

Mentoring Matters

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Editor's Note: This newsletter is designed to keep you informed about the StrengthBuilding Partners Mentoring Program. This program at Johnson Primary, Lawrence Intermediate and Hohokam Middle Schools is being funded (in part) by the Governor's Office for Children, Youth and Families through a grant provided by the U.S. Department of Education, Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Title IV Program through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

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Join Us at the Mentor Recognition Dinner



Tim LaPorte with Matthew at the 2005 Mentor Recognition Dinner.

It's time to call (546-9296) or email Marie Stickford with your reservations for the 3rd Mentor Recognition Dinner on Tuesday, May 9 at the Hohokam Cafeteria. This will be a special year as we dedicate the dinner to Florentina Molina and Frank Garcia, two mentors who passed away in 2005 and are missed by all. In addition to the awards for the one and two-year mentors, we will be honoring the mentors who have been with the program for three years. Mentors receiving three-year awards include: Jesusita Alvarez, Veronica Avelarde, T. Sandra Estrella, Marcelino Flores, Vanessa Gutierrez, Juan Jaimez, Tim LaPorte, Sonia Laventure, Rosa Soto, Lupita Valencia and Valerio Valencia.

A Mexican buffet dinner will be served at 5:30, followed by the program. Please let Marie know if you and your mentee will have a presentation to share that night. Chairwoman and mentor-to-be Herminia Frias will welcome the guests. We are thrilled to announce that we will be recognizing 109 mentor-mentee pairs! See pictures from last year's event at www.strengthbuilding.com.

Meet the Mentors: Featuring Three-Year Mentors

Sandra Estrella was born in Jerome, and grew up in Clarkdale. As a Labor Compliance Officer with the Housing Department of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Sandra travels to job sites to make sure all subcontractor employees are receiving the right pay for the work they perform. She joined the Housing Department in 1991, after having held a similar position with the Yavapai Apache Nation (her tribe). With six children and 14 grandchildren all in the Tucson area, Sandra enjoys spending time with her family, particularly going to her grandson's baseball games. Sandra was among the first mentors to sign up, and has had the same mentee for three years. She believes mentoring is important because kids need someone to be there and listen.

Tim LaPorte is a Paramedic Firefighter with the Picture Rocks Fire District. As a paramedic, he has seen too many kids end up in bad situations, and that's why he decided to become a mentor three years ago. Giving back to the community has always been his calling, and at one point in his life, he wanted to become a priest. Tim became an EMT in 1977 in New York, and served as a paramedic at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. He became certified as a firefighter while with the Drexel Heights Fire District prior to joining Picture Rocks. He currently serves as Dean of Camp Hope that serves developmentally disabled adults and Dean of Camp Courage that serves burn survivors. He is an AYSO soccer referee and is Tumbleweed Timmy the clown. Tim is married to Katie and has a 19-year-old stepdaughter. Tim was featured in the Tucson Firefighters Calendar as Mr. November in 1996 and Mr. April in 1997.

Lupita Valencia decided to become a mentor three years ago because she has seen children around the community that needed help and encouragement. She is very supportive of the program because she remembers how she would have appreciated having mentors for her children when she was raising them as a single mom. She has two sons and two daughters, who are now in their 20's, and is very involved in the lives of her seven grandchildren. Lupita was born and raised in Tucson, graduated from Sunnyside High School, and attended Pima Community College. She worked as a TUSD campus monitor, then joined the staff at Pascua Yaqui Tribe, and currently serves as Administrative Assistant in the Tribal Gaming Office. Lupita likes spending time with her family and working with children. In addition to being a mentor, she teaches catechism to 10 children.

Game Days Fun at Hohokam

We had a great turn-out at Hohokam on March 28. Assistant Principal Delano Price stopped by and commented that he was pleased to see so many people from the community volunteering at the school and he thanked the mentors.



Game Days are a great opportunity for mentors and mentees to see all their friends and neighbors who are also participating.



Tribal Council members David Ramirez (left) and Robert Valencia (right) with their mentees.



Tribal Council Vice-chairman Peter Yucupicio played checkers with his mentee.

Mentor to Mentor

“My mentee was really shy at first. I realized that I couldn’t push her to respond, this would only force her to turn more inward. It just takes time. As we played games, she began to open up. Then she had a death in her family and was really struggling with its effects. I asked Marie for some books on dealing with death, and went to one of the StrengthBuilding workshops, which were helpful. My mentee is doing better now, and her teacher has commented to me that my influence has been helpful.”

Sandra Estrella

“Initially mentoring was frustrating for me because of what I expected. But I have learned many lessons from my mentee. The gems that we get are not always the way we expect them to appear. Mentoring is a ministry of presence. After three years, my mentee’s personality is blooming, and the teachers say they have seen the improvement.”

Tim LaPorte

“When I started visiting my mentee, she was in the 2nd grade at Johnson Elementary School. Her attendance was low and she didn’t seem that interested in school. She has many interests and is very creative. She is also very mature for her age, and has many interests. We have found fun things to do together, like playing games, arts and crafts and painting her nails with glittery

polish. Mostly she likes creating things with beads or just doing art. Even though I do not visit her as often as I used to, I know that she looks forward to seeing me and asks what happened if I am not there. Now her teacher tells me her attendance is better and that she is doing well in school.”

Lupita Valencia

News from the Partnership Team



Olivia Gaxiola is the new Mentoring Aide.

Join us in welcoming Olivia Gaxiola as our new Mentoring Aide. Olivia will work closely with Marie and Pat as the program continues to grow. You may be familiar with Olivia’s voice, as she has been the Morning Show Co-host/On-Air Personality with KPYP Yoeme Radio. She was the Supervisor for the Pascua Yaqui Reservation for the U.S. Census Bureau for the 2000 Census. Her new position will draw on her strengths and experience in serving the Yaqui community. Olivia graduated from Sunnyside High School and attended Pima Community College and the University of Arizona. Her daughter attends Johnson Primary. Olivia says, “I love seeing the faces of the kids light up when they see their mentors. The kids look forward to going to school just to see their mentors.”

Other news from the Partnership Team:

- We now have **109** pairs of mentors and mentees! Our goal for this school year was 100.
- Evaluation results of the program continue to show that the Mentoring Program is meeting its objectives: children are bonding with pro-social adults, and school attendance and mentee self-esteem are increasing.
- Hector Youtsey of KPYP Radio continues the station’s valuable support of the Mentoring Program. Three mentors have agreed to be interviewed during a morning program.
- We have two new mentors from Casino del Sol from referrals from active mentors, and we’re working on setting up presentations at the Casino.
- The time it takes to replace a mentor who has left the program is being reduced so children do not have to wait long before being matched with a new mentor.
- Nineteen mentors attended the Emotional Intelligence Workshop; 17 attended the Multiple Intelligences Workshop. Staff from the Tribal Education Department also attended. Mentors received a stipend of \$35 for attendance at each workshop.

Upcoming Events

April 13, 14, 17

Spring Break

Thursday, May 4

End-of-Year Mentor Meetings at Tribal Council Chambers
Choose 9:30 -10:30 a.m. or 11:00 to 12:00 noon

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| Tuesday, May 9 | Mentor Recognition Dinner, 5:30 – 8:30 at Hohokam Cafeteria |
| Wednesday, May 24 | Last day of school for students |
| Tuesday, August 15 | First day of 2006-07 school year |
| Week of August 21 | Mentor-mentee visits begin |

How You Can Help

Please continue to encourage your friends and co-workers to contact Marie Stickford at **404-6275** for more information or an application to become a mentor. Now you can download the mentor application from our Web site at http://www.strengthbuilding.org/mentoring_home.htm. Marie is also available to make a presentation or home visit to talk about how to become a mentor. Call Pat Trainor with mentee referrals at 481-5760.

We also welcome your submissions of stories about the mentor/mentee relationship and ideas for activities for publication in this newsletter. Please send your articles or comments to Marie at maries@strengthbuilding.org.