



More Than A Mentoring Experience

By Deb Kathman, Executive Director

Every June, high school seniors and their families look forward to the big day- graduation! This year's graduating class from Jamestown High School included twenty-seven mentees who were part of the Project ME Mentoring Program; it was a very exciting day for them and for their mentors. This group of seniors have been with their mentors since they were in seventh grade, that would be 6 years! They met once a week during the school year, which is approximately 216 times. Mentors first encountered young, impressionable, shy, twelve year-olds who were not always open to conversation. But, they persevered and returned each week to talk with their mentee and to see how they were doing.

Project ME Report Card

27	Received High School Diploma
21	Enrolled in College /Trade School
2	Enlisted in U.S. Military
4	Undecided

*Based on 27 student s in program

Over the course of those six years, mentors have shared life experiences, listened to the trials of young adulthood, offered advice and guidance, and most importantly, made a commitment to be there every week to spend time with their mentees. Sometimes it was easy and sometimes it was not so easy, but their commitment never wavered. They helped them

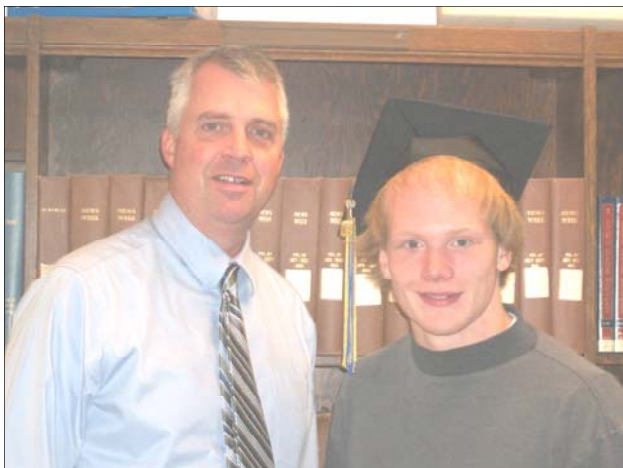
understand the importance of friendship through their friendship, as well as, the importance of kindness, compassion, and follow-through on their goals. Mentors encouraged them to look to the future to see what was possible and what it could hold for them. They shared a range of personal experiences whether it was college, family, community or work and they encouraged volunteerism and spoke of the value of giving back.

In return, their mentees provided them with a view of life as a modern young adult and shared with them what they encountered throughout their school years, including their highs, their lows, and everything in-between. Together, they developed a bond that surely will not end with graduation. We look forward to what the future will hold for them and hope that someday, they too, will pay it forward and mentor a young child. Thank you to these fine mentors, listed on this page, who gave of themselves for these young adults.

Project ME Mentors

Ignacio Parra
Bob Kenyon
Keith Ecklund
Vicky Bardo
Bill Drellow
Vicky Matteson
Pastor Bill Blair
Tammy Brunecz
Betsy Shults
John Sirianno
Roxanne Sheehy
Kim Ecklund
Cathy Kimball
Stephanie Cutrona
Lorraine Walker
Cheryl Akin
Jill Muntz
Pam Holmberg
Pam Drellow
Scott Mekus
Faith Graham
Cheryl Ciancio
Deb Kathman
Mike McElrath
Kathy Collver
Carla Brouwer
Pierre Chagnon

Thank You!!!!



Project Me mentor, Mike McElrath, began mentoring William Blakey in seventh grade. After high school graduation, William will continue his higher education at Fredonia State University in the fall.



This Hat Never Goes Out of Style



Of the approximately 1,700 high school seniors in Chautauqua County, approximately 15%, or 255 will not graduate with their classmates. Graduates will be spending the summer either entering the job market and working or planning and packing for the next step on their educational adventure. Those students falling short of acquiring their graduation requirements, however, may spend their summer frantically trying to complete high school coursework or finding out if they are eligible to enroll in a G.E.D. program.

With the state and national dropout rates considerably higher than those of Chautauqua County, our high school students are fortunate to be attending districts that are mindful of the importance of keeping children in school. Some school districts are allowing students to complete their high school requirements in the summer following their senior year. Other districts are considering a “fifth year” of high school. Both plans allow students extra time for learning which is just what many of them need.

It is critical students have academic support options to help them stay on track throughout high school.

Navigating the difficult waters of high school can be trying for any student, but when obstacles such as language barriers, scheduling conflicts, lack of home support, financial hardships, and learning deficiencies are added, graduation may seem almost impossible. It is critical students have academic support options to help them stay on track throughout high school. Teachers and after school programs must be available to students for additional help with concepts they don't understand and for making up missed homework assignments. It is also important for students to have access to alternative programs, such as tutoring. Chautauqua Striders has been a student resource for over thirty years.

Chautauqua Striders tutoring sites are available at many schools throughout the county through youth and teen centers. Students who attend Striders have the opportunity to work with caring, highly trained, and educated professionals. They work with students on test-taking skills, test preparation, time management, organizational skills, and daily homework. Often, youth find it less intimidating and are more comfortable in a small group, tutor-style setting, and it is easier to ask for help when they do not understand specific subject matter. After attending tutoring on a regular basis, students gain self-confidence in their educational abilities and generally do better in school, not only on an academic level, but on a personal level. Homework assignments are turned in on time, after school help is sought out, and tests are studied for well in advance. Striders is here to assist youth in every way possible. Take a chance on Striders tutoring programs next fall- see the results!



Washington Middle School students are seen planting Venus Fly Traps as part of a writing and research project.

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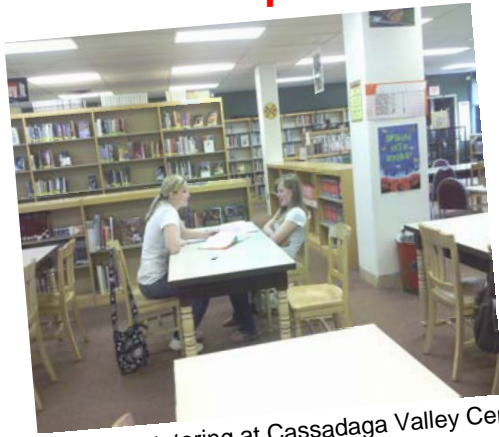
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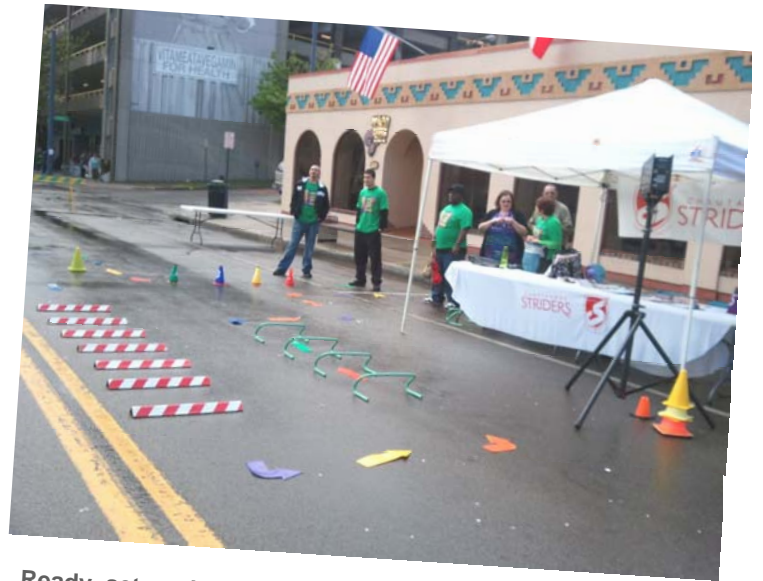
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Striders' Snapshots



One to one tutoring at Cassadaga Valley Central School.



Ready, set, and rain at the 2011 Community Day in Jamestown



McKinney-Vento grant starts a new tutoring program at Sherman Central School.



Small group tutoring at Lincoln Elementary School.



Chautauqua Striders' 2011 United Way Volunteers of the Year, Paul Hedberg and Ruth Lundin.



It's track time for the track & field development program.



Proper warm up and good stretch before the big race!



Running and jumping at the USATF Niagara Junior Olympics held at Strider Field.



Staying Connected

Summer Activities to Keep Youth On Track!!

Chautauqua Striders outreach programs are winding down, since they are linked to the same schedule as the Jamestown Public Schools. During the summer break, children and youth are encouraged to stay connected with organizations such as the YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, Chautauqua Striders track programs, and the Gateway Center. These summer youth organizations place strong emphasis on empowering young people, so they feel valued and appreciated. Like the African proverb says, "It takes a village to raise a child," and we are fortunate to have excellent community organizations available to them. In summer programming, they are encouraged to take on leadership roles, participate in numerous events, and in community service projects. Furthermore, they stay connected with friends and are exposed to many activities and opportunities.

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Hispanic Youth Embrace Community

This has been a great year; new bonds have been formed and rewarding experiences have been lived. Two issues of the *La Voz Latina* were successfully delivered to all Hispanic students in the district, a trip to Chautauqua Institution on June 2nd was successful, and we are currently working on linking many with summer jobs through Chautauqua Works. Twenty three Hispanic students are potential graduates at Jamestown High School.



New and exciting projects are in place for next year. The ESL* Divas group is expanding to Jefferson Middle School. With Mrs. Liz Pardue, the ESL teacher, we are starting Little Divas that will be composed of 5th and 6th grade Hispanic girls. Also, a new program will begin at Love Elementary school called ESL PACT (Parents and Children Together) with Mrs. Debbie

Yahn. College trips, character building activities, and informational nights are additional activities planned. We will continue developing the Futuro Latino Club at JHS and the ESL Divas and Let's Share Lunch at Washington Middle School. All this brings more expectations and excitement for the next year.

As the Hispanic Outreach Coordinator, I am available for translation, home visits, advocacy, and casework. Contact me, Karisse Rotger-Gonzalez, at Washington Middle School during the school year or Chautauqua Striders at 488-2203. Have a safe and fun-filled summer.

*English as a Second Language

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Visit our website for the latest standing in the 2011 Runner of the Year Series. The next race in the series will be the Lakewood Y Firecracker 10 K Run on Monday, July 4th.



167 friends "like" us on Facebook!!
Learn more our programs and events through weekly updates from our Facebook page.

www.facebook.com/chautauquastriders

Mentoring Looks at “The Bigger Picture”

As the school year comes to an end, Chautauqua Striders Mentoring (CSM) has jam-packed schedules with a surplus of fun activities for mentors and mentees to enjoy and celebrate together.

Gear Up/Project ME students and mentors shared a weekend of fun at Mission Meadows June 4th and 5th. Additionally, in recognition of the hard work and determination exhibited by these students, Gear Up/Project ME hosted a graduation celebration on June 17th at JCC honoring the Jamestown High School Class of 2011 Project ME graduates and their mentors.

Project ME (Mentoring Experience) is a component of **GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs)**, a school-based grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in post-secondary education.

As this final year of Gear Up Project ME comes to a close we celebrate success! Twenty seven mentees will soon receive high school diploma's, some being first generation high school graduates. Fifteen students will attend JCC's fall semester while five more students will attend Mercyhurst, Medaille, SUNY Fredonia, or JBC . Another student will attend UTI, a technical school near Philadelphia, while two students will be serving our country in the United States Army. Four students plan to stay in Jamestown with the hopes of finding long-term employment.

The elementary and middle school mentoring programs hosted an year-end celebration at Bergman Park on June 11th, extending the invitation to family members of the participants. For our school-based mentors and mentees, Chautauqua Striders Mentoring (CSM) planned a special activity for them to do together as a last hoorah until they meet again in the fall. During each lunch period at their particular school, mentors and mentees met on the same specific date to join in on some creative (and edible!) food crafts. With all the fun-filled events CSM planned for June, the activities provided a perfect opportunity for mentors and mentees to share laughs, stories, memories, and most importantly, strengthened the bond they have already established between each other.

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