

Address: 10211 – 105 St., Edmonton Alta. T5J 1E3  
Phone: 429-5717 or 429-9622  
Fax: 425-9380  
Website Address: [www.edmonton.ymca.ca](http://www.edmonton.ymca.ca)  
Email Contact: Jackie McGowan, Coordinator of Volunteer Services  
[jmcgowan@Edmonton.ymca.ca](mailto:jmcgowan@Edmonton.ymca.ca)

## Mentoring Programs:

### 1) Learning at the Y:

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

**Purpose:** This *on-site alternative learning* program is run in partnership with the Argyll Home Education Services Centre. It is for youth grades 7 through 12. The combination of life skill workshops, academics and one to one support provides the students with the skills that they need to be successful in school.

**Mentor role:** Students are supported by staff and tutors / mentors, as they pursue academic studies. The role of the mentor is to assist youth in their individual studies, by providing advice, encouragement and assistance in problem solving. Youth will be working on different subjects, at different grade levels, or in different modules of the standard curriculum. Mentors are matched one-on-one with students.

**Youth Outcomes:** The program outcomes for youth are to build skills for academic success and positive personal development skills Youth build a relationship with a caring adult in an “empowering” way – the mentoring activity is consistent with their stated personal goals, the concept of a “tutor” is more consistent with how they see their needs, and the mentor responds / adapts to their readiness to accept or seek assistance.

**Mentor Outcomes:** As youth achieve success in daily problem solving and curriculum completion, mentors experience a tangible or “measurable” demonstration of the “difference” or they have made for a youth.

#### *ii Relevant Recruitment / Promotional Messages - Learning at the Y:*

**Youth Best Suited to this Program:** This program supports youth who have not experienced success in a traditional school setting Youth may be referred to the program by community agencies or their parents, or they may hear of it through “word of mouth”

**Mentors Best Suited to this Program:** This program is best suited to mentors who *genuinely enjoy all youth*, including “youth at risk”. The best volunteers for this program are those who wish to work youth in a *non-judgmental, facilitative way*, to achieve their individual academic goals. The program prefers to recruit mentors who are willing to make a long-term commitment of at least *6 months to a year*.

Mentors should *value academic pursuits*, and enjoy participating with the youth in *academic related activities* (e.g. researching topics, doing math problems, reading and analyzing information).

Mentors have been attracted through advertising in the Edmonton Journal, Edmonton Examiner, and on volunteer recruitment websites (e.g. V.O. Exchange, Charity Village).

**Motivations and Potential Fears of Prospective Mentors:** Mentors are attracted to this program because they want to “*give something back to the community*”, they wish to do this through working with youth, and they like the *tangible, structured* aspect of mentoring in an academic context.

Prospective volunteers may be *fearful of “youth at risk”*, as they may hold *false stereotypes* of this group. They may also be concerned that they themselves do not have enough further education to be a “tutor / mentor”, as they *do not understand or value their own personal skills and problem solving skills*.

### iii ***Current and Projected Recruitment Demand for Mentors:***

#### **Current Matches:**

- ◆ Number of mentors: 8
- ◆ Number of mentees: 25

Target Number of Matches *September 2002 (September 2003 numbers are likely to be higher, but current program reviews make 2003 projections difficult at this time)*:

- ◆ Number of mentees? (new): 40-52
- ◆
- ◆ Number of returning mentees: 8
- ◆ Number of mentors (new): 12
- ◆ Number of returning mentors: 8

## 2) **YMCA Kids Club**

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

**Purpose:** This *after school literacy* program is offered to elementary students in inner-city schools. Sessions are held twice a week, for *an hour and a half*. The program runs *10 weeks*.

**Mentor role:** Mentors are assigned a group of 3-4 children for the duration of the program. In each session, mentors assist staff by leading their group through 3 types of activities: asset building, literacy-based, and recreational activities. The groups spend 15 minutes on an assigned asset-building activity (e.g. identify all the people in your life that support you), 45 minutes on a literacy activity (e.g. reading), and 30 minutes on a recreational activity (e.g. a fun game).

**Child Outcomes:** Through the relationship built with the mentor, and participation in group activities, children acquire self-confidence, self-esteem and social skills. They become more willing to try new things, to speak out and to participate in a group setting.

**Mentor Outcomes:** Mentors are provided with *a very structured environment* through a variety of *set activities*, and with the *modeling of leaders*. Mentors can commit to a *short-term, intensive program* that assists them in *acquiring experience and skills*

*related to career goals (e.g. university students) or targeted community contribution goals (e.g. “make a difference” for high needs children, inner city children).*

ii ***Relevant Recruitment / Promotional Messages - YMCA Kids Club:***

**Children Best Suited to this Program:** Teachers and principals within the inner city schools recommend students to the program. This program best supports children who need to gain self-esteem, self-confidence and social skills through group interaction.

**Mentors Best Suited to this Program:** This program is best suited to mentors who like leading *small groups of children*, enjoy conducting a *variety of preset activities*, and are able to make a commitment twice a week for two and a half months. Mentors have been attracted through advertising in the Edmonton Journal, Edmonton Examiner, posters at high schools and university faculties, and on volunteer recruitment websites (e.g. V.O. E., Charity Village).

**Motivations and Potential Fears of Prospective Mentors:** Mentors are attracted to this program because they like working with young children, are unable or unwilling to make a long term commitment, and like site-based activities.

Prospective volunteers may be nervous about leading a variety of activities, being unable to attend all 10 sessions, or leading tasks without adequate guidance or modeling.

iii ***Current and Projected Recruitment Demand for Mentors:***

**Current Matches:**

- ◆ Number of mentors: 9
- ◆ Number of mentees: 34

Target Number of Matches *September 2002 and September 2003:*

- ◆ Number of mentees: (new): 80
- ◆ Number of returning mentees: n/a
- ◆ Number of mentors (new): 40
- ◆ Number of returning mentors: 9

**Current and Planned Program Practices:**

**1) Recruitment / Screening:**

*i Interviews and Reference Checks:*

Interested volunteers complete an application form, and are asked to provide two references (preferably personal references, but employment related references are acceptable). They are asked to request a criminal record check, and a child welfare record check. All volunteers would be declined if record checks were negative, or if interviews suggested inappropriate behaviors (e.g. anger management, inappropriate interest in children, etc.).

Prospective volunteers **would not** be channeled to the Learning at the Y program if they displayed high control needs, a lack of flexibility or if they make judgmental comments related to youth stereotypes and youth behavior.

*ii Orientation / Training*

Mentors in the *Learning at the Y* program receive 7 hours of training, regarding the YMCA, Asset Building, how to be effective in the role of a tutor / mentor, realistic expectations of youth, and working with high needs youth. Mentors are often scheduled to observe the “classroom” for an hour, to help the mentor and recruiter determine if this is the best setting for this volunteer.

Mentees in the *Learning at the Y* program are given a brief orientation to the role of the tutor / mentor, and realistic expectations for this role.

Mentors in the *Kids Club* program receive 6 hours of training regarding the YMCA, Asset Building, how to be effective in the role of tutor / mentor, small group behavior management, and developing literacy skills.

**iii Matching**

*Learning at the Y* mentors are matched with a student who has educational needs similar to the academic or personal skills of the volunteer. These matches are made after the volunteer is observed interacting with the youth.

*YMCA Kids Club* volunteers are matched after the first session with a group of 2 to 4 children, upon observation of mentors and children, and determining the emerging relationships between the mentors and the children, and between the children.

**iv Follow-up / Evaluation**

*Learning at the Y* mentors provide informal feedback to the staff after each session. They also complete a formal questionnaire at 6 months, regarding the effectiveness of the match. Youth also complete follow-up questionnaires in January and June. Weekly follow-up is done with other stakeholders (e.g. parents, social workers, parole officers, teachers) to discuss progress.

*YMCA Kids Club* mentors complete feedback questionnaires at the 5 and 10 week mark of the program. Mentors can also provide informal feedback to program leaders at activity sessions. Follow-up is also done with school teachers and/or principals to discuss observations.

All programs hold regular feedback / evaluation sessions with groups of volunteers upon program completion (e.g. *Kids Club*), or at regular intervals (3 times per year).

**v Recognition**

Volunteers in mentoring programs are included in, and invited to the organization-wide volunteer recognition events offered twice a year, training events and conferences, and month recognition items.