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Tutors can set tone for school

For many kids, the first six weeks can set the tone for the rest of their school year and possibly even their lives, says Daniel F. Bassill, president of Cabrini Connections and its affiliated group, Tutor/Mentor Connections.

"This means that every youth who gets connected during late September or October with a volunteer tutor/mentor in a well-organized tutor/mentor program has a greater chance of making positive learning choices than those who don't have such opportunities and who may be influenced by negative peer influences, street gangs or worse," Bassill said.

Now a member of the Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service, he formed Tutor/Mentor Connections in 1993 to help every similar tutor/mentor program in the Chicago area to attain resources (volunteers, leaders, funds, training and technology). The ultimate goal of the volunteer programs is to grow in their abili-

ty to mentor young people born into poverty to a job or career by age 25.

The programs will be seeking volunteers from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday, September 8 at the James R. Thompson Center.

Cabrini Connections expects 65 percent of its volunteers from the last school year to return this fall, along with 85 percent of the kids in the program. Such continuity provides "momentum that we hope helps them make productive learning decisions," Bassill said.

Prospective volunteers will be able to search by ZIP code to learn of similar programs close to their own neighborhoods.

Since 1998, Bassill has been building a library of Web links that connect visitors to the knowledge of other people who are concerned with poverty, education, diversity and workforce development.

For more information, please visit tutormentorexchange.net and its Recruitment Section.
