



Royal Friends' Clubs™, Mentoring Foster Kids A White Paper

by Joanne R. Feldmeth and Lindsay Feldmeth

Our Unique Mission-- *Royal Friends' Clubs is launching the very first national mentoring organization that is designed only for foster children, ages 7-11.*

- **THE NEED:** Every year, more than 3 million children in the United States are reported abused or neglected. Almost half a million of the nation's children have been removed from their homes for their own safety and currently live in foster care. Even after they enter the foster care system, the impact of the abuse continues as many children bounce from one placement to the next or live in institutions. Thousands, tragically, are re-abused in foster care.¹ In fact, children in the foster care system are considered "at the highest risk for serious emotional, social, academic and physical problems."¹¹ The long-term risks are especially serious among pre-adolescent children separated from their parents, as "the development of a sense of industry and ability to work productively for 7-10 year olds is instead a period reflective of developmental regressions, poor self-concept, acute traumatic stress reactions, and an impaired ability to overcome future trauma."ⁱⁱⁱ
- **THE IMPACT OF MENTORING:** A groundbreaking 1995 study of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program^{iv} reported that children who are mentored by a trusted adult are "more confident in their schoolwork performance, able to get along better with their families, 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs, 27% less likely to begin using alcohol, 52% less likely to skip school."^v Additional research confirmed that mentored children demonstrated healthier behaviors, better relationships and an increased likelihood of going to college^{vi} than their non-mentored counterparts. Mentoring is even more effective for "high risk" children,^{vii} accelerating their academic progress and social development.^{viii} High-risk children in successful mentoring matches were also less likely to become depressed^{ix} or to engage in violence than their peers.^x
- **THE OPPORTUNITY:** In 2007, the *Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics* reported that foster children who had adult friends achieved better health, higher self-esteem and more academic success; in addition, they were less at risk for suicidal thoughts and aggression.^{xi} "Although centered around *naturally-formed* mentoring relationships, this research indicates that close non-parent adult mentoring relationships may be a key strategy for supporting foster youth."^{xii} All the findings indicate that foster children may be the youngsters who most urgently need a strong and safe national mentoring program with trained adult mentors.
- **THE GAP:** Other national mentoring organizations (Big Brothers/Big Sisters, TMC, Mentoring USA, MentorKids USA, National Mentoring Partnership, etc.) have reported great success with the general population of at-risk kids, *but they are not designed primarily for foster children*—in fact, foster children pose special challenges in sustaining relationships with mentors in traditional programs because of their frequent moves. Local mentoring organizations that have been developed to match the specific needs of foster children (Agape for Youth, AFC, BestKids, FAAST, etc.) have focused their resources on just one city or region.

- OUR CAPACITY:** Since 1985, Royal Family Kids' Camps have provided 5 days of residential summer camp to 45,000 foster children (ages 7 – 11) across the United States. **Royal Friends' Clubs, Mentoring Foster Kids** is a 'sister' organization built on the Royal Family Kids' Camps' national network of over 6,000 screened and trained volunteers and a congregational network drawn from over 20 denominations in 38 states and in eight foreign countries. Now for the first time, children who have attended Royal Family Kids' Camps can also participate in a mentoring program during the academic school year.
- A NEW MODEL FOR MENTORING:** Research has proven that “the one-year mark appears to be of significance in achieving positive outcomes for the mentees.”^{xiii} In fact, a short-term mentoring match can actually harm a hurting child. “[E]arly terminations decrease feelings of self-worth and academic self-confidence, resulting in lower levels of pro-social activities and school attendance.”^{xiv} By building on the established success of Royal Family Kids' Camps, Royal Friends' Clubs are creating a new model for mentoring that allows foster children to stay in relationship with their mentors for *at least one year*.

SUMMER: **ROYAL FAMILY KIDS' CAMPS**--Abused or neglected children (ages 7-11) start and end their 12-month program by attending Royal Family Kids' Camps—a 5 day summer residential camp with a 2-to-1 ratio of children to trained and cleared camp counselors who provide group mentoring. All camp costs are covered by the sponsoring neighborhood church. Individual mentors are matched to children after camp and continue in relationship until the next camp.

SCHOOL YEAR: **ROYAL FRIENDS' CLUBS**—Launching in at least 6 states this fall and anticipated to grow to 12-15 states within 36 months, Royal Friends' Clubs are provided for RFKC campers through the neighborhood church that hosted their camp. The clubs include at least four hours a month of 1-to-1 mentoring from a cleared, trained and matched adult mentor PLUS once a month Club events (club meetings, field trips or parties) that provide group mentoring, fun memories and a special Cohort time for the mentors.
- WHICH FOSTER CHILDREN CAN GET ROYAL FRIENDS' MENTORS?** Any current or former foster child (aged 7-11), or a child with a history of abuse or neglect, is eligible to join Royal Friends' Clubs if he or she (1) attended Royal Family Kids' Camps, (2) has agency and/or caregiver permission and (3) has been matched with a trained and cleared mentor by the local Royal Friends' Clubs' Mentoring Director in one of the pilot areas. While children can be accepted into Royal Friends' Clubs through age 11, priority is given to campers who are eligible to attend camp the next year, so that they can maintain a 12-month 'camp to camp' relationship with volunteers. The number of campers accepted into a local Club mentoring program is limited only by the number of mentors and support resources available.
- OUR TIME LINE AND TARGET AREAS:** Starting in September 2008, Royal Friends' Clubs is launching a 3-Year Pilot Project in 10 sites in at least 6 states (see our website for an updated list of approved sites) and anticipates running 20-40 mentoring sites in 12-15 states within 36 months. The pilot project includes an evaluation component, tracking qualitative and quantitative objectives.
- OUR SAFETY:** In over 20 years of providing residential camps for foster children, Royal Family Kids' Camps have an unblemished record of safety. Because of our experience in working with a vulnerable child population, we understand that safety is an essential part of mentoring foster children. That is why Royal Friends' Clubs have *higher standards of child safety and volunteer training* than most national mentoring programs:

 1. Mentors must be over 18 and they must complete rigorous background checks.
 2. Mentors must complete an application process with a personal interview, references and approval from the Mentoring Director.

3. Mentors must complete 16-20 hours of training including 10-12 hours of RFKC camp counselor training PLUS 6-8 hours of mentor training before they are matched with a foster child.
4. Mentors and mentees are supervised by a Mentoring Director at monthly meetings and mentors are required to submit a Mentoring Log to the Director.
5. Mentors meet with their peer mentors (Mentor Cohorts) each month to debrief and to get peer support. A mental health or social service professional meets with cohorts quarterly to answer questions and provide additional training.
6. Mentors are trained to meet their mentees only in public places, unless they bring a second cleared adult with them.
7. Overnights are prohibited unless they are club activities approved by the Mentoring Director and supervised by several mentors and/or cleared volunteers.

- **HOW WE WORK WITH SOCIAL SERVICES AND THE FAITH COMMUNITY:** Royal Family Kids' Camps and Royal Friends' Clubs are hosted by local congregations that provide the volunteers and the financial support to serve abused children within their own neighborhoods. The camps and clubs draw from a multi-denominational, multi-ethnic church network based in 38 states. The foster children are referred to Royal Family Kids' Camps by their local Health and Human Services children's department.

Local social service departments refer foster children to faith-based camps and mentoring programs (including the Salvation Army and Catholic Big Brothers) like ours as long as: (1) no child is coerced into accepting a particular religion and (2) the foster placement program, foster parents or other caretakers are given a voluntary choice. Both the Royal Family Kids' Camps and the Royal Friends' Clubs meet these standards. All camp and club staff are committed to their Christian faith and active in their church but they are trained not to proselytize at camp and club and no religion is ever criticized or denigrated. Our volunteers demonstrate Christian love and care, modeling a non-violent, positive way of life as an alternative to the negative and hurtful experiences of abused children.

- **POTENTIAL FOR PROGRAM SUSTAINABILITY:** One of the most successful recent mentoring efforts, "Amachi: People of Faith Mentoring Children of Promise," has used a faith-based model. Amachi, which began in African-American churches in Philadelphia, has grown to serve thousands of children of prisoners across the nation (only 10% of the children served are in foster care) and has attracted government funding and recognition in partnership with Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Like the Royal Family Kids' Camps and Royal Friends' Clubs network, Amachi volunteers are recruited through their church's involvement with the project.^{xv}

An even more relevant example of sustainability, of course, is the two decades of growth documented by Royal Friends' sister organization, Royal Family Kids' Camps, which includes over 140 privately funded, self-sustaining camp programs that serve more than 7,000 children each year.

- **SUSTAINING RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOSTER CHILDREN:** The Royal Friends' Clubs program can have an impact on a child far beyond the 7-11 year old age range we target. Through the sponsoring church, children are introduced into a larger community that can literally continue through adulthood. Camp directors report that some alumni from Royal Family Kids' Camps attend church youth activities and maintain friendships with volunteers after camp, in some cases even after they have been moved to another foster home or have been reunited with relatives. We anticipate that the year-round mentoring effort will expand and further deepen those relationships with caring adults and healthy role models.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact the National Office of ROYAL FRIENDS' CLUBS, *Mentoring Foster Kids*, 3000 W. MacArthur, Suite 412, Santa Ana, CA 92704, (714) 438-2494, info@royalfriends.org or visit our website at www.royalfriends.org

Endnotes

- ⁱ Mary I. Benedict and Susan Zuravin, *Factors Associated With Child Maltreatment by Family Foster Care Providers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health, June 30, 1992) charts, pages 28,30.
- ⁱⁱ Children Now. "Child Safety." Webpage cached May 3, 2008. <http://www.childrennow.org/issues/health/child_safety.html>, page 1.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Erik Erikson's theory of arrested psychosocial development when a child is separated from a parent (1950) as cited in "Mentoring: A Promising Intervention for Children of Prisoners," by Shay Bilchik, J.D. Edited by Jean E. Rhodes, PhD. (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2007.) Pdf: mentoring_391.pdf, page 10.
- ^{iv} J.P. Tierney, J.B. Grossman, and N.L. Resch. *Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 1995.
- ^v J.P. Tierney, J.B. Grossman, and N.L. Resch. *Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 1995. As cited by Big Brothers Big Sisters, 2007. Big Brothers Big Sisters Home Page. <<http://www.bbbs.org>>.
- ^{vi} Jekielek et al., 2002. As cited in "Mentoring: A Promising Intervention for Children of Prisoners," by Shay Bilchik, J.D. Edited by Jean E. Rhodes, PhD. (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2007.) Pdf: mentoring_391.pdf, page 11.
- ^{vii} DuBois et al., 2002. As cited in "Mentoring: A Promising Intervention for Children of Prisoners," by Shay Bilchik, J.D. Edited by Jean E. Rhodes, PhD. (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2007.) Pdf: mentoring_391.pdf, page 11.
- ^{viii} Tierney, Grossman & Resch, 2000. As cited by Communities in Schools in "After-School Program Toolkit," 2006. http://www.cisnet.org/working_together/after_content.asp?id=2543
- ^{ix} Bauldrey, 2006. As cited in "Mentoring: A Promising Intervention for Children of Prisoners," by Shay Bilchik, J.D. Edited by Jean E. Rhodes, PhD. (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2007.) Pdf: mentoring_391.pdf, page 11.
- ^x Sipe, 1996. As cited in, "Mentoring: A Promising Intervention for Children of Prisoners," by Shay Bilchik, J.D. Edited by Jean E. Rhodes, PhD. (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2007.) Pdf: mentoring_391.pdf, page 11.
- ^{xi} Kym R. Ahrens and David Lane DuBois, Laura P. Richardson, Ming-Yu Fan and Paula Lozano, "Youth in Foster Care With Adult Mentors During Adolescence Have Improved." *Pediatrics: Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics*. (American Academy of Pediatrics: 2007). Published online Jan 8, 2008, by the Mentoring Resource Center of the United States Department of Education: <<http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/peds.2007-0508v1>> <<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/peds.2007-0508v1.pdf>>, pages 5-7.
- ^{xii} Ahrens, page 7.
- ^{xiii} Shay Bilchik, J.D., "Mentoring: A Promising Intervention for Children of Prisoners." Edited by Jean E. Rhodes, PhD. (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2007.) Pdf: mentoring_391.pdf, page 14.
- ^{xiv} Rhodes, 2002. As cited in "Mentoring: A Promising Intervention for Children of Prisoners." by Shay Bilchik, J.D. Edited by Jean E. Rhodes, PhD. (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2007.) Pdf: mentoring_391.pdf, page 12.
- ^{xv} Shawn Bauldrey and Tracey A. Hartmann. "The Promise and Challenge of Mentoring High Risk Youth: Findings from the National Faith-Based Initiative." (Philadelphia: Public Private Ventures, 2004), page 46.

Bibliography

Adoption and Foster Care (AFC) Mentoring Home Page. Accessed April 11, 2008.

<<http://www.afcmentoring.org>>.

Adoption.Com "Mentoring Program Targets Foster Children." Accessed May 11, 2008.

<<http://library.adoption.com/mentoring/mentoring-program-targets-foster-care-children/article/4025/1.html>>.

Amachi Mentoring Home Page. Accessed April 13, 2008.

<<http://www.amachimentoring.org>>.

Agape For Youth Home Page. Accessed April 12, 2008.

<<http://www.agapeforyouth.com>>.

Ahrens, Kym R. and David Lane DuBois, Laura P. Richardson, Ming-Yu Fan and Paula Lozano, "Youth in Foster Care With Adult Mentors During Adolescence Have Improved." *PEDIATRICS: Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics*. Elk Grove, Illinois: American Academy of Pediatrics, 2007. Published online Jan 8, 2008, by the Mentoring Resource Center of the United States Department of Education.

<<http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/content/full/peds.2007-0508v1>>.

<<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/peds.2007-0508v1.pdf>>.

Bauldrey, Shawn. "Positive support: Mentoring and depression among high-risk youth." Philadelphia:

Public/Private Ventures, 2006. <http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/202_publications.pdf>.

Bauldrey, Shawn and Tracey A. Hartmann. "The Promise and Challenge of Mentoring High Risk Youth: Findings from the National Faith-Based Initiative." Philadelphia: Public Private Ventures, 2004.

<http://64.233.169.104/search?q=cache:scIIUM4OIEkJ:www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/171_publication.pdf+amachi+BBBS+pastors+share+faith&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=4&gl=us&client=firefox-a>.

Benedict, Mary I. and Susan Zuravin, *Factors Associated With Child Maltreatment by Family Foster Care Providers*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University School of Hygiene and Public Health, June 30, 1992.

BestKids Home Page. Accessed April 11, 2008.

<<http://www.bestkids.org>>

BestKids Mentoring Foster Youth. "New Non-Profit to Mentor D.C. Foster Children,"

<<http://www.bestkids.org/news/new-non-profit-to-mentor-d.c.-foster-children-21.html>>.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Home Page. Accessed April 11, 2008.

<<http://www.bbbs.org>>.

Bilchik, Shay, J.D. "Mentoring: A Promising Intervention for Children of Prisoners." Edited by Jean E. Rhodes, PhD. MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2007. Pdf: mentoring_391.pdf

Boys to Men Home Page. Accessed April 12, 2008.

<<http://www.boystomen.org>>.

Children Now. "Child Safety." Accessed May 1, 2008.

<http://www.childrennow.org/issues/health/child_safety.html>.

Communities in Schools. "After-School Program Toolkit," Created 2006. Accessed May 1, 2008.

<http://www.cisnet.org/working_together/after_content.asp?id=2543>.

DuBois, D. L., Holloway, B. E., Valentine, J. C., & Cooper, H. (2002). Effectiveness of mentoring programs for youth: A meta-analytical review. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 30(2), 157-197.

Foster Angels of Arizona Serving Together (FAAST) Home Page. Accessed April 12, 2008.

Copyright J. Feldmeth, 2008

<http://www.fosterangelsaz.org>

Future Leaders Now. Volunteer Match Home Page. Accessed April 13, 2008.

<https://www.volunteermatch.org/orgs/org79729.html>

Gillham, Jane, Ph.D., and Lisa Jaycox, Ph.D., Karen Reivich, Ph.D., Martin Seligman, Ph.D. and Terry Silver. Penn Resiliency Program (PRP). University of Pennsylvania. <<http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/prpsum.htm>>, accessed May 13, 2008, and

<<http://www.fcnetwork.org/training/MentoringIssues/CWLA-curriculum.pdf+resiliency+curriculum+prisoners&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us&client=firefox-a>>, accessed April 13, 2008.

Goode, W. Wilson, Sr. and Thomas J. Smith. "Ground Up: Creating Effective Programs to Mentor Children of Prisoners. The Amachi Model." Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 2005.

Hartmann, Tracey A. "Moving Beyond the Walls: Faith and Justice Partnerships Working for High-Risk Youth" Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 2003.

Husock, Howard. John F. Kennedy School of Government. Cambridge: Harvard University, 2003. "Starting Amachi: The Elements and Operation of a Volunteer-Based Social Program."

<<http://www.amachimentoring.org/more.html>>, A8BBB2D9-31FD-43F7-9B23-D3D2A9AA16D4.pdf

Jekielek, S.M., Moore, K.A., Hair, E.C. & Scarupa, H.J. "Mentoring: A Promising Strategy for Youth Development" in Child Trends Research Brief. *Child Trends*. Washington: Child Trends, 2002.

Jucovy, Linda. "Mentoring Children of Prisoners in Philadelphia." Philadelphia: Public Private Ventures, 2000.

Kansas Norms Society, Background and Program. "Prevalence of Mentoring Survey." Accessed April 11, 2008.

<http://64.233.169.104/search?q=cache:ngs_4xPY7fYJ:www.mentoringworks.org/sites/>.

Krinski, Miriam Aroni. "Foster Children: Our Second Family" from Open Forum, *San Francisco Chronicle*. September 12, 2005. Accessed May 10, 2008.

<<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2005/09/12/EDG4PDMTOT1.DTL>>.

Mentor/National Mentoring Partnership Home Page. Accessed April 11, 2008.

<www.mentoring.org>.

National Mentoring Center. "Measuring the Quality of Mentor Youth Relationships: A Tool for Mentoring Programs." Accessed April 12, 2008.

<<http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/pdf/packeight.pdf>>.

MentorKids USA Home Page. Accessed April 13, 2008.

<<http://www.mentorkidsusa.org>>.

Mentoring USA Home Page. Accessed April 12, 2008.

<<http://www.helpusa.org>>.

National Service Resources. "Mentoring Children in Foster Care: Considerations and Partnership Strategies for Senior Corps Directors." Accessed April 12, 2008.

<http://64.233.169.104/search?q=cache:oFKezUa9MNUJ:nationalserviceresources.org/sites/learns/resources/seniorcorps/products/Mentoring_Children_in_Foster_Care_Final_Revised.pdf+mentoring+foster+children&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us&client=firefox-a>.

Michigan 4-H Mentoring Initiative.

<<http://web1.msue.msu.edu/cyf/youth/mentor/general.htm>>.

National Mentoring Center Home Page.

<<http://www.nwrel.org>>.

Patel, Bhavisha. "Mentor Program help foster kids." *The Connection*. November 8, 2007.
<<http://www.crcconnection.com/news/2007/11/08/News/Mentor.Program.Help.Foster.Kids-3101200.shtml>>.

Public Private Ventures Youth Mentoring Publications.
<http://www.ppv.org/ppv/youth/youth_publications.asp?section_id=7>.

Rhodes, J.E. and J.B. Grossman (2002). "The test of time: Predictors and effects of duration in youth mentoring relationships." *American Journal of Community Psychology*. 30 (2), 199-219.

Rhodes, Dr. Jean E. "Youth Mentoring in Perspective." Jean E. Rhodes, 2001.
http://www.infed.org/learningmentors/youth_mentoring_in_perspective.htm, cached April 27, 2008.

Sipe, C. L. "Mentoring: A synthesis of P/PV's research: 1988-1995." Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 1996.

Solutions for America. "Youth Mentoring." Healthy Families and Children.
<<http://www.solutionsforamerica.org/healthyfam/mentoring-programs.html>>.

TMC (The Mentoring Center) Home Page.
<<http://www.mentor.org>>.

Tierney, J.P., Grossman, J.B., and Resch, N.L. *Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 1995.

Tierney, J.P., & Grossman, J.B. with Resch, N. *Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures, 2000.

United States Department of Education, Mentoring Resource Center:
<http://www.edmentoring.org/online_res11.html>.

Volunteer As A Special Friend: Mentoring Foster Children in Phoenix. Accessed May 11, 2008.
<<http://www.1800volunteer.org/1800Vol/volunteerphoenix/LoadOpportunityReview.do?opportunityId=85966>>.

Youth Mentoring Network (Australia) Home Page.
<<http://www.youthmentoring.com.au/>>.