“Pass It On taught me that all girls, no matter what age you are, have the same thoughts and feelings just kind of on a different level. It helps you not judge and just really get to know people better.”

- Mentor

“Pass It On”: Mentoring Among Youth

An Evaluation of a Cross-Age Mentoring Program

This report highlights the evaluation findings from a short-term cross-age mentoring program that took place between high school girls and grade 8 girls during the spring of 2009.

Prepared for: SWOVA

Prepared by: Denise Buote, Arbor Educational & Clinical Consulting Inc.
“Pass It On” Mentoring: An Overview

One of the components of the “Pass It On” project was a two month cross-age mentoring experience that took place between high school girls and grade 8 girls (last year of middle school). During the spring of 2009, sixteen grade 8 girls were chosen to be buddies through consultations that were held between project staff, school administration and the school counselor. In addition, grade 8 girls were spoken with in order to get their opinions as to whether they would like a mentor. At the same time, 16 high school girls, who underwent a screening and interview process, came forward to be paired with a grade 8 girl to act as a mentor during an eight week period. The overall goals of the mentoring program were:

- To assist middle school girls in areas of self esteem, healthy decision making related to academics, dating relationships, friendships and peer pressure.
- To strengthen community connections amongst senior and middle school.
- To increase leadership capacity amongst senior girls.

The mentoring component was carefully developed and guided by the “Pass It On” staff in order to ensure that all the mentors received weekly supervision and ongoing support as needed. Weekly meetings focused on logistical issues of mentoring as well as discussing challenges (e.g., gaining trust, finding mutually satisfying activities) and successes (e.g., connections made with buddies, enjoyment of activities) in the relationship. Mentors were asked to keep a journal of their experiences of mentoring throughout the process.

The “Pass It On” staff communicated with the middle school in the planning stages of the mentoring; however the mentor-buddy meetings occurred outside of school hours. In addition, the staff communicated with the parents of the buddies to explain the program and answer any questions at the beginning of the mentoring and on an ongoing basis as issues arose.

In order to prepare for the role of being a mentor, high school girls participated in an overnight mentor training retreat in February 2009. In March 2009, buddies and mentors met together for an informal event in which they all got a chance to know one another, through participating in fun activities, prior to matching being decided upon. Based on the feedback from this event and the knowledge of the adults overseeing the program, matches were made between the two groups of girls.

Participants

At the beginning of the mentoring, there were 16 grade 8 girls (ages 13 and 14) and 16 high school girls (1 mentor in grade 9; 4 mentors in grade 10; 5 mentors in grade 11 and 6 mentors in grade 12). During the course of the mentoring, one grade 8 girl decided to withdraw from the mentoring relationship due to scheduling issues and few common interests.
**Evaluation Process**

Both mentors and buddies were asked to complete a survey prior to matching (February/March 2009). Middle school staff were also asked to provide information about the buddies at this time. At the end of the mentoring, both mentors and buddies were asked to complete a post-mentoring survey (May/June 2009). Four mentors and two buddies also participated in a brief telephone interview at the end of the mentoring.

**Survey Measures for Buddies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure Name</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Subscales/Items</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Demographics                  | Buote, 2009                     | n/a                              | Age, previous mentor, benefit, reasons for wanting a mentor  
Post survey included open-ended questions about the mentoring relationships and overall program. |
| “Thoughts About Me”           | Marsh, 1992                     | General self-concept             | General self concept items: 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16  
School self concept items: 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15 |
| “Important Adults in my Life” | California Healthy Kids Survey, 2005; HBSC, 2004 | Supportive adults in the child’s life | Existence of supportive relationships with non-related adults in:  
Part I: school  
Part II: neighbourhood  
Part III: home  
Part IV: supportive parents |
| “My Future”                   | California Healthy Kids Survey, 2005 | Positive outlook on the future | Future orientation (4 items)                                        |
| “My Friends”                  | Buote, 2009                     | Peer relationships                | Degree of friendships, school interactions – ques. 1, 2, 3         |
| “My Friends”                  | California Healthy Kids Survey, 2005 | Peer belonging Peer conventional involvement | Peer belonging items: 4,5,6  
Peer conventional involvement items: 7,8,9 |
| School staff survey for Pre match | Buote, 2009                  | n/a                              | 11 items – peer acceptance, social skills, help-seeking, commitment to learning, self-esteem, outside school support, areas of strength and challenge |
## Survey Measures for Mentors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure Name in Survey</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Subscales/Items</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographics Questionnaire</td>
<td>Buote, 2009</td>
<td>Community Involvement</td>
<td>Age, siblings, reasons for volunteering, had mentor in the past, volunteer experience, outside involvement in activities, feelings of being valued by the community. Post survey included open-ended questions about the mentoring relationships and overall program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me and My Community</td>
<td>Oman et al., (2002). Reliability and Validity of the Youth Asset Survey (YAS)</td>
<td>Community Involvement</td>
<td>6 items Higher scores indicate higher levels of involvement with the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being with Others</td>
<td>Bosworth &amp; Espelage, 1995</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>5 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>The Hemingway: Measure of Adolescent Connectedness (Fall, 2005)</td>
<td>Connectedness to school</td>
<td>6 items (item 3 reversed scored) Higher scores indicate greater connectedness to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Outlook on Life</td>
<td>Resiliency Inventory (RI; Noam &amp; Goldstein, 1998; Song, 2003)</td>
<td>Self-efficacy optimism</td>
<td>17 items Self-efficacy (2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17) Optimism (1r, 3, 5r, 7, 9r, 11r, 12, 14, 16r) “r” indicates that item is reverse scored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About Me</td>
<td>The Hemingway: Measure of Adolescent Connectedness (Fall, 2005)</td>
<td>Self-esteem; identity</td>
<td>6 items Higher scores indicate higher self esteem and sense of identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-Making</td>
<td>Mincemoyer &amp; Perkins (2005) National Like Skills Evaluation System</td>
<td>Factors in decision making</td>
<td>5 items Higher scores indicate more complex decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Important Adults in my Life” (school, community)</td>
<td>(California Healthy Kids Survey, 2005; HBSC, 2004)</td>
<td>Support &amp; Boundary &amp; Expectations</td>
<td>Existence of supportive relationships with non-related adults in: school “At my school....” (4 items) In my community (4 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How I see things</td>
<td>Nedweck, 1987; Dejong, Spiro, Brewer-Wilson et al., 1992 Flewelling, Paschall &amp; Ringwalt, 1993</td>
<td>Social Responsibility Social Consciousness</td>
<td>Mature civic responsibility and awareness (items 1-3) Social consciousness (items 4-6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mentors: Pre-Mentoring Perspectives and Experiences

Past Experience with Mentoring

Prior to being matched with a grade 8 girl, mentors were asked to respond to a series of questions in order to learn more about their thoughts and opinions about past experience in relation to mentoring. 9 out of the 16 high school girls reported that they had been mentors before.

- 4 of the 9 rated their previous experience of being a mentor as ‘Good’
- 5 of the 9 rated their previous experience of being a mentor as ‘Excellent’

Half of the mentors had been mentees in the past with mentor-mentee relationships lasting between 4 months and several years.

When asked who they felt would get the most out of mentoring, all but one mentor felt that both the mentor and the buddy would benefit (note that this one mentor had not had experience with mentoring).

Involvement in the Community

All but one mentor reported having been involved with service work in the past. The average number of hours spent volunteering by mentors was between 41-60 hours. Examples of volunteer work done are:

- Leadership
- SPCA
- SWOVA youth team
- Community events
- Raising money for children in developing countries

This group of mentors spent on average 16-20 hours in extra-curricular activities in the previous month.

When asked whether they felt they were an important part of the community, mentors responded:

- No: 12%
- A little bit: 6%
- Somewhat: 41%
- Quite a bit: 29%
- A lot: 12%
Overall, this group of mentors is made up of girls who are highly engaged with their community and activities beyond school. As a group, they have a significant amount of experience with being mentored and mentoring. Despite their involvement, their perception of their place in the community (i.e., Do you feel that you are an important part of your community?) varies a great deal.

Buddies: Pre-Mentoring Perspectives and Experiences

Just as the mentors provided their thoughts and opinions about mentoring before being matched, the buddies were asked to do the same. Of the 16 buddies, only 3 had older sisters. Six of the 16 had had a mentor in the past. These previous mentoring relationships had lasted between 2-6 months.

When asked who they felt would get the most out of mentoring, 5 grade eight girls felt that the buddy would get the most out of it whereas 11 girls felt that both the mentor and the buddy would benefit. Two of the girls indicated that they were looking forward to having a mentor ‘somewhat’; 10 girls were looking forward to having a mentor ‘quite a bit’; and 4 girls were looking forward to it ‘a lot’.

Further to this, girls were asked to provide their thoughts to 2 open-ended questions. Answers for these questions were content analyzed for themes.

**What Would Be Good About Having A Mentor?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would be good about having a mentor?</th>
<th>Number of Comments</th>
<th>Examples of Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social network/ Someone to hang out with</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>To know more people; Just hang out and stuff; I don’t really know many people in the high school; So that you know someone when you change schools; It will get me a hook into the high school social system; It would be good to know someone at high school; To know someone older in high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendship/support</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Have a good friend you can trust; Make a new friend; I can gain a friend; I don’t really think of it as a mentor, more like a new friend; Someone to talk to about your problems; To help the buddy cope with some problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn about high-school life/ lived experiences</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>I would like to learn more about going through high school; So if I don’t want to go to high school - maybe they will tell me it’s ok and it’s fun and we can do things; I think that having a mentor will be good because I will have someone to ask questions about high school; A lot of the time people/girls our age are confused or unhappy, maybe they’re just excited about growing up and for anybody in our vulnerable state it’s good to have somebody who’s been through it and will relate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Have fun; It sounds fun. I’ve never really hung out with a girl who is a lot older than me and I believe it will be an experience that will be fun and different for me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have other siblings.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>I don’t have an older sibling; I don’t have any sisters so it would be neat; I don’t have an older sibling so that would be cool to have a mentor.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**What Qualities Do You Want In a Mentor?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What qualities do you want in a mentor?</th>
<th>Number of comments</th>
<th>Examples of Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Fun; Exciting; That they love doing fun things like chilling. Just fun to hang out with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shares same interests</td>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>Athletic</strong> 6 comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>General</strong> 2 comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Shopping/clothes</strong> 2 comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Likes animals</strong> 1 comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of humor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Funny; Laughs; Somewhat funny.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be nice</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding/ Easy to talk to</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Understanding; Chatty; Be able to talk; Love talking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outgoing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Be friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artistic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Artistic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not judgmental</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>She should not be overly judgmental.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perceptions of Friends

Buddies were also asked about their friendships prior to the beginning of the mentoring relationships. In total, there were 9 separate questions which buddies were asked to rate on a 4 point Likert-type scale (1 = ‘not at all true’ to 4 = ‘very much true’). The following charts present the responses that buddies provided in the form of the percent (%) of buddies who indicated ‘not at all true’ and those who indicated ‘pretty much or very much true’.

**Thoughts About Friendship**

- **I have good friends**: 15% ‘not at all true’, 16% ‘pretty much true/very true’
- **I have enough friends in my school**: 0% ‘not at all true’, 16% ‘very much true’
- **The girls in my school are nice**: 7% ‘not at all true’, 8% ‘very much true’
- **I have a friend who cares about me**: 0% ‘not at all true’, 15% ‘very much true’
- **I have a friend who talks to me about my problems**: 1% ‘not at all true’, 15% ‘very much true’

**Thoughts About Friendship**

- **I have a friend who helps me when I am having a hard time**: 0% ‘not at all true’, 16% ‘very much true’
- **My friends get into a lot of trouble**: 2% ‘not at all true’, 6% ‘a little true’, 8% ‘pretty much true/very true’
- **My friends try to do what is right**: 0% ‘not at all true’, 5% ‘very much true’
- **My friends do well in school**: 0% ‘not at all true’, 1% ‘very much true’
Further to this, school staff were asked to comment on the buddies in relation to their overall social skills, commitment to learning, self-esteem, strengths and challenges. Buddies were girls who it was felt would benefit from extra support to assist with their transition to high school by helping them forge connections with older girls. Based on staff feedback, there were two groups of girls who were chosen to participate in the mentoring program: those who are less socially connected and those who are much more socially connected but would benefit from guidance from an older girl.

In turn these older girls would be able to provide insights and answer questions about the new environment to which the grade 8 girls would be going in the fall of 2009.

The Mentoring

During the spring of 2009, buddies and mentors were asked to meet eight times for a total of approximately 8 hours. At the end of the mentoring, mentors reported meeting between 2 and 8 times. In terms of hours, the average time spent with buddies was 9 hours (ranged from 4 hours to 20 hours).

Matches engaged in a variety of activities during their meetings such as: going to coffee shops, going to the beach, going for lunch, and just hanging out.

Change from Pre to Post Mentoring: Buddies

Although a short-term mentoring experience, specific dimensions found to be impacted in other mentoring projects were examined within the “Pass It On” mentoring for both the buddies and the mentors.

Buddies responded to a series of questions on a 4 point Likert-type scale (1 = ‘not at all true’ to 4 = ‘very much true’) at pre and post mentoring. Five dimensions were examined. Higher scores indicate more positive levels of functioning in that dimension. Given that there was variation in the number of meetings between buddies and mentors, data is examined in two ways; by whole sample and by number of meetings (less than 5 meetings; more than 5 meetings).

As can be seen, when the whole sample is examined, small gains were made in the areas of self-concept, school self-concept, relationships with adults and optimism for the future from pre to post mentoring. When buddies were divided into two groups (those who met less than 5 times and those who met more than 5 times), what emerges is higher ratings on 4 of the 5 dimensions for buddies who had more meetings. Although the sample sizes are small (5 buddies met more than 5 times whereas 10 met less than 5 times), it is a finding worthy of note given that the longer match has better overall outcomes.
Change from Pre to Post Mentoring: Whole Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre Mentoring</th>
<th>Post Mentoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-concept</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School self-concept</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with adults</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with parents</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimism for the future</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change from Pre to Post Mentoring: Meeting Number

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre Mentoring Sample Average</th>
<th>Post Mentoring (less than 5 meetings)</th>
<th>Post mentoring (5 or more meetings)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-concept</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School self-concept</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with adults</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships with parents</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimism for the future</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Change from Pre to Post Mentoring: Mentors**

Mentors responded to a series of questions on a 5 point Likert-type scale (1 = ‘not at all true/never’ to 4= ‘very much true/always’) at pre and post mentoring. Eleven dimensions were examined. Higher scores indicate more positive levels of functioning in that dimension. Although mentors had varying levels of contact with their buddies, all mentors received substantial adult support through their mentoring experience. Overall, mentors experienced modest gains in 7 of the 11 areas examined in this evaluation. There was no change in levels of empathy however empathy levels were quite high at pre-program (4.3) hence one would not necessarily expect to see change over the course of two months. The other three areas saw slight decreases, none of which are statistically significant in nature and due to the slight decrease (.1 change), one could consider these findings as ultimately not a reflection of involvement in the mentoring program but more as an area that remained similar pre to post program.
Buddies: Post-Mentoring Perspectives

At the post mentoring point, buddies were asked a series of open-ended questions about their experience of mentoring. Answers were content analyzed for themes which are presented below.

Buddies were asked what activities they did with mentors and which ones they liked the best. The following were the activities that the pairs did together. The top three activities are noted by a star.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentor-Buddy Activities</th>
<th>Number of times that a buddy noted this as an activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walks/Hanging out</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met for coffee/drink</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch/Dinner</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costumes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Played cards</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further to this, buddies were asked what they liked best about their favorite activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did you like best about it?</th>
<th>Number of Comments</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Talking and the fact that she listened; We had lots of time to talk; We were just talking; Just being able to talk about stuff I usually wouldn’t. Just talking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to connect</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>You can connect with someone that much older; We were together for 4 hours, it was a nice environment; I just liked how it wasn’t uncomfortable; I liked how open my mentor was, I felt like I could tell her anything and she was listening and we laughed a lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nice Day/Nice view</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Beach: Well, it was really nice out, and we started to smash open oysters; It was a really nice day; Mount Maxwell: Looking at the views on Mount Maxwell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s fun</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>It’s fun; It was really fun; It provides lots of fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch/Dinner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>We also went out for sushi at a really nice place that she recommended; Making it with her!!! (HOMEMADE PIZZA); We got to eat after.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>We both really enjoyed the movie; They were movies we both somewhat enjoyed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Buddies were also asked to comment on whether there were any aspects that they wish were different. Eight buddies commented that they had no wishes in this regard and seven indicated that there were things that they wish were different. Among the wishes were:

- ✔ Wishing it wasn’t so hard to find time to meet and wanting a longer mentoring timeline.
  - “It was sometimes hard to find time.”
  - “Maybe hang out more.”
- ✔ Wishing that it wasn’t so structured.
  - “…that we HAD to meet every week.”
  - “…so we don’t feel so pressured.”
- /checkbld
- /checkbld
- Wishing it wasn’t so structured.
  - “…that we HAD to meet every week.”
  - “…so we don’t feel so pressured.”
- “Getting to talk.”
- “Getting to tell her about my life.”
- “Being able to talk to someone about my family issues.”
- “Maybe hang out more.”
- “…so we don’t feel so pressured.”

**Examples:**
- “Knowing more people at the high school.”
- “Becoming good friends.”
- “She was like an older friend or a sister that I never had.”
- “Having someone older to hang out with.”

**What were the best parts about having a mentor?**
(20 comments)

- **Having another friend**
  - 50%
- **Learning from someone older**
  - 20%
- **General support**
  - 10%
- **Someone to talk to**
  - 20%

**Examples:**
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- “She was like an older friend or a sister that I never had.”
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- “Being able to talk to someone about my family issues.”
- “Maybe hang out more.”
- “…that we HAD to meet every week.”
- “…so we don’t feel so pressured.”

**What were the best parts about having a mentor?**
(20 comments)
What qualities did you like about your mentor? (23 comments)

- Nice 32%
- Easy to get along with 27%
- Good sense of humor 14%
- Smart 9%
- Everything 9%
- Other 9%

Examples:
- "Fun, listens....a good friend."
- "Accepting."
- "Open and outgoing."

In what way did having a mentor help? (13 comments)

- Learning about high school 46%
- Learning from mentor 15%
- It just did! 8%
- Help with communication 8%
- Knowing other people 23%

Examples:
- "It’s nice to have someone there to show you around."
- "I didn’t want to go to high school but now I am okay with it more than I was."
- "She showed me all the good and bad things about high school but made me feel good."
- "Her intelligence is inspiring."
- "It helped me learn about getting a job and relationships."
- "It just made me more comfortable expressing my thoughts."
- "We both liked anime."

Examples:
- "Fun, listens....a good friend."
- "Accepting."
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- "Her intelligence is inspiring."
- "It helped me learn about getting a job and relationships."
- "It just made me more comfortable expressing my thoughts."
- "We both liked anime."
More about the experience...

- 3 buddies felt that the buddies got the most out of the experience whereas 12 buddies felt that both the mentor and buddy benefited.
- 1 buddy liked have a mentor ‘somewhat’; 5 buddies liked it ‘quite a bit’ and 9 buddies liked it ‘a lot.’
- In terms of helping prepare for the experience of high school, 2 buddies indicated that having a mentor helped them ‘a little’; 7 buddies indicated it helped them ‘some’; 2 buddies indicated it helped them ‘quite a bit’ and 4 buddies indicated that having a mentor helped them prepare for high school ‘a lot.’ 73% of buddies were looking forward to high school ‘quite a bit’ or ‘a lot’.
- 11 buddies liked the mixer that was done before matching and 4 buddies indicated that they ‘sort of’ liked the mixer.
- 8 buddies indicated that they would like to be a mentor when they are in high school. 6 buddies indicated that they may like to mentor when they are in high school.

Buddies were also asked to comment on what type of meeting format they would prefer for mentors and buddies. As can be seen below, most buddies prefer mostly one-on-one with some group activities.

![Chart showing meeting format preferences](chart.png)
Interviews with 2 buddies

Two buddies participated in a brief telephone interview at the end of the mentoring program. Both buddies stated that they had had a good experience in the mentoring process

“It was kind of scary but then good....”

- it had helped them prepare for high school through the mentor sharing their high school experience.

“We talked about the social standing in the school. When I went to visit the school for grade 8 tours, I could wave to her and stuff and that was great.”

“She told me things that I don’t know about.”

They enjoyed being part of a larger group and they enjoyed getting to know an older girl. One buddy commented that the mentor was a source of emotional support through a difficult time.

“She was there for me to talk and everything.”

One buddy felt that the program was long enough whereas the other buddy wished it was longer.

“It was nice knowing you had a scheduled time to see her.”

The words that these buddies used to describe their mentors were: intelligent, caring, inspiring, helpful, adventurous and fun.

One buddy noted that scheduling times was a challenge due to their own busy schedules and different school dismissal times. One buddy stated that it would be nice to have more all group activities in which all the buddies and mentors could participate together.
Mentors: Post-Mentoring Perspectives

At the post mentoring point, mentors were also asked to provide detailed feedback about their overall mentoring experience. In response to the question, how was the overall mentoring experience, 4 mentors indicated it was ‘okay’; 7 mentors indicated it was ‘good’ and 4 mentors indicated it was ‘excellent’.

When asked when mentoring should begin, half of the mentors felt that starting in the fall of the year would be best. The other half felt fall or spring would work. In terms of frequency of meetings, there were two main thoughts – either once a week or once every two weeks. A small number of mentors noted that meeting whenever possible would be a reasonable goal. Mentors varied in the length of time in which they felt mentors should meet. Four mentors indicated that meetings should last at least a half hour; five mentors indicated at least one hour and four mentors indicated between 1-3 hours. Three mentors noted that meeting length would vary depending on the activity.

Next, mentors were asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions about mentoring. Responses were content analyzed and results are presented in the following charts. Percents (%) represent the number of comments in the given category that focus on a specific issue.

What were the best parts of being a mentor?

(24 comments)

- Meeting new people: 23%
- Being a role model: 15%
- Making a difference: 11%
- Supervision meetings: 12%
- My buddy: 11%
- Having fun: 8%
- Learning: 8%
- My buddy: 8%
- Personal reflection: 4%
- Making a friend: 11%
- “Getting to know a younger girl.”
- “Getting to know new people and finding out common likes.”
- “I loved knowing that I was being a friend to her and not a peer counselor.”

Examples:

- “Getting to know a younger girl.”
- “Getting to know new people and finding out common likes.”
- “I loved knowing that I was being a friend to her and not a peer counselor.”
What were things that made it hard to mentor?
(21 comments)

- Busy schedules: 67%
- Agreeing on activities/meeting times: 14%
- Transportation issues: 9%
- Family/school issues: 10%

Examples:
- “Hard to find things that we both wanted to do.”;
- “Buddy didn’t want to meet on weekends.”

What were the most challenging parts of being a mentor?
(23 comments)

- Busy schedules: 43%
- Conceiving/connecting with buddy: 25%
- Being myself: 11%
- Motivating her about the program: 14%
- Writing in my journal: 3%
- Feelings of obligation to buddy: 4%

Examples:
- “Trying to have more open conversations instead of surface talk.”;
- “Finding ways to connect deeper.”;
- “Gaining trust.”

“School and sports got in the way of hanging out.”;
“We are just generally busy people.”
**Pass It On** Mentoring Evaluation

**What really helped in mentoring?**
(10 comments)

- Supervision meetings: 50%
- Ongoing support: 22%
- Retreat: 22%

**What other supports would have been helpful?**
(8 comments)

- More supervision time: 25%
- Activity ideas/Group activities with buddies: 25%
- Other: 50%

**Examples:**
- “Just having them [staff] there and knowing that they care.”
- “There were many different opportunities for us to receive help from in and around the community.”

- “Meeting time to go over what was happening.”
- “Having time to talk with other mentors was good but would have liked more time.”

- “Clearer expectations about how much meeting time was needed.”
- “If staff had contacted buddies about specific times.”
- “Clearer expectations about how to use the journals.”
- “Help with my buddy’s parents.”
**What kinds of pressures did you feel in your relationship with your buddy? (20 comments)**

- Conversation engagement: 14%
- To be a good role model: 24%
- Giving good advice: 10%
- Being cool: 19%
- Other: 24%
- Making meetings: 9%

**Examples:**
- “Felt judged when I was with her because of the age difference.”
- “Trying to get her to open up.”
- “Pressure to know the rules of her family.”
- “To be very mature.”
- “Not sure what personal stories were appropriate.”
- “Pressure to be cool.”
- “To be really outgoing.”

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**What skills do you feel need to be a focus in the training? (19 comments)**

- Conversation skills: 32%
- Activity ideas: 23%
- Trust building strategies: 27%
- Other (boundaries; time management): 9%
- Nothing: 9%

**Examples:**
- “Every person is different and you never know how they are going to react.”
- “You can’t have lessons on getting someone to trust you.”
- “How to keep a conversation going.”
- “Working with awkwardness and what to talk about.”
- “Getting the counselor role out of the picture.”
What do you think is the best way for mentors and buddies to be matched?  (18 comments)

- Common interests/Personality (25%)
- Pre match activities (55%)
- Staff decides (20%)

**Examples:**
- “More get-to-know you [activities] with buddy and mentors.”
- “Do 2-4 mixers before final pairings.”
- “Speed dating conversations and both the buddy and mentor write down top three.”

What has been the best part of the whole PASS IT ON project?  (17 comments)

- Mentoring (26%)
- Learning about life (11%)
- PIO in general (16%)
- Workshops (21%)
- Meeting new people (10%)
- Other (16%)

**Examples:**
- “Hanging out with my buddy.”
- “Creating a bond with my buddy.”
- “Fill out forms about interests.”
- “Surveys on favorite activities.”
- “Meeting all the great women.”
- “The people in the teen mentor group.”

Other:
- “Meetings.”
- “Retreat.”
- “Initial mixer meeting with buddies.”

Note that not all youth participated in all “Pass It On” activities so percents do not indicate a ranking of activity preference.
Interviews with 4 mentors

Four mentors participated in brief telephone interviews after the mentoring had come to an end. For mentors, they felt that the best part of the mentoring was getting to know new people (grade 8s, other mentors and adults), participating in the supervision and getting an opportunity to know themselves better through the mentoring relationships.

“Meeting new people and learning about different types of friendships – like how mentoring can be the same as having a friend but it can also be on a different type of level and kind of distinguishing what level you are on with different people.”

The short length of time and the juggling of schedules were noted as challenges. One mentor did describe a challenge with communication when the relationship didn’t work out with her buddy. She didn’t know what the whole situation was and had to wait about a week to find out and this was somewhat stressful for her.

“Setting the time aside because I always have a really busy life.”

All the matches went well (one mentor was re-matched) and the matches were able to find common interests to engage in during their meeting times.

“We didn’t have common hobbies but we had common interests.”
In terms of learning from the experience, one mentor indicated that she had done quite a bit of mentoring in the past so the current experience enhanced her skills. The other three mentors noted the following learnings:

✓ Letting the other person talk more
✓ General communication skills
✓ Appreciation for the time and effort it takes to develop a friendship

“How much commitment it takes to start a friendship – open up to someone and wanting to put yourself out there but not too much. I learned a lot about that. I feel like I can be a better friend now.”

One mentor, who described herself as rather shy, was matched with someone who is quite outgoing. Although challenging, this mentor stated that she grew as a result of this experience. Her buddy pushed her to be more outgoing.

Overall the mentors felt that the experience changed the way they see other people.

✓ More aware of being welcoming to those younger

“When I think about how I felt at that age and how awkward it was to be around a grade 11 or 12 girl, I was really conscientious of how I was around her – making sure I was really welcoming.”

✓ More open to others in order to get to know people more without judging too quickly

“It [Pass It On] taught me that all girls, no matter what age you are, have the same thoughts and feelings just kind of on a different level. It helps you not judge and just really get to know people better.”

✓ Increased ability to connect with others

The mentors expressed that they felt that the mentoring was well organized. Specifically, the training retreat helped the group bond as a group, the mixer prior to the matching was very much fun and helped ease into the mentoring and having weekly supervision meetings was very positive as it gave an opportunity for mentors to share experiences. One mentor expressed that having weekly meetings was ideal as if there was longer than a week between meetings, the relationship would be harder to build.

“Meeting with your buddy every week. In two weeks you lose connection sometime because so much stuff goes on and so much stuff goes by.”

Mentors did have suggestions as to how the mentoring component of the “Pass It On” project could be improved.
✓ Have more group activities for mentors and buddies.
✓ Start the mentoring earlier in the year so that the matches could meet over a longer period of time.
✓ Have matches set times to meet that are consistent. It was expressed that this would increase commitment to the process. This may include examining whether there is any possible overlap at the end of the school day that would be a natural meeting time.
✓ Increase time in supervision meetings to allow mentors just to talk about their experiences.

“Just more time for the mentors to just be able to talk about their buddies and difficulties that they were having – less structure to the meetings. We just needed more time to talk.”

✓ Incorporate a “Pass It On” focus in the mentoring relationships. For example, the matches could do activities that focus on giving back to others.

“We would take the “Pass It On” idea not just as far as your buddy – I felt like it was wonderful to have a buddy and spend time with her.....do something to improve the community or to help do things that would improve relationships between adults and youth.”

✓ Generate a list of activities that the buddies and mentors could do during their meeting times.

Finally, the mentors who participated in these interviews all agreed that the “Pass It On” staff provided excellent support. They were encouraging and gave helpful feedback that allowed mentors a chance to improve their skills. It was felt that staff each brought different skills to the project. This was seen to be a real strength.

“They’re fantastic. Just being so understanding.”
Key Findings

Grade 8 Girls: Background

✓ Grade 8 girls identified expanding their social network, developing friendships, learning from someone who knows about high school life and having fun as key reasons for wanting a mentor.
✓ Grade 8 girls identified wanting mentors who are fun to be around and who share some of the same interests as them.
✓ Overall, grade 8 girls expressed that they have friendships in their school.
✓ Approximately half of the grade 8 girls agreed ‘a little bit’ with the statement, “The girls in my school are nice.” The other half of the girls endorsed this statement as being ‘pretty much true’ or ‘very true.’
✓ Based on staff feedback, there were two groups of girls who were chosen to participate in the mentoring program: those who are less socially connected and those who are much more socially connected but would benefit from guidance from an older girl.

Grade 8 Girls: Change From Pre to Post Mentoring

✓ When the results from all 15 girls were considered, small gains were made in the areas of self-concept, school self-concept, relationships with adults and optimism for the future from pre to post mentoring.
✓ When buddies were divided into groups (those who met less than 5 times and those who met more than 5 times) what emerges is higher ratings on 4 of the 5 dimensions for buddies who had more than 5 meetings.

Mentors: Change From Pre to Post Mentoring

✓ Overall, this group of mentors were adolescent girls who were very involved in their school and community.
✓ Mentors experienced modest gains in 7 of the 11 areas examined in this evaluation. These areas include enhancements in the following areas: community involvement, relationships with adults, relationships with school adults, connectedness to school, feelings of self-efficacy, optimism, and self-esteem.

Buddies: Post-Mentoring Perspectives

✓ Buddies reporting engaging in a variety of activities with their mentors. Of greatest enjoyment was having lunch/dinner, talking and going to the movies.
✓ When asked to describe what they liked about the activity, they indicated having a chance to talk, the ease of connecting with their mentor, having fun, sharing a meal together and enjoying a nice day.
Buddies identified the best parts of mentoring as having another friend, getting support, learning from someone older and having someone to talk to about life. The key qualities they liked best about their mentors were how nice the mentors were, how easy they were to get along with, and their good sense of humor. According to the buddies, mentoring helped them by expanding their social network, helping them learn about high school and other areas (e.g., relationships, communication, job skills). 3 buddies felt that the buddies got the most out of the experience whereas 12 buddies felt that both the mentor and buddy benefited. 1 buddy liked having mentor ‘somewhat’, 5 buddies liked it ‘quite a bit’ and 9 buddies liked it ‘a lot.’ 8 buddies indicated that they would like to be a mentor when they are in high school. 6 buddies indicated that they may like to mentor when they are in high school. Buddies felt that the best format for buddy-mentor meetings, if the project were to continue, would be having mostly one-on-one activities with a few group activities. When asked about challenges, the key theme was time – finding it hard to find the time to meet and wishing the mentoring lasted longer, feeling pressured to find the time to meet.

Mentors: Post-Mentoring Perspectives

In response to the question, how was the overall mentoring experience, 4 mentors indicated it was ‘okay’; 7 mentors indicated it was ‘good’ and 4 mentors indicated it was ‘excellent’. Half of the mentors felt that beginning the mentoring process in the fall would be better as this way it would allow more time for the mentor-buddy relationship to develop. The biggest challenge to mentoring was finding the time to meet given the busy schedules of the mentor and/or buddy and building the relationships (connecting and conversing with the buddy). Mentors identified the best parts of mentoring as being: meeting new people, making a friend, making a difference, being a role model and the supervision meetings. Aspects that helped in the mentoring process were: supervision meetings, the mentoring retreat and ongoing support from staff. More supervision time, and help with activity planning/ideas were the key areas which mentors felt that more help would have been of benefit. Mentors did feel some pressure in relation to mentoring such as: needing be cool, being a good role model, engaging buddies in meaningful conversations, giving good advice and making meetings. Suggestions for future mentor training are in the areas of conversation skills, trust building strategies and activity ideas. Although most of the mentors liked the pre-match mixer, several buddies liked the idea of having more pre-match mixers prior to matching. This experience along with interest and personality inventories could guide the matching process. Overall, from the mentors’ perspectives, the best part of the project was mentoring followed by the workshops.
40% of the mentors stated that they couldn’t think of anything that would make the project better; 20% thought it could be longer while another 40% had specific suggestions such as matching strategies.

Mentors who participated in the post mentoring interviews identified several key learnings from the experience of mentoring.

Conclusions

Overall, this short-term mentoring program met with success. From start to finish, the program was carefully guided and shaped through continual feedback from participants. Factors that led to this success were: mentor training, the support of the middle school in nominating the grade 8 girls for the program, a pre-matching mixer and close monitoring of the program. Through the weekly supervision meetings, issues that arose could be dealt with effectively and in a timely manner. From the mentors’ perspectives, the “Pass It On” staff were open, available and receptive to hearing their thoughts and opinions.

One of the greatest challenges of the program was the issue of time in many forms. First, the short length of the program was a challenge in that relationship building takes time and the time to form a strong bond varied between matches. Second, there was limited free time in the lives of youth. Many of the grade 8 girls and the mentors had busy schedules which made it harder to meet. Third, there was a difference in the amount of time that individual girls and mentors wanted to spend together each week or over the course of the program. It was expressed by a small number of buddies and mentors that they felt pressure to meet and that they wished that there wasn’t that level of structure. At the same time however, others appreciated the level of structure and looked forward to meeting.

In the end, based on the findings from this evaluation, the ‘Pass It On’ mentoring component serves a strong framework which, with some minor modifications, can be implemented in other communities, provided the community has the capacity in the area of staff and community connections. Both mentors and grade 8 girls experienced modest growth which speaks strongly of a mentoring program that is short-term in nature. Through this growth, mentors were able to “pass on” caring and support through their relationships and grade 8 girls were able to experience this care and support and hopefully one day have a chance to “pass it on” to a younger girl.
Recommendations

Based on participant feedback the following recommendations for future “Pass It On” mentoring are made for consideration for future mentoring:

Training

1. Increase the amount of instruction and skill development in the area of communication and relationship building skills.

Pre-matching

2. Increase the number of pre-matching activities in order for buddies and mentors to get to know each other better. Incorporate more opportunities for buddies and mentors to learn about interests and hobbies.
3. Determine the availability of mentors and buddies, as well as the frequency of meetings that they desire. This may serve as one of the matching criteria. For example, it may be that a buddy wishes to meet every two weeks as opposed to every week and this may work well for the mentor.
4. When possible, help mentors and buddies set a schedule of meeting times so that there are less challenges around scheduling. At the same time, maintain flexibility for any pairs that do well in managing their own scheduling.
5. Engage buddies and mentors in generating a list of various activities that matches could do over time. After a comprehensive list has been developed, mentors and buddies could check off all activities of interest. This document can also serve as a mechanism to help with matching girls.

Mentoring

6. Hold some all mentor-buddy events. Over a longer period of mentoring, teams of mentors and buddies can assist in the planning of these events.
7. Create opportunities for matches to give back or “pass it on” to the community through various community service activities.
8. Continue the level of supervision with increased time for free dialogue and skill building opportunities (as needed) for the mentors. This would allow for ongoing growth and refinement to the overall training and program based on mentor needs.