



January 6, 2014

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Be a Mentor to celebrate mentoring, recruit new mentors for National Mentoring Month

CHARLESTON, S.C. — January 6, 2014 — [Be a Mentor](#), an in-school mentoring program that works to instill youth with confidence, build social and emotional skills, and ensure that every child in the Lowcountry has a caring adult in their lives, will be celebrating mentoring and recruiting new mentors throughout the month of January in recognition of National Mentoring Month.

One-on-one mentoring programs provide ongoing, stable support and guidance for children while exposing them to a wider variety of post-secondary education and career options. Mentoring also improves a child's attitude about school, with a national study from the National Mentoring Partnership showing that students who meet regularly with a mentor are 52% less likely than peers to skip a day of school. The same study also showed that mentored students are 46% less likely to start using illegal drugs.

Be a Mentor has seen this success in the Charleston-area through its five one-on-one, school-based mentoring programs serving K-12 students. The organization has nearly 300 mentors meeting with mentees in 18 tri-county schools, meaning Be a Mentor volunteers are in local schools approximately 300 hours each week. Mentors meet with their mentees once a week throughout the school year for an hour during the student's lunch period. Volunteers also have the option of mentoring before school in the Morning Math Buddies Program at James Island Elementary School or with the After-School Academic Mentoring Program at the Carolina Youth Development Center. BAM places mentors with the grade and at the school of their choice.

While BAM has seen much success recruiting dedicated mentors, there is still a need for mentors in the Charleston-area community. Each of the schools BAM serves have waiting lists of students wanting to be matched with a mentor. From elementary school students who need a Lunch Buddy to middle-school students looking for a confidence boost to high school students seeking career guidance, there is a need at all grade levels. Just one hour a week has been proven to change a child's life for the better.

Be a Mentor believes in the importance of mentoring and will be holding special events throughout January to celebrate National Mentoring Month. The biggest of these will be a mentoring information session on January 20. BAM will team up with representatives from Big Brothers Big Sisters and Communities in Schools to share information about various Charleston-area mentoring programs and how to get involved. The event will be from 6 p.m.-7 p.m. in the cafeteria of North Charleston Creative Arts Elementary School, located at 1600 Saranac Street in North Charleston. Additional events

include a happy hour for current mentors, an appreciation lunch for those mentoring through BAM's partnership with Charleston Young Professionals and a field trip for mentors and mentees in the After-School Academic Mentoring Program.

National Mentoring Month, established in 2002 by the Harvard School of Public Health and MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, focuses national attention on the need for mentors, raises awareness of mentoring and promotes the growth of mentoring through both individuals and organizations. Mentoring organizations throughout the country organize special events to help adults learn how to channel their concern for youth into mentoring.

To become a mentor or get your business involved in mentoring, fill out an application at www.beamentornow.org or contact Program Director, Eileen Burkhardt, at eburkhardt@beamentornow.org. Volunteers must participate in a one hour training, pass a background check and provide two references. BAM accepts volunteers on a rolling basis throughout the school year.

About Be a Mentor

Founded in 2004, Be a Mentor is a nonprofit organization headquartered in North Charleston, SC. There are currently five signature programs being implemented in various schools throughout the Lowcountry. The Lunch Buddy program fills the need for in-school mentoring for elementary school children. Project SHINE focuses on career exploration, academic success and teaches the importance of setting and reaching goals at the middle school grade levels. The Career Path program matches mentors with high school students interested in similar career areas. The Academic Mentoring program matches mentors with youth living at the Carolina Youth Development Center (CYDC) to offer academic support as well as life mentoring. The Math Buddies program at JIES matches adult tutors with students in 3rd, 4th or 5th grade to improve basic math skills. For more information, visit www.beamentornow.org.

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