

River East M.B. Church Mentoring Program

The River East mentoring program is a way for adults and youth in our congregation to develop relationships that are beneficial for young people and adults. It gives the young person someone who thinks of them, talks to them and prays for them. For the mentor, it is an opportunity to share faith, experience and knowledge with a young person as they make the transition to young adulthood.

History

The River East mentoring program has been going for a number of years. A review of the program was conducted in spring; the review found high praise for the program by youth, mentors and parents alike, and a desire was expressed to see it continue, with a few changes.

Goals of the Program

The goal of the program is to match adults and young people so they can form friendships while sharing interests and activities. Through this friendship, we hope they will feel free to discuss friends, relationships, family, school, faith, struggles, challenges and joys. We also hope that mentors will find it to be an enriching experience as they share their faith, knowledge and experience with a young person, and as they see them grow in faith.

Making the matches

We will ask youth and mentors to fill out a questionnaire about their interests. We will use these questionnaires to try to match youth and adults together.

Time Commitment

The review suggested that bi-monthly meetings would be sufficient (once very two months), although some people might want to meet more frequently. Other contacts can be by e-mail, phone or notes. It is our hope that the relationship could continue until the young person is 18. Of course, we realize that things change over that period of time—people move, new challenges enter people's lives, etc. But we hope that matches can develop into long-term commitments where deep friendships occur.

Ensuring the match/Ending relationships

We recognize that, despite our best efforts, not all matches will work out. With this in mind, at the six-month mark we will ask the mentor, young person and the young person's parents to let us know how the relationship is going. If it isn't working, it can be ended. At the end of each year together, we will check in again to see if the relationship is going well; again, an opportunity for ending the relationship will be given if things aren't working out.

(Over)

Activities and Costs

When choosing activities, we expect that mentors will consult with the parents (e.g. concerts, movies, plays, etc.) In everything, we want the activities to be appropriate for the young person, and considerate of parental values.

As for cost, we don't expect mentors to pay for everything that they do with the young person, although they may choose to do so. If finances are a concern with regard to certain events (concerts, sporting events, etc.), we recommend that they consult with parents about whether they should pay for the young person's ticket.

Police check

In accordance with the policies of the Manitoba M.B. Conference, adults who become involved in youth work must have Criminal Records Check conducted by the Winnipeg Police. This includes adults who become involved in the mentor program.

Relationship to the Youth Program

The mentoring program does not replace the youth program. Youth leaders and the Youth Pastor will continue to provide youth at our church with a full range of programs, activities and spiritual care. The mentoring program exists to provide special one-on-one care and friendship, alongside the other ministries of the church. Youth leaders and the Youth Pastor will also be consulted for advice and assistance for the mentoring program, to ensure that all of our youth receive the care they need.

Conclusion

The mentoring program is another way for the church to show young people and their parents that we care for them. If you have any questions about the program, or about your involvement in it, contact me at Longhurst4@shaw.ca

John Longhurst, Mentoring Program Coordinator