

## ***Boys and Girls Club of Edmonton (BGCE) / EYOC***

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### **Mentoring Programs:**

#### **1) Community Transition Program: Partnership with Edmonton Young Offenders Centre**

##### ***i Program Purpose and Outcomes:***

**Purpose:** The purpose of this mentoring program is to assist young offenders in making a successful transition back into the community. This program *begins “on-site”* at the EYOC; the match is made approximately 1 to 5 months before the scheduled release, with site-based activities. The match follows the youth into the community through *transition-related activities*, and the focus of the match ultimately *shifts to recreational activities*.

**Mentor Role:** The mentor builds a relationship with the youth on-site through transitional, recreational and academic related activities. The mentor provides emotional support and guidance while assisting the youth in practical activities related to a successful move into the community (e.g. apartment hunting, school registration). Finally, the mentor participates in community-based recreation activities with the mentee (e.g. sports), and helps to link the youth to community supports (e.g. relevant BGCE programs). Mentors are a role model for positive community membership.

**Youth Outcomes:** The desired program outcome for the youth is a successful transition to life in the community, and the development of a relationship with a caring adult who can become part of the youth’s support network, and they do not re-enter the criminal justice system.

**Mentor Outcomes:** Participation in the program can provide a mentor with career related experience, *sometimes contributing to educational credits* (e.g. mentoring can become the focus of a practicum). Mentors may have overcome difficult circumstances, and they gain a *sense of accomplishment and satisfaction* from helping a young person to do the same. Mentors are also likely to increase their links to community.

Youth participate in the program based upon an interest in having a mentor, and a *demonstrated a willingness to change*. They also *may not have*, or

choose not to have *another support system* that could assist in their transition to community (e.g. those selected would might have declined a further relationship with Child Welfare; they might not have a supportive extended family, etc.).

**Mentors Best Suited to the Program:** Young adults, typically aged 22 to 30 years old, are often successful mentors in this program. These adults often have a *career related interest* in the program (i.e. are studying to become a corrections worker, youth worker, police). As majority of youth requiring a mentor are aboriginal, they must have a heightened sensitivity to aboriginal culture, or a willingness to learn.

These prospective volunteers *may have overcome obstacles* in their youth, so can relate firsthand to the mentee's personal challenges. In supporting family and friends, they may also be familiar with the criminal justice system, the child welfare system, etc.

Mentors must be willing to make a *long-term commitment* to the program (e.g. 16 - 18 months), as a short-term match can be detrimental to a youth already dealing with loss issues.

**Motivations and Potential Fears of Prospective Mentors:** Mentors are often motivated to "*make a difference*" for a youth at risk, and *break the stereotypes* for these youth. They are interested in helping their mentee develop *tangible skills for a successful life in the community*.

Prospective mentors may be dissuaded by *fears about what to expect* from the mentee *throughout the different stages* of the match. They may be unaware of the breadth of resources available at BGCE that will be supporting the match throughout the transition process, and uncertain of their own abilities to support the youth. They may be unclear about when it is appropriate to ask for help.

ii **Projected Volunteer Demand for the Program:**

Current match statistics:

- ◆ Current mentors – 3 (total of 4 in 2001)
- ◆ Current mentees – 4 (total of 12 in 2001)

Target number of planned matches by September 2003 (recognizing normal "turnover rates"):

- ◆ Total number of matches? 20
- ◆ How many mentors (new)? 20
- ◆ How many mentees? (new)? 20
- ◆ How many rematched mentors? NA
- ◆ How many rematched mentees? NA

## Current and Planned Program Practices:

### 1) Recruitment / Screening:

- i **Interviews and Reference Checks:** The recruitment and screening of mentors is done by BGCE. Interested volunteers complete an application form, submit 3-4 references, request child welfare and police checks, and submit a driver's abstract (e.g. insurance coverage, etc.) Interviews follow BGCE standards, allowing the interviewer to make a personal and skills appraisal.
- ii **Orientation / Training** The orientation and training of mentors is done by BGCE. To this point, this has been done one on one with the volunteer coordinator. The orientation covers the roles of EYOC, BGCE, the mentor and mentee. It also included discusses expectations for "at risk" youth, and the community supports available to assist the match. Finally, it includes safety issues (e.g. disclosure). Mentors are also required to take mandatory training, i.e. First Aid training and Critical Response training, offered and sponsored by BGCE. Mentors are also encouraged to take the Suicide Prevention and Aboriginal Awareness sessions offered by BGCE. EYOC provides a half hour orientation for mentees to the role of a mentor.
- iii **Matching** The BGCE volunteer coordinator and the EYOC Community Transition Coordinator meet with the mentor to discuss the interests and expectations of the mentor, and profiles of the 2 or 3 youth needing a mentor. The mentor can express a preference, based on the described needs and interests of the potential mentees. Based on the discussion, and additional feedback from the BGCE volunteer coordinator, the EYOC coordinator then selects the most appropriate youth to be matched with this mentor.
- iv **Follow-up / Evaluation** Both the youth and the mentor complete a standardized form following each match meeting / activity. The form requires each to confirm their willingness to meet again, and is submitted to the EYOC coordinator.  
When the match moves to the community, EYOC Community Transition Program coordinator continue to coordinate match activities. The EYOC coordinator receives a phone call after each scheduled activity, to see how things went. Also, it is up to the mentor to drop off or mail the weekly standard reporting forms.  
Community stakeholders (e.g. teacher, probation officer) are asked to notify EYOC coordinator with relevant feedback regarding the match.  
The BGCE volunteer coordinator also follows up regularly with the match, to ensure that they are connected to appropriate BGCE resources (e.g. housing, recreational). As the program design is finalized, the BGCE review process will be formalized around the 3 month service plan review.  
Statistics on the long-term status of the young offender can become an instrument for measurement of outcomes.
- v **Recognition:** Mentors are invited to the annual EYOC volunteer appreciation night, and the to the BGCE formal recognition events.