volunteers to all programs operating in the city.
In addition to the list of challenges Freedman highlighted, the challenges of finding consistent, on-going operating dollars to fund constantly improving programs would also be among the biggest barriers to having more programs operating in places where they are most needed.

As you use this publication, spend time reading articles in the Tutor/Mentor Web Library. Dozens of articles are in this section focusing on “Challenges facing Non Profit Organizations” ,

http://tinyurl.com/TMILibrary-ChallengesFacingNPO
As leaders organize a new volunteer-based tutor/mentor program, this message should serve as a reminder of what it takes to succeed.

If you do not address each of these issues in the structure of your program, in the on-going activities, policies and commitments, your program will fall short of meeting its potential.
Building a new program starts with research and building a team to share responsibility for doing the work. Based on research the team defines mission, finds a place for the program to meet, and determines program structure, schedule and action plan. It then begins to recruit students and volunteers and starts operating.

Once the program is launched, the organization learns from its activities and constantly improves what it does to influence the lives of youth and volunteers.

It takes many years to build a great program. It will never be achieved without the work done at the base of this pyramid each year.
You are encouraged to use this for planning and training. If you find the material valuable to you, please consider sending letter of appreciation and encourage others to visit Tutor/Mentor Institute, LLC web sites to gather their own program development resources.

If you would like to have Dan Bassill come speak at your organization, be part of a conference, or explain the purpose of this and other ideas of the Tutor/Mentor Institute, LLC email tutormentor2@earthlink.net to discuss fees.
Other Resources

Create a “learning organization” and draw from this and the library of on-line resources in the links below.

http://www.tutormentorexchange.net
http://www.tutormentorconnection.org
http://www.tutormentorprogramlocator.net
http://tutormentor.blogspot.com
http://debategraph.org/mentoring_kids_to_careers
http://michaelcnt.blogspot.com/

Email tutormentor2@earthlink.net to discuss ideas for collaboration and capacity building among programs, or between cities. Connect on Twitter @tutormentorteam

Connect on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/TutorMentorInstitute
STEPS TO START A PROGRAM: A mentoring-to-career strategy of the Tutor/Mentor Connection

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