



NEWS

30 Arbor Street, South Building, Hartford, CT 06106
P: 860.523.8042 F: 860.236.9412 www.preventionworksct.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 23, 2007

CONTACT:

Liz Hall

(860) 523-8042/(860) 305-9544

Anne Gribbon

(203) 576-7808

CITY GEARS UP FOR MOST WANTED CAMPAIGN

Bridgeport Alliance for Mentoring to Hold Recruitment Drive for Mentors

BRIDGEPORT — They have the programs and children. Now all the Bridgeport Alliance for Mentoring needs is more adults.

The alliance, a group of area school, community and faith-based mentoring programs throughout the city, is gearing up for a recruitment campaign to increase the number of mentors for the many city children whose identified need and desire for a mentor go unfilled.

Its campaign is being supported with a \$10,000 grant from The Governor's Prevention Partnership, which presented the funding to the alliance at a small ceremony Thursday, August 23rd at the United Way of Eastern Fairfield County. The United Way is overseeing the recruitment campaign for the alliance.

Alliance member Anne Gribbon, Coordinator of Volunteer Services with the Bridgeport Public Schools, said that a shortage of mentors is a common denominator among the dozen-plus programs that make up the alliance.

"We all share a need for more mentors," Gribbon said. "I've had principals and guidance counselors call me and say I have a child who can really use a mentor. And each year there are children who go without. A lot of children could benefit from having a caring consistent adult in their lives."

The alliance came together under a mentoring expansion effort in seven Connecticut cities spearheaded by The Partnership and funded by the state legislature. Under its urban mentoring initiative, The Partnership is working with local officials and organizations to expand the pool of mentors willing to extend a hand and a shoulder to local youth and strengthen the network of programs that meet recognized standards. In addition to Bridgeport, the initiative is under way in Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury, Norwich, New Britain and Willimantic.

"As anyone whose life has been touched by a mentor can tell you, the attention and validation of a respected adult can make an enormous difference in the opportunities, direction and outlook of a young person," said Jill Spinetti, The Partnership's president and chief executive officer. "Many children in our challenged urban neighborhoods and schools are in want of that boost, that example to encourage them to push at the ceiling and break through. A great resource for change lies within our communities, our businesses and our churches."

The alliance's campaign will include billboards on 1-95 and major routes as well as ads in local media advertising the many opportunities and programs that exist for volunteer mentors. To find out more about mentoring in Bridgeport, visit The Partnership's website at www.preventionworksct.org or The United Way of Eastern Fairfield County at www.thewaytocare.org.

A not-for-profit organization founded in 1989, The Governor's Prevention Partnership is a collaboration of public and business leaders dedicated to keeping Connecticut's youth safe, successful and drug-free.

###