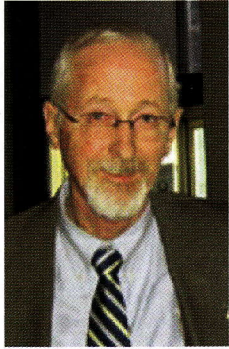


# Tutoring/mentoring needs corporate help

Prepared Materials



“January is National Mentoring Month. Let’s commit ourselves to making it a truly worthwhile opportunity,” says Daniel F. Bassill, founder and president of Tutor/Mentor Connection and Tutor/Mentor Institute, LLC.

“While this annual event has been a wonderful showcase for the roles mentors play the lives of young people, and it provides many opportunities for public leaders to encourage volunteerism, we must aim a laser-like beam to spotlight strategies needed to make top-notch, volunteer-based mentoring and tutoring programs available in more of the neighborhoods where they are needed most.”

Now in its tenth year, the annual commemoration of National Mentoring Month was created by the Harvard University School of Public Health and MENTOR, a research and development organization with a volunteer referral component. Bassill is urging corporate trade associations, business networking groups, philanthropic forums and local media to use National Mentoring Month to help bring a reinvigorated paradigm to mentoring issues.

Bassill shares National Mentoring Month’s mission of focusing attention on the vital need for mentors, and how interested parties can work together to promote the value of mentoring, brighten the future of youth and increase the ranks of adult mentors. “Sustainable, comprehensive, volunteer-based mentor programs benefit both the kids being helped and the adults helping them,” he said. “At the heart of the mentor ‘infrastructure’ is the bedrock concept that adult volunteers have as much to gain, in terms of improving their leadership skill sand networking abilities, as do the children, who critically need the extra attention.

“Let’s be clear,” Bassill continued. “Extra support outside of traditional K through 12 public education is undeniably necessary for at-risk youth to meet their goals and become civically-engaged, productive members of society. The successful development of long-term mentoring relationships with kids who

cope every day with poverty, absent or overstretched parents, and poorly performing schools in underserved communities is crucial to our nation’s well-being.

“However, high quality youth mentoring programs will not grow without the strategic involvement of business leaders and the talent and resources of their corporations.” Bassill draws on his own 17-year advertising career with Chicago’s Montgomery Ward Corporation to craft his philosophy. Through his Tutor-Mentor Institute, Bassill advocates a tutor/mentor program development and support design similar to how big corporations underpin countless branch locations throughout the country. “The mentoring community does not have the millions of dollars that big corporations have to spend on thousands of locations; so we need to motivate leaders from every industry to provide some of the talent, technology and cash necessary to produce the same impact,” he said.

“At-risk youth steadily mentored from middle school through college become ideal employees who are prepared and enthusiastic. However, while youth mentoring aims to develop future workers, the effect on the current workforce can’t be overstated, especially in this current economic climate,” Bassill emphasized. “Employee volunteers gain new skills and enlarge their own informal knowledge networks as a result of their on-going involvement in mentoring programs with volunteers from many different industries. Research underscores that many employees prefer to work at socially-involved companies. Thus, CEOs who earmark resources, both financial and human, to support the

growth of mentoring programs in neighborhoods where their employees live, work, shop or can easily participate, are taking a much broader perspective on mentoring and its importance.

“We need business executives to say, ‘I am committed to this effort and therefore, I designate this employee or group of employees to develop an in-house strategy that encourages employee volunteers to work with one, or many, mentor groups, and stay with them for the long haul.’ A volunteer doesn’t necessarily have to be a one-on-one tutor,” Bassill explained. “The organizations running these programs need help with much more - marketing, sales, technology, etc., from business volunteers. As mentoring organizations learn to enlist this kind of corporate talent and advocacy, their programs become much more stable and offer a greater range of services. Relying on government subsidies that come and go, especially these days, and philanthropic grants simply doesn’t provide the dependable revenue streams these programs require.”

In order to influence expanded mentor support business practices, Bassill created the Tutor/Mentor Institute as an “ideal resource” that could bolster mentoring programs in Chicago and other cities. He works constantly with others via the Internet to help organizations understand and adopt these concepts. In addition, through a series of speaking engagements during January 2012 and beyond, Bassill is encouraging the metropolitan Chicago area’s corporate community to step up in bigger, better and more innovative ways. “The generous, steadfast and forward-looking component of corporate sponsorship cooperation is what will launch youth mentoring into the new and much brighter future it so desperately deserves.”

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