



NEWS

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President Obama proclaims January as National Mentoring Month

In Connecticut, The Governor's Prevention Partnership announces campaign to recruit, retain mentors for 190,000 CT Youth in need

HARTFORD, CONN. – Tymisha Stewart, a student at Bullard-Havens Technical High School in Bridgeport is set to graduate high school this spring and plans to become a nurse, thanks, in large part, to her mentor, Donna Mendizabal. “Without her, I don’t know where I’d be,” says Tymisha, a once misguided teen now headed to college and to a better future.

Tymisha Stewart is just one of the millions of mentoring success stories that undoubtedly moved President Barack Obama to issue a proclamation designating January 2011 as National Mentoring Month. In fact, he stated, “Across our Nation, mentors steer out youth through challenging times and support their journey into adulthood. During National Mentoring Month, we honor these important individuals who unlock the potential and nurture the talent of our country, and we encourage more Americans to reach out and mentor young people in their community.”

According to Jill K. Spinetti, President of The Governor's Prevention Partnership in Connecticut, “Thousands of children in our state are hoping for a mentor. We know there are people who want to help, but may believe that they aren’t qualified or need exceptional skills. What children are looking for, and missing, is the attention of a caring adult who wants to spend one or two hours a week with them. If you can spare just a little time, we desperately need you.”

National Mentoring Month

January 2011 will mark the 10th anniversary of National Mentoring Month, an annual media campaign to recruit volunteer mentors for young people. Spearheaded by the Harvard Mentoring Project of the Harvard School of Public Health, MENTOR, and the Corporation for National and Community Service, this year’s campaign focuses on mentoring as a strategy for boosting academic achievement. The campaign’s tagline is “Help Them Get There. Become A Mentor.”

General Colin L. Powell, a spokesperson for the campaign, is featured in a public service announcement (PSA) that has been distributed to Connecticut television and radio stations. In the PSA, General Powell states, “Our nation’s future depends on what we do today to prepare our

young people for productive and fulfilling lives. All of us need to get involved to help kids stay focused and stay in school. We must become a nation of graduates. One way for you to help is to volunteer as a mentor.”

Research shows that volunteer mentors can play a powerful role in reducing drug abuse and youth violence as well as boosting academic achievement. Mentors help to build young people’s character and confidence, expand their universe, and help them navigate a path to success.

Despite these benefits, however, the gap between the number of mentors and the number of young people who need a mentor continues to grow. Today, 15 million young people nationally need a caring adult mentor in their lives. In Connecticut, that number stands at 190,000.

Connecticut Mentoring Month

To address the need for mentors, especially male mentors, The Governor’s Prevention Partnership encourages interested volunteers to call The Partnership at 860-523-8042, Ext. 18 or log onto www.preventionworksct.org. In addition, the following series of events are planned:

January 25, 2011 – *On Thank Your Mentor Day*, young people will reach out to thank or honor those individuals who encouraged and guided them. Thank Your Mentor Day is an initiative of the Harvard School of Public Health.

January 25, 2011 – A *National Mentoring Summit* held in Washington D.C. to celebrate the 10th anniversary of National Mentoring Month will include Connecticut delegates: Jill K. Spinetti, President of The Governor’s Prevention Partnership, Roland Harmon, Manager of The Connecticut Mentoring Partnership, an initiative of The Governor’s Prevention Partnership, and Diane Raffanello, Senior Corporate and Community Coordinator of The Connecticut Mentoring Partnership.

January 29, 2011 – *Free Tickets to CCSU Men’s and Women’s Double-Header Basketball Games* are available statewide to Mentoring Programs by calling Cheryl Yetke, Senior Program Coordinator of The Connecticut Mentoring Partnership at 860-523-8042 Ext. 23.

February 3, 2011 – A *Corporate Honor Roll Breakfast* honors 100 businesses for their investment in mentoring Connecticut’s youth. The breakfast will be held at the Hartford Farmington Marriott. Keynoter will be Eric Stansbury, Program Manager, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. For more information or to attend, log onto www.preventionworksct.org.

MISSION: With a focus on Connecticut’s youth, The Governor’s Prevention Partnership is a statewide public-private alliance, building a strong healthy future workforce through leadership in mentoring and prevention of violence, underage drinking, alcohol and drug abuse.