



Christian Association
of Youth Mentoring

Advancing Christian Mentoring...
one kid at a time

CHRISTIAN MENTORING TODAY

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Calendar of Events

September 14-16, 2006

Basic Training
New York City

September 28-30, 2006

Basic Training
Winston-Salem, NC

November 2-4, 2006

Basic Training
Lebanon, OH

For further details visit our
website @ www.caym.org



A message from the Executive Director...

Harold E. Orr

At times it can be so easy to get caught up in all of the *busy work* that comes with the day-to-day running of the Christian Association of Youth Mentoring. The ubiquitous e-mails, returning phone calls, planning for the next training; what do they call it, the “tyranny of the urgent”? Then, I’ll go on a member’s website, or review a video, or just seek some quiet time with my Heavenly Father. That’s when it all comes into focus again; what it’s all about.

It’s the kids... it’s all about the kids!

The CAYM exists to communicate God’s heart for His children and to be a resource for Christ-centered mentoring ministries. That all sounds very noble, but what is the end product of our efforts; ours and yours ? It’s to see more hurting children in one-to-one relationships with caring Christian adults. To provide an opportunity for these children to feel genuine love perhaps for the first time, as they experience their Heavenly Father’s love as shown through a Christian mentor.

If we are faithful to God’s call to protect the unfathered, we *will* make a difference not only for society, but for eternity. And, our Father will joyfully say, “well done, good and faithful servant.”

Yes, it’s all about the kids...His kids.

“Synergy” (from the Greek word “synergos” meaning working together): The interaction of two or more agents or forces so that the effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects.

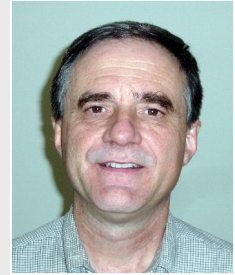
The Christian Association of Youth Mentoring has as its Mission Statement:

“To impact vulnerable youth with the love of Jesus Christ by equipping and supporting Christ-centered mentoring ministries.”

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!”

Eccl.4:9.10

Have you joined the CAYM yet?



Peter Vanacore
Director of Training

Durable Mentors

Mentoring looks pretty on paper. We've seen the photos of happy matches enjoying walks on the beach, baseball games or cooperatively grinding out a tough school assignment. These are the happy mentors with great matches.

Many matches take *durable mentors*. Our member ministries often match hurting children who find it difficult to trust a new mentor. Some youth greet their matches with enthusiasm but are easily disappointed because they do not know how to work through problems that naturally occur in relationships. Some are testy -- almost from the moment they are matched. And we haven't even mentioned certain parents who can make mentoring more difficult with inappropriate expectations or manipulative behavior. Mentoring can be hard work!

How can we find mentors who can *endure*? Certain mentors are naturally durable, but most durable mentors are "made", not born. Here is one key to finding durable mentors:

Look for flexibility. That doesn't mean "wishy-washy." Mentors must have firm personal standards while being able to graciously understand the lack of discipline and control in many youth. It also doesn't mean being a "push-over." Mentors need boundaries that display an understanding of their respect for themselves and their match.

Here is one way to determine a mentor's flexibility. Most mentor interviews, including ones given through CMI's training, include situational questions designed to determine how a mentor will react to a difficult moment in the match. We usually introduce these questions with a disclaimer that "there are no right or wrong answers." That is mostly true because there can be dozens of helpful responses. Yet there are some *wrong attitudes* that can foretell trouble. One key determiner is if the mentor can react to the negative behavior while still maintaining a relationship. If the mentor seems to be communicating that "bad behavior = bad child," that's an easy indicator that they will have trouble building a positive relationship.

"...most durable mentors
are made, not born."

Flexibility shows that a mentor can learn, which is a key component in durability. In the long run, our training and supervision of a teachable mentor helps "make" durable mentors as they learn to understand themselves, the youth and their family.

Email us at info@ChristianMentoring.org if you have any comments or questions, and we'll post your responses on our site.

Life Coaches for Kids

Most of us involved in Christian youth mentoring are engaged because we feel called to make a difference. Many of us have been involved in other forms of youth ministry as well, but have decided that mentoring is a more effective

way of making a long term and sustained difference in the lives of hurting kids. As good stewards, we want to be about work that truly changes lives, for now and for eternity.

When I had the opportunity to retire early from the corporate world, I began a time of reading and research regarding the causes and cures for “at risk” behavior. Reading David Popenoe’s, “Life Without Father” and David Blankenhorn’s, “Fatherlessness in America” sent me on a journey of discovering the incredible correlation between father absence and almost every form of “at risk” behavior known to troubled kids. Ten years later, it has become widely accepted across the political spectrum that kids who grow up without a caring father in the home have substantially increased odds of experiencing both economic and social poverty. Kids without fathers are disproportionately poor and disproportionately troubled.

Over seventy percent of kids who end up incarcerated have grown up without a father in the home. The majority of girls who get pregnant as teenagers did not have a healthy relationship with a dad. The same is true for kids who drop out of school, exhibit behavioral disorders, join gangs and get addicted to illegal drugs. William Galston, when he was President Clinton’s Domestic Policy Advisor, wrote that the only significant factor producing differential rates of criminality across racial groups was the factor of father absence.

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Most unfathered kids swear they will never become like their own fathers. They will never leave their kids or the mother of their children. Girls swear they will never have serious relationships with someone like their “old man”. But sadly, that is exactly what most unfathered kids do. They use drugs and alcohol to dull the pain of abandonment, they steal to raise money for drugs and they look for love in all the wrong places to try to fill the void inside their hearts. They impregnate and marriage and thus begin another generation of unfathered kids. We are now in the third generation of increasing levels of unfathered kids. Increased levels of crime have mirrored the levels of increased levels of father absence to the point where the Department of Justice can predict the level of criminality in any community by simply knowing the percentage of unfathered homes.

When I looked at this data, I realized that the only hope for our future generations was to find a way to break the cycle of father absence. Research persuaded me that Christian mentoring held more promise than any other strategy. It is only the church of Jesus Christ that has the resources and the power to minister to this deepest of human needs.

Secular mentoring has proven to make some difference, but only at the margins. The research that most mentoring organizations point to from Public Private Ventures is actually much less persuasive than many mentoring organizations pretend. What many mentoring professionals don’t understand or at least don’t like to report is that while kids mentored in this study did better than similar kids waiting to be mentored, they did not actually improve. Their behavior simply got less bad than the control group. Promotional spin by many mentoring organizations which tries to pretend otherwise is dishonest and we need to have some integrity about the true findings.

I am increasingly persuaded that fundamental and sustained change in behavior only happens when there is fundamental and sustained change of the heart. It is only as kids radically change their heart, soul, mind and bodies to become what God designed them to be that we see transformational change in their behaviors. This is a process of mentoring that looks much more like a process of discipleship. And like most disciplines of discipleship, it takes time.

Jesus spent three years with his group of twelve. At Life Coaches for Kids™ we have found that most transformational change takes place between two and three years as well. Kids don’t change through programs. They generally don’t change through sermons. They don’t change through e-mentoring or tutoring programs. They change when their hearts change. They change when someone embodies the love of Jesus and hangs in there with them until they begin to love themselves.

We call Life Coaching caring for someone until they care for themselves, loving someone until they love themselves, expecting great things from someone until they expect great things from themselves and walking with Jesus along side someone until they walk with Jesus for themselves.

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I look forward to the day when Christian mentoring organizations can afford to do the kind of long term research that will document the difference that transformational change can make when kids, once broken by the pain of father abandonment, experience the healing friendship of a Christian mentor and come into relationship with Jesus Christ. You and I who have been involved in Christian mentoring can point to sufficient anecdotal evidence to keep us inspired, but we will all be better stewards of our time and resources when we have models of Christian mentoring that stand the test of time and when independent research confirms for us and others, that this is a ministry worth investing in for now and for eternity.

Part of good stewardship involves an ongoing commitment to refining our models of effective Christian mentoring practice. We need to better understand what works and what gets in the way. I'm delighted to be part of the Christian Association of Youth Mentoring that is committed to ministry that makes a difference in the lives of kids. Far more important than the number of matches we achieve, or the glossy colors of our tri-fold brochures, is the number of kids who break the cycle of father absence and the cycle of incarceration.

At the end of time, Jesus tells us in that the way he will evaluate our love for him is the degree to which we truly loved others, particularly those who were difficult to love. It won't be about how well we preached, or used "god talk" or even cast out demons (or the number of matches we made); it will be about how well we loved the "least of these". Long term mentoring between believers and the "least and the lost" requires great love. God's love embodied in friendships with hurting kids can makes a great difference.



Glenn W. Jeffrey is the Founder and President of **Life Coaches for Kids**, a Christian mentoring ministry headquartered near Minneapolis, MN. Life Coaches for Kids is a church-based mentoring ministry that equips churches and para-church ministries to mentor unfathered kids and kids with incarcerated parents. More information is available on the web site at **www.lifecoaches.org**.