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# Be a **MENTOR**

**TOUCH A LIFE**

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**The  
Middle School  
Mentor Program  
of  
Eugene School  
District 4J**

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*“ My entire view of life has changed thanks to my mentor’s help and advice.”*

Zach, Student, Kelly Middle School

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# What does it take to touch a life?

## Our Mission Statement

The Eugene 4J Mentor Program serves at-risk middle school students by providing them with dedicated community volunteers who have lunch weekly with them at school and give personal attention, support and encouragement in an effort to increase self-esteem, daily attendance, and academic performance.

## Who is a mentor?

A mentor is an adult who provides young people with support, friendship, reinforcement and a positive, constructive example.

Any caring person who enjoys teenagers and is interested in helping young people can be a mentor. You don't have to be an expert or have previous experience. Mentors are good listeners who want to help young people bring out strengths that are already there.

## Qualifications for a mentor

- Be a good listener.
- Be tolerant, not judgmental.
- Be consistent, flexible and patient.
- Have a good sense of humor and enjoy teenagers.

## Goals of a mentor

- To establish a trusting relationship.
- To improve a student's self-esteem and confidence.
- To help a student learn how to make friends.
- To help a student develop his or her talents and abilities.
- To help a student set goals.

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## Role of a mentor

A mentor is *not* a teacher, parent, grandparent or counselor. A mentor *is* a friend who is caring and supportive.

## Time involved

The Middle School Mentor Program requires a commitment of 30 minutes a week for the school year; however, occasional absences (vacations and other obligations) are expected. Some mentors spend two lunch periods at school and have two mentees. Activities after the school day or on weekends are optional.

## Responsibilities of a mentor

- Attend an orientation meeting at the beginning of the school year.
- Fill out confidential 4J forms and turn them in to your coordinator.
- Meet with your mentee once a week as scheduled.
- Attend trainings and an evaluation meeting (four per year).
- If your school celebrates birthdays or holidays, you may be asked to bring treats once during the year.
- Attend trips with your student, including the end of year skating and pizza party.
- Help recruit new mentors.

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## Get involved

A small investment of time, energy and caring can yield great dividends in the life of a middle school student.  
*Please join us.*

For more information or to get started, contact the mentor program coordinator at your local Eugene School District 4J middle school or call **541.790.7550**. You can find the phone number of your neighborhood middle school at [www.4j.lane.edu/schools](http://www.4j.lane.edu/schools).

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## Thank you!

*Thank you for being there. For getting involved in the life of a middle school student in your community. Thank you for stepping out of your comfort zone to help a student learn how to be more comfortable in his or her life.*

*Thank you!*

## What is the Middle School Mentor Program?

The Middle School Mentor Program operates in all eight Eugene School District 4J middle schools. Adults are matched with students on a one-to-one basis for the school year and meet once a week during their lunch period. The Mentor Program is about sharing interests, talking, listening and being a friend.

## Why is the program needed?

Middle school is a time of transition from childhood to adulthood, as students try to stand on their own feet for the first time. Many students come from broken homes or other unhappy situations and need support. It has been proven that mentoring will make a difference in the lives of young people.



## Who is eligible to be a mentee?

Students are selected by the counselor, teacher or coordinator based on individual needs. Sometimes these needs are not apparent to the mentors, but the need is there. Students must have parental permission to be in the program.

## Training

An introductory orientation meeting is held by the coordinator at the beginning of the school year. Additional training is scheduled throughout the year. These sessions may be about anger management, literacy, developmental assets and other topics related to the life of a teenager. An evaluation session occurs at the end of the program. Consultation with a coordinator or counselor is provided throughout the school year as needed.

## Guidelines for mentors

*Get acquainted with your mentee.* There are suggestions for your first few sessions to the right. Let your student interview you as well.

*Be a good listener.* Your conversation should be confidential. Don't be shocked with what your student says—he or she may be testing you and sometimes stories get exaggerated. Investigate the facts if they seem important.

*Report any serious problems or concerns to the coordinator.* It is not up to the mentor to solve problems, but to give

encouragement when needed. Do not lecture or talk down to your mentee.

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*Be dependable.* It is important for your mentee to know they can depend on you. They look forward to their weekly meetings and are disappointed if you don't show up. If you will not be there, notify the coordinator at the school. If you are out of town, your student will appreciate a postcard from you. If your student is absent on meeting day or if there is a schedule change, you will be notified.

*About sex and drugs:* it is not the mentor's job to talk about this, but if it comes up in the conversation, take the opportunity to discuss the dangers involved. They have heard it before, but it might make an impression coming from you.

*Any talk of violence, abuse, gangs or guns* should be reported immediately to the counselor or principal.

*Do not get discouraged.* Sometimes mentors feel they are not needed or that their student is not responding to them. This is generally not true. Don't give up. Sometimes it takes a while for your student to open up to you.

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*“Remember, you may sometimes feel insignificant in their lives, but for some kids, you may be the only adult person all week who makes them feel like they are worth anything at all.”*

*Games of Life* by Bob Welch



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## Your first few sessions

Remember to ask open-ended questions that begin with *if, who, what, where, why and how...*

- “If you could be a famous person, who would it be?”
- “If you had three wishes, what would they be?”
  - “Describe a perfect day.”
  - “What is the scariest thing that ever happened to you?”
  - “If you could go anywhere in the world, where would it be? Why?”
  - “Who is your favorite relative? Why?”
  - “Who is your best friend? What are qualities you admire in this person?”
- “If you had a chance, what animal would you like to be?”

...instead of *yes* and *no* questions that begin with *do you* or *did you*.

## Suggested activities

- Make a scrap book or photo album.
- Do homework together if the student requests help.
- Play games like checkers, chess, cards.
- Mystery box—Bring a box with something in it and play twenty questions.
- If the weather is nice, your coordinator might approve going outside for a game of basketball or foursquare or hopscotch.

## Don't give up!

Remember, don't give up! Once your student understands that you care, you will be welcomed into the amazing world of a middle schooler.

*Above all, have fun!*

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## The Middle School Mentor Program

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For more information or to get started, contact the mentor program coordinator at your local 4J middle school or call 541-790-7550 (general information line). The building coordinators and the times each program meet are listed below.

**Arts and Technology Academy:** Jenn Laughlin, 790-5700, *Wednesdays*: 12:45-1:20 p.m.

**Cal Young:** Amy Baker, 790-6400, *Thursdays*: 12:10-12:40 or 1:05-1:35 p.m.

**Kelly:** Jeanie Fuji, 790-4740, *Tuesdays*: 11:33 a.m.-12:03 p.m., 12:21-12:51 or 12:51-1:21 p.m.

**Kennedy:** Callan Coleman, 790-5500: *Tuesdays*, 10:55-11:25 a.m. or 11:55 a.m.-12:25 p.m.

**Madison:** Nancy Collie, 790-4300: *Thursdays*, 11:16-11:46 a.m., 11:55 a.m.-12:25 p.m. or 12:40-1:10 p.m.

**Monroe:** Natalie Chacón, 790-6300: *Thursdays*, 11:48 a.m.-12:18 p.m., 12:22-12:52 p.m., or 12:57-1:27 p.m.

**Roosevelt:** Jolyn Merrifield, 790-8500: *Wednesdays*, Even days 11:45 a.m.-12:19 p.m., or 1:02-1:36 p.m. Odd days 11:48 a.m.-12:22 p.m. or 1:07-1:37 p.m.

**Spencer Butte:** TBA, 790-8300: *Wednesdays*, 12:18-12:48 p.m. or 1:07-1:37 p.m.

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