

St. Albert Community Information and Volunteer Centre

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Mentoring Program

1) St. Albert Sidekicks Mentoring Program

i Program Purpose and Outcomes:

Purpose: This purpose of this program is to link mentors with St. Albert children / youth in need of a relationship with a caring person, as well as their families. Mentees in the program range in age from 6 – 16 years of age, and may have some disabilities or other special needs (e.g. ADD). Mentors can be teens (16 years or older), young adults or couples interested in supporting high energy children and their families. Mentors are asked for a weekly commitment of about four hours, for a minimum of one year.

Mentor Role: Most mentors meet with one-on-one with the mentee, as well as participating in regular group activities. Match activities are usually fun activities (e.g. sports, crafts) and volunteering at community events. Sidekicks is also a partner with SCOUTSabout, and mentors assist in offering regular modules that include studying a topic, and then taking a field trip (e.g. a module on space that included a trip to the Odysium). Group mentoring also involves regular events for all Sidekicks families. Due to time constraints, some mentors choose to be group mentors only.

Outcomes for children and families: The mentee is able to build a relationship with a caring adult, develop self esteem confidence learning new skills or trying new things, and build social skills in a variety of settings. Parents are also able to build relationships with mentors, as well as other parents, and gain skills and abilities through planning and participating in events. Families feel a sense of ownership and belonging to the Sidekicks “community”.

Mentor Outcomes: Mentors gain the satisfaction of being able to make a difference for *a whole family*. For couples, mentoring becomes *a shared and cost-effective social event*. Young adults acquire career related skills and abilities. All mentors become connected as volunteers to a variety of local community events (e.g. Children’s Festival).

ii **Relevant Recruitment / Promotional Messages:**

Youth Best-Suited to this Program: Children best suited to this program may not have an opportunity to benefit from adult role models in a variety of settings. They are also children that would benefit from events that include the parents, siblings and other children. In particular, children with disabilities or with special needs can gain a heightened sense of inclusion or belonging.

Mentors Best Suited to the Program: Mentors in this program must be willing to participate with groups of high energy children, that may have short attention spans. They are committed to mentoring within a family context, and also positive about volunteering in range of activities in the community.

Motivations and Fears of Potential Mentors: Potential mentors could be dissuaded from volunteering if they feel they do not have the skills, the supports or the energy to support high needs children. They may also be dissuaded by the time commitment, but mentors often find, once they are in the program, that this is not onerous.

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

Current match statistics:

◆ Current matches	15
◆ Current mentors	25
◆ Current mentees	40

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

◆ Total number of matches	30
◆ Number of mentors (new)	25 (1/1) + 5 (group)
◆ Number of mentees (new)	25
◆ Number of rematched mentors	5
◆ Number of rematched mentees	5

iv **Recruitment / Screening:**

Interviews and Reference Checks:

Prospective mentors are often attracted in a number of ways: by positive press in the local paper, visible community participation events (e.g. car wash), mall displays, presentations to high school classes, and word of mouth.

Prospective mentors are provided with a volunteer folder with the application, description of the program, a mentor “job description”, and an explanation of the screening process. Adults are asked to supply 3 references, while teenagers under 18 must submit 5.

Interviews are conducted at the centre. Applicants must request child welfare and criminal record checks.

Parents and children are also interviewed to determine their expectations of a mentor, and needs to be addressed.

Orientation and Training: Mentors receive an orientation manual, and are walked through program and role descriptions, boundaries issues, ideas for activities, and a unit on child sexual awareness that addresses abuse and disclosure issues.

Matching: Mentors to be matched are encouraged to attend a group activity, to meet the children that might be appropriate matches.

Based upon this experience, mentors and parents can give feedback as to their comfort with the proposed match.

Parents attend the match meeting with the mentor at the Sidekicks office. The background and interest of the family, the child and the volunteer are discussed.

Follow-up / Evaluation: Group events provide an opportunity for informal follow-up and observation regarding the effectiveness of matches. The perspectives of the mentor, the parents and the child are sought. Parents and mentors are also asked to submit monthly written reports including hours spent on match activities; use of e-mail for communication has made this an easier requirement for all.