Parents and Mentors: Bridging the Gap

by Ashlen Frederickson, English 1010

When it comes to mentoring there is not much talk on parents and their involvement. Yes, there is an understanding that mentoring has an effect on children and youth. It’s not hard to grasp. Not when there’s compelling stories like that of Denzel Washington who states: “Everything you’ve seen or heard about me began with lesson I learned to live by at the club.” Or statistics like 40% of youth that are involved in the Boys and Girls Club are more likely to be on track to graduate high school, according to the 2016 National Outcomes Report.

I know first-hand how having mentors in someone’s life can make a difference. Having someone to guide you in ways your parents may not be able to and having a trusted adult to look up to that is more like a friend than a superior, can make all the difference. There have been links found between mentoring and a reduction in bullying, success in school and feeling less anxious towards peer pressure.

There are many outlets and mentor programs available. The one I was a part of was a church affiliated program through The First Covenant Church in St. Paul, MN. Their program had a director who worked directly with the youth every single day through events or simply just by being there to listen. With the director came mentors, adults that were usually themselves a part of the program at one point in their life. Just like the Boys and Girls Club.

The experience I had was what inspired me to get involved in a program similar. Which is why I decided to volunteer at the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Salt Lake. The ‘club’ is known as a safe place for all, a place where youth can come, learn and have fun. The structure alone is built to guide and foster growth. The club’s focus is on homework, imagination, and structure fosters this growth. When youth come from school the club has free time and snack time, followed by activity time, homework time, a second activity time, and lastly dinner time. The structure rarely changes, and when I volunteered I could tell it made a difference. Kids were excited and ask for help.. Get involved..Sometimes we have resources the parents don't realize we may have to help them in their own situations.” Julie mentions a common notion many have about the Boys and Girls Club; “It’s not just for the ‘bad kids’ and were not for bad kids… Were for every kid.”

Julie T rujillo the director of the Boys and Girls Program of Greater Salt Lake, Mead Club and asked what her take was; as not only the director but as a parent herself. She has worked with the boys and girls club for about 20 years, and states that “it takes a village to raise our children” and hopes that the boys and girls club can be a part of that ‘village’ the same way it has been a part of her ‘village’. She went on to say how the club has helped teach her children things that she may not have been able to teach herself. She also stated the importance for parents of the club members to get involved as well. “It’s important because then they can understand where we are coming from... So they can really get a feel for what we do and what we can offer their kids.” Julie also said parents can get involved in many ways from helping with serving dinner to teaching the kids any special skill or talent they may have.

I asked Julie how the club has impacted her children’s lives, that may not just be academic; she states, “for my children the club has helped bring diversity into their lives… the club offers diversity in every shape and form,” something I think that can be overlooked at times. Although I cannot speak as a parent I can speak as once being a child. I grew up on the East Side of Saint Paul, MN. Went to what most would call an “inner city school” and can confidently say I would not have wanted it any other way. I learned a lot from having a diverse group of friends that came from all kinds of not only cultural backgrounds but also economic ones as well.

The Boys and Girls Club can offer not just that but a structure for your children to grow and thrive. Julie mentions a three pillar program that the club focuses on; Academic Success, Healthy Lifestyles, and Good Character/Citizenship. Three pillars that I believe every parent would want to teach their child and why not have a little help doing so? Julie mentions a common notion many have about the Boys and Girls Club; stating, “sometimes I think the stigma is that the Boys and Girls Club is just for the ‘bad kids’ and were not for bad kids… Were for every kid.”

She finishes by saying; “So let them come in have fun, get homework done, and ask for help... Get involved...Sometimes we have resources the parents don’t realize we may have to help them in their own situations.”

The Boys and Girls Club can be an affordable way to help bring that extra guidance into your child’s life. They can offer not just members but, lasting friendships and help with giving you and your child the tools to succeed. Remember as important as it is to have your child as a member it is just as important to get involved yourself.

Upcoming Events

- Writing and Social Justice Course Community Events, throughout the semester, contact Andrea.Malouf@slcc.edu for more information.
- Service-Learning Professional Development Series, thoughtout the semester, contact Lucy.Smith@slcc.edu for more information.
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Keynote with Nikki Giovan, Jan. 18, 2018, SCC Grand Theatre, 7:00-8:00 pm. Free tickets available via Grand Theatre online.
- African American Read-In, Feb. 7, 2018. Redwood STC, Oak Room, 12 noon-2:00 pm.
- Community Partner Speed Networking, Feb. 27, 2018 Redwood AAB 135, 3:30-5:00 pm.
- Alternative Spring Break, Mar. 18-24, 2018. Contact Brandon.Devlin@slcc.edu for more information.
**Student Reflections on Service Learning and Civic Engagement**

In our English 2100 course we took part in a service learning project. Our group drafted a guide for successful peer-to-peer fundraising using the Classy fundraising platform. This project was designed for the United Way of Salt Lake, which is an organization that offers programs for impoverished children and young people, focusing primarily on the advancement of education. Our guide assists aspiring contributors in successfully and effectively using social media and peer motivated fundraising platforms to support the United Way program. Doing our part to support this cause was fulfilling and enriching. Although we may have been unable to donate an abundance of riches to the cause, by volunteering our time and resources we have made it significantly easier for others to spread the word and support children in need. Thank you for taking the time to read about our project!

—Kayle Martin, English 2100

Hello my name is Manuel Tapia, I coordinated the efforts of my team in English 2100 Technical writing. In working with a non profit organization here in Utah: The Family protection Center, in separating standard procedures and policies of the adoption respite care section in their manual of regulations. My team, we separated 5 different policies in this section. We really hope that that will bring more understanding to the workers, facilitators and volunteers and beneficiaries of this program. I feel closer to my community ever since this project, I am glad I have participated. At the beginning, I was not a fan of the idea. Now I have seen how we can Impact our local community even before graduation.

—Manuel D. Tapia

"I believe that my involvement in service learning and civic engagement this semester has influenced my writing in that I see now that there are a lot of topics that I can write about in this world that I care about. What I mean by that is, I’ve always had a creative mind and have wanted to write my own stories in other worlds that I create in order to escape this one. Unfortunately, my creative energy is stifled by the crushing weight of being alive in a world run by people who do not seem to care about me and billions of other humans. Through my service learning experience, I have learned that I can possibly use my creative energy to help others see what is wrong in this world and what we can do to change it. In the song “Circles” by the artist Thrice, they insist “True progress means matching the world to our vision in our heads, but we always change the vision instead.” This lyric has always resonated with me because I feel it is the truth; in this world it seems that if progress is just out of reach, people would rather give up and compromise that vision." 

—Madison Stephens, English 1010

Through my service, I have further solidified my understanding that we can bring so much more joy into our lives and the lives of those around us by serving others rather than ourselves. There are so many people out there in our world that have it (life) far worse than we do and there is so much that we can do to help them. There is no greater fulfillment than the happiness that selfless acts of kindness can bring. My service learning opportunity presented me with a lesson of how engaging in something meaningful provides for great purpose and authenticity in a persuasive piece of writing. I was able to analyze the issues that United Way of Salt Lake are trying to resolve and create an infographic that supports their mission/cause from a different point of view.

—Connor Clark, English 1010

This summer in Prof. Baird’s English 1010 class, we did service learning projects with United Way of Salt Lake. United Way is a nonprofit organization that hosts a number of fundraiser for people in the Salt lake area. One of United Way’s yearly fundraisers is a school supply drive called Stuff the Bus. Stuff the Bus is a school readiness program created to help kids in our community be ready for the first day of school with everything needed to ensure a successful year. We paired with United Way to create a best practice guide, to help people who would like to volunteer but, don’t know how to. My partner, Kelsey Faydes and I worked together to create a step by step procedure for hosting your own drive. We also created several downloadable flyers, made bus pins for volunteers, and created emails that hosts could use to get others involved. With our project, we hope it would make things easier for anyone who wants to help United Way. If United Way approves of our service learning project they will use it for the next Stuff the Bus drive they will host next August.

—Joselin Padilla, English 1010

We were part of the English 2100 class taught by Professor Baird during the Summer of 2017 at SLCC. We had the opportunity to work with The Family Support Center, and their Volunteer Coordinator Kellie Mieremet. Our group was tasked with revising, updating, and editing 27 job descriptions. What we initially thought was going to be very simple actually turned into quite a difficult task. The job descriptions needed a lot of attention, we worked together as a team to make sure the descriptions were revised to exceed the expectations of Kellie and The Family Support Center. We believe the newly revised job descriptions will play a key role in the future of The Family Support Center. As a group, we learned a lot about standardization, and also learned some cool new formatting tips/tricks in Microsoft Word. We were thankful for the opportunity to lend a hand to The Family Support Center. They received 27 updated job descriptions, and our group learned a lot along the way, it was a win win!

—Brady Ralph, Tarick Piatt, and Jordan Quinn, English 2100

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**Service Learning Profesional Development Series (SLPDS) spring 2018**

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**For questions contact:**

Lucy Smith, Engaged Learning Coordinator

lucy.smith@slcc.edu

(801)957-4688