

Michigan Reach Out!

A Center Linking College and Community Mentors with Children and Teens

Final Report on Tutor/Mentor Program at Scarlett Middle School, 2002–2010



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Table of Contents

I. Report Summary	1
II. <i>Reach Out</i> Philosophy and Model	
A. Who We Are and What We Do.....	9
B. Values and Principles.....	10
C. Programming Implications	10
1. What is going wrong or is missing for children who are not succeeding?	10
2. Rationale for strategies and objectives.....	12
3. What kind of mentoring works for at-risk youth	13
4. What “works” means	14
5. How much mentoring costs.....	14
III. Services We Provided	
A. Direct Academic Tutoring Services.....	17
Academic Achievement Data	18
Academic Enrichment.....	19
B. Training and Professional Development for Mentors, Students, and Parents.....	20
1. Comprehensive Orientation.....	20
2. Regular Workshops	21
3. Match Supervision	23
C. Family Events	23
D. Career Exploration Activities	24
E. Services to Mentors	25
IV. Interpretation: What We Have Learned	
A. Successes.....	27
1. Some closing of achievement gaps	27
2. Significant parental involvement.....	29
3. Maturation of college-age mentors	29
4. Our model has been shared with and adopted by others.....	30
5. A heartening variety of donors supported our efforts financially.....	31
B. Disappointments.....	32
1. Mismatch between MRO and Site.....	32
2. Gradual loss of program elements.....	34
3. Less capable mentors.....	34
4. Inability to develop a stable donor base adequate to support our programming ambitions.....	36
C. What We'd Do Differently, Given the Chance.....	37
1. Go where we will be true partners, involving all stakeholders in planning	37
2. Require professional development; build in reflection time.	38
3. Be <i>more</i> ambitious, not less.....	39
4. Integrate personal and career exploration for students.....	40

V. Appendices

A. Supporters Who Have Funded Our Work	42
Foundation, Corporate, University & Government Grants and Gifts:	42
Individual Gifts:	42
In-Kind Supporters:	43
B. Our Amazing Volunteers	44
C. References	46
D. Testimony from <i>Reach Out</i> Mentor	46
E. Cumulative Survey Results.....	48
1. Mentor Survey Responses, 2005–10.....	48
2. Children’s Survey Responses, 2006–10	55
3. Parent/Guardian Survey Responses, 2005–10	57
F. <i>Reach Out</i> Board of Directors	58

I. Report Summary

Michigan Reach Out (MRO) recruited, trained, and supervised volunteer tutor / mentors from the University of Michigan (UM) student body and the community at large to serve students at Scarlett Middle School, part of the Ann Arbor Public Schools (AAPS), from 2002 through 2010. *Reach Out* has its roots in a UM College of Engineering K–12 Outreach program where, in 1996, the UM student *Reach Out* group was created to augment its programming. When the staff was laid off by UM, the 501(c)(3) nonprofit version of *Michigan Reach Out* was created in 2002. Although our active tutor / mentoring program at Scarlett came to an end with the close of the 2009–2010 school year, we believe that the lessons we have learned over the years should be shared with others who desire to create or improve mentoring programs. That is the primary purpose of this final report.

A. ***Reach Out* Philosophy and Model**

Beginning in 2005, Scarlett Middle School began partially funding our efforts through federal Title I funds, so our student clients eventually became entirely Title I-qualified students: economically disadvantaged, English language-learning, and / or those with disabilities. These students obviously had language, skill, or knowledge gaps, with which weekly tutoring could help. But our mentoring model addresses other reasons for poor achievement: lack of confidence, no sense of personal agency, poor motivation, no vision or plan for the future, and lack of soft skills needed to study well and to interact productively with teachers. No curriculum can provide all of those keys to success in school and in life. Caring mentors in long-term relationships can provide some of the missing elements: thoughtful, engaged conversation; personal guidance on dress and behavior norms; trips to recreation centers, sports arenas, museums, libraries, farms, college campuses; education about sleep, exercise, and nutrition; exposure to cultural values for education, self-direction, delayed gratification; the ineffable power of someone else's encouragement and faith in you.

This kind of enrichment is perfectly suited to long-term mentoring programs. That is what *Reach Out* was designed to do: to give children whatever they need that they are not getting, so that they can grow as complete and competent individuals. We recognize that under-performing children also have strictly academic needs. Their knowledge and skill deficiencies are often appalling, and specific tutoring can be helpful in overcoming them. But no one knows better than we that *tutoring will never be enough* by itself. Much of the homework children need help with is far beyond their abilities and knowledge, at that frustration level where they will (sensibly) give up. If we want children to be persistent, their assignments must be just challenging enough. That is why simple tutoring, as an add-on and uncoordinated with classroom teachers, can never be very effective.

We now know quite a bit about what works in mentoring. A review sponsored by Child Trends of rigorous evaluations of ten programs found these characteristics for programs that worked: (1) a whole-child focus; (2) duration of more than a year; (3) a developmental approach that follows the child's lead rather than attempting to impose a preconceived "solution"; (4) significant training; (5) family involvement; and (6) ongoing match supervision. Matching by race or gender was *not* found to affect relationship quality. The *Reach Out* model includes all of these elements for success.

A more recent review and meta-analysis of three separate, large-scale, random-assignment studies of the effectiveness of school-based mentoring programs for youth, however, did *not* find significant effects on academic achievement. This analysis has already resulted in the elimination of federal funding for such programs. The reviewers ignored, however, what we consider the most important characteristics of effective mentoring: the duration and closeness of the relationship. All of the randomized studies looked at effects after *less than six months* of mentoring (average durations). Our experience confirms that, unless the mentor is very practiced, the mentoring pair is barely achieving

an effective rapport by six months. In the second and third years, on the other hand, matches have been extremely effective—“life-changing,” according to mentee and parent reports.

We in *Reach Out* believe that the most important outcomes our mentoring can offer to young people are an increase in their sense of control over their own lives and a belief in their own ability to make a difference in how well they do. Internal motivation and self-confidence are needed before they can catch up academically. This takes time—more than six months.

How much mentoring costs

An analysis from Public/ Private Ventures provided excellent data on what it costs to run mentoring programs. The average annual budget cost (actual dollars spent) per youth served in one-on-one mentoring programs was \$1,030. Adding donated goods and services approximately doubles the value of services provided. In the case of *Michigan Reach Out*, we estimate the value of goods and services donated at significantly more than 100% of the actual dollars spent. In addition to receiving more donated goods and services than average, we have operated with considerably less staffing and funding than the averages cited. For our first three years as a nonprofit organization, we continued to serve AAPS at no direct cost to the district, although Scarlett Middle School generously provided a classroom, copying, and background checks for our volunteers. AAPS began supporting us through Title I funding in the fall of 2006; from then through spring 2009, with fewer than 3 FTE (full-time-equivalent) paid staff annually, we spent an average of \$543 per child per year. Of that amount, \$266 per child per year came from AAPS funding.

B. Services We Provided

1. Direct Academic Tutoring Services

- 280 individual Scarlett students were served by *Reach Out* mentors from Fall 2002–Spring 2010.
- 190 individual Scarlett students met 4,427 times (an average of 23.3 times over 2.9 semesters) with MRO mentors from 2005–10, since we began to receive some Title I funding and to record every meeting; 84 of these 190 children were served for more than one year.

Most academic tutoring offered by MRO volunteers took place in the *Reach Out* room at Scarlett MS after school. Meetings typically lasted 1-to-1-1/2 hours. The numbers cited above are slightly lower than in our annual reports, because we have removed any matches that did not meet at least three times. Not included in these figures: Mandarin- and Spanish-speaking bilingual tutors met at least weekly with their mentees during class time—three each in 2006–07 and 2007–08, and two in 2009–10.

Academic Achievement Outcomes. The 2007–08 school year was the only year that we were given access to demographic data, grades for three quarters, and test scores for all Scarlett students long enough to create “well-served” and “control” groups that were matched by gender, ethnicity, special education status, English proficiency, and economic disadvantage. Thus, we were able to tease out differences in performance that may have been partially attributable to the support of *Reach Out* volunteers. Generally speaking, the Served group slightly to significantly outperformed the Control group, in Reading, Writing, and Math MEAP testing for the immediately past two years, as well as in grade point averages for the first three marking periods of the 2007–08 school year. We believe the small sample sizes limit the usefulness of this data, but we were pleased to see some evidence in student performance measures for the efficacy of the support offered by MRO tutor/mentors.

Academic Enrichment. In 2005–06, our University of Michigan student organization (also called *Reach Out*) successfully applied for grant funding through the Michigan Student Affairs Office to pay for two events for 67 children meant to coordinate with Scarlett’s NASA Space Grant programming that year and to pique interest in possible career fields that might motivate study. Through 2008 (when science fairs ended), most tutors provided significant help to their children for science fair projects:

helping children pick and research topics, consulting with teachers, getting materials, doing experiments, and writing the papers and posters. By 2005–06 and 2006–07, 100% of *Reach Out* mentees participated with our help, even the ESL and Special Ed students that were not required to do a project; several earned awards for their projects.

2. Training and Professional Development for Mentors, Students, and Parents

We continued to add to and refine a robust regimen of professional development for our mentors. Initial contact with potential mentors served to weed out many of the less dedicated, since we required a commitment to stay with a child for at least a year and an investment of 3–4 hours in a comprehensive orientation before matching. There is simply too much mentors need to know before they can be effective in working with at-risk youth.

We believe that effective mentors must appreciate the challenges and uniqueness of adolescents. Adolescence is a period of rapid and profound developmental changes. Teens are making huge leaps in cognitive and moral reasoning, decision-making skills, and social maturation. Periods of such change offer both opportunities for growth and vulnerability to influences from family, peers, authority figures, and others. Major developmental achievements are directly dependent upon the physical maturation of the brain and include the ability to foresee consequences of actions, the patience to delay gratification, and the ability to manage the expression of emotions. Modeling by and “rehearsal” with a mentor can accelerate the development of these adult skills.

Because we were unable to fully cover, and mentors were unable to absorb, as much as we'd like in a single orientation session, they were given a thorough handbook for reference. We also deepened and reinforced their understanding with a series of workshops throughout the year on these topics: Intentional Dialogue & Active Listening; The “Power of What I Say”; Learning Styles; Talents, Interests & Passions; Healthy Relationships & Boundaries; Understanding Feelings & Emotions; and Finding a Career I’ll Love. These interactive sessions were in addition to the regular weekly meetings between mentor and child that were focused on homework help, studying for tests, and tutoring in basic skills, as well as the coaching by our director and our site leader on specific academic strategies. All such professional development was intended to facilitate closer and more lasting mentoring relationships—because, as noted earlier, duration is the single best predictor of mentoring effectiveness.

- From 2005–10, individual mentors spent 1,628 hours in orientations, 1,181 hours in training workshops, and 610 hours in joint planning meetings. Parents spent 45 hours and children 465 hours in workshops. A total of 26 workshops were offered.

Match Supervision. As supervision of the match is the program practice *most* associated with a high rate of interaction between mentors and mentees, which fosters the long-lasting relationships that are most effective, we take this guidance requirement seriously. A site coordinator was always in the *Reach Out* Room on mentoring days for advice and general supervision. Regular workshops were occasions for sharing among mentors and with the director about both problems and successes. But the majority of this supervision was weekly interaction with site coordinator and one-on-one interaction with the director.

3. Family Events

In line with our research-based strategy for involving parents in the mentoring relationship, we regularly sponsored family events at Scarlett and in the community. Every fall, we offered either a family picnic, an open house, or a farm visit in October, all involving food, interactions with horses and other animals, and seasonal crafts; 219 children and adults attended in the past four years. Entire families enjoyed our annual Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner, meeting the mentors, sharing a meal, doing crafts and playing games afterward; from 2005–2009, 635 people attended. Winter or spring

Gala Celebrations brought another 314 attendees, often including mentor parents who wished to contribute to our expenses. In 2007–08, 242 mentors and children participated in two service projects.

- From 2005–10, 1,320 children, parents, and mentors attended 16 family events.

4. Career Exploration Activities

We believe that one of the most important outcomes of mentoring for teens should be the assumption of responsibility for their own lives and futures. Determination, persistence, and a belief that effort brings results can do more than any in-born talent or inherited advantage to influence life outcomes. We assert that finding a passion and pursuing it as a career may be one of the best motivators existing. One cannot aspire, however, to a career he or she has never heard of. Accordingly, we regularly sponsored tours and job shadowing at work places, as well as career presenters in the *Reach Out* Room at Scarlett, to expose children to a variety of broad career fields that might interest them.

- From 2005–10, we organized 24 individual tours or presentations attended by 396 mentors, children, and parents. We also offered a *Reach Out* Day at Washtenaw Community College from 2003 through 2008; 30–80 teens, parents, siblings, and mentors attended every year, touring labs and doing activities planned by faculty members in many career fields.

5. Services to Mentors

Because of our origins at UM and the fact that the founders of the student *Reach Out* organization were our work-study students, the MRO staff has always mentored our college-student volunteers. Much of our professional development and career exploration activities were designed as much to help them personally as to make them better mentors. University students are not that much older than their mentees, and they face many of the same developmental challenges. They are still establishing their own identities, and many are confronting their own motivational problems regarding academic work. As with our middle-school mentees, their academic performance problems are rarely rooted in academic preparation or support, inherent capacity or aptitude, or amount or efficiency of effort. When they look beyond themselves and think of others, the human connections built in the mentoring process actually make them better students. Working with youth and acting as role models for them energizes, motivates, and matures them. Being useful to others is deeply satisfying, and discovering that paves the way to constructive citizenship.

C. Interpretation: What We Have Learned

1. Successes

Some closing of achievement gaps. Both the administration of Scarlett Middle School and *Michigan Reach Out* had hoped that serving Title I-eligible children with our tutor-mentors would result in improved achievement test scores and reduced achievement gaps between them and the rest of the student body. Title I is meant to give extra help to students who need it due to their status as economically disadvantaged, disabled, or English language-learning. While there is no racial criterion, a disproportionate number of these children are also either African American, Hispanic, or both, and AAPS has been quite concerned with those achievement gaps, which is why we also charted their test scores over time. Most of our mentees were in more than one of these categories.

The scores for eighth-graders, which should show the greatest cumulative effect of mentoring, are mixed. There was a generally upward trend in *reading* scores, except for black students; *gaps for students with disabilities and for economically disadvantaged students closed significantly*. There was a generally upward trend in *mathematics* scores, as well, except for students with disabilities; *there was significant closing of achievement gaps for African American and Hispanic students and for economically disadvantaged students*. These scores, of course, are those of all Scarlett children, not just those served by *Reach Out*. Even if we had that data, however, we would still be unable to take credit for any

success demonstrated by it, as the interaction time with mentors was a relatively small intervention among many. Still, the indications of successful learning offered by these scores, however limited they may be, are at least encouraging.

Significant parental involvement. Our model deliberately seeks the involvement of parents and guardians, for several research-based reasons. One-on-one mentors are more effective in producing positive outcomes for their mentees if they know their children's parents well. Reaching out to parents socially spurs them to become more involved with their children's academic lives and with the school, as well as prompting some to attend our workshops and to consult with our director. Non-experimental analyses suggest that "mentoring improves parental relationships and scholastic confidence, thereby increasing the value he or she attaches to academic activities, and raising grades."

The numbers reflecting this involvement of parents, grandparents, and other guardians have already been cited under **Family Events**. We are extremely proud of how many of them—often busy, working-class parents, often with limited English skills—we were able to draw into our activities over and over. They repeatedly volunteered in our end-of-year surveys that we made them feel welcome at and connected to the school. Many had never been to an open house or parent-teacher conference until solicited to go with their child's mentor. Many parents took advantage of every opportunity offered to get together socially and to explore colleges and careers, often bringing younger siblings with them. We were touched by how much they appreciated the simple crafts, games and other activities offered at family events. Clearly, there is a need for these community-building events that is rarely met—at least for our population of parents.

Maturation of college-age mentors. As we had planned and hoped for, many of our college-age mentors were spurred in their own development by their experiences with *Reach Out*. Our evidence for this can only be anecdotal, but it is nevertheless powerful. *Reach Out* has drawn attention for the number of UM recruits to Teach For America and the Peace Corps who come from our ranks. They have found service to others gratifying and hunger for more. Our alumni have participated in and created service organizations, in addition to finding work in the public service arena. Examples are cited in the report. We hear back from now-distant alumni that they remain in touch with their one-time mentees. They *know* they have made a difference. It is edifying to read of the impact that their short time with us has had on their lives—and how they are living out the same values as adults.

Our model has been shared with and adopted by others. Although we have had less time for networking and outreach than during our university years, we have still managed to influence other people and organizations in our field. Director LaSovage was an original member of the Mentor Michigan Providers Council; its definition of mentoring, standards of quality, and outcome measures for youth are essentially identical to our own. The Connecticut Governor's Prevention Partnership chose the *Reach Out* program for statewide replication and brought LaSovage in to provide workshops for partners on how to establish, implement, and evaluate programs. Flint's Kettering University sent nine students to our 2006 orientation to see how they might create a similar program. The Center for Independent Learning hired Director LaSovage as the Project Manager for the Washtenaw 2009 Youth Action AmeriCorps*VISTA Program, for which she developed a curriculum, workshops, and activities to foster growth in self-knowledge and self-direction, in addition to the specific job-related skills common to internship programs. We post much of our training materials on the web and encourage their free use. We are frequently contacted with thanks, questions, and requests for updated versions.

A heartening variety of donors supported our efforts financially. Our major funding came from an original donation by the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation; significant grants came to us from the Pfizer Foundation, through the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, the Downtown Ann Arbor Kiwanis Club, and the Rotary Club of Ann Arbor. Several local businesses sent small but regular donations. The UM chapter of *Pi Kappa Alpha* fraternity provided not only many mentor

volunteers and two current board members, but also serious, ongoing efforts to raise funds for us. Similarly, we received major assistance from sales of the UM Business School's student publication, *The Monroe Street Journal*. The Michigan Student Assembly supported specific enrichment programs through small grants to the student *Reach Out* organization, as did the Ann Arbor Public Schools Educational Foundation and the City of Ann Arbor. The AAPS was a sustaining supporter for the last five years through an allocation of Scarlett Middle School's Title I federal funds for disadvantaged students. Most heartening of all, however, was the ongoing and growing support from mentor "alumni" and their family foundations. In total, 164 individuals, many annual donors, supported us financially. Dozens of people and organizations supported us with in-kind donations or services.

2. Disappointments

We believe the program was remarkably successful for many mentors, children, and families, but we consider its weaknesses in the spirit of accountability and to facilitate better implementation of this valuable model in the future. Integration problems are probably inevitable in a collaboration: each organization has a different focus, culture, and values. But just plugging in volunteers without true integration makes them less effective than they might be in a truer partnership.

Mismatch between MRO and Site. There was an evident mismatch between our values, beliefs, and objectives and those of Scarlett Middle School. This is not intended as a criticism but as a plain statement of fact. It is a consequence of the national culture's acceptance of notions of accountability that are rooted in and even defined by standardized testing. Unfortunately, the short-term perspective engendered has led us to choose test preparation over whole-child solutions that might be more effective in the long run. Philosophically, we cannot be simply tutors, yet that is what Scarlett came to want us to be.

Early in our collaboration, *Reach Out* Director LaSavage was part of the school improvement team and served on the school's Turning Points Design and Implementation Teams. *Reach Out* volunteer leaders promoted the technology infusion project and the NASA project. Our mentors were trained to help children use their laptop computers for study, research, and organization purposes. Mentors were provided information and training about the AIMS and Turning Point model in order to better support teachers and children with teaming and learning strategies. Our 2006–07 end-of-year report noted a high level of support from teachers and counselors. Coordinators and tutor/mentors felt very comfortable going to teachers for advice, help, and direction. Scarlett staff was tremendously helpful.

Gradually, though, this kind of integration into the life and culture of the school was lost. There was increasing emphasis on "homework help," to the exclusion of less directly instrumental skills. While many mentors expressed alarm at their mentees' deficits in basic math and reading / writing skills, they didn't think they could fix this. Schedule conflicts with Elevate Math and sports programs caused many children to drop out of *Reach Out*. By 2009–10, we had many more trained and willing volunteers than willing and Title I-eligible children to match with them.

Gradual loss of program elements. When we had the luxury of university sponsorship and access to federal grants, we were able to develop a really rich array of programming: preschool play groups; elementary-age hands-on science clubs and summer science camps; middle school career clubs and youth task forces and one-on-one mentoring; high school academic and career mentoring. Programs evolved in collaboration with partner sites and volunteer desires to do more. Our model of providing opportunities and support through community volunteers from preschool through college seemed almost within reach. On our own as a nonprofit organization, however, we have been unable to bring in the same financial backing. As we pulled back to working only in Ann Arbor due to limited resources (where before we had also worked in Detroit, Pontiac, and Ypsilanti), our resources became

even more limited. Ann Arbor is simply not seen by potential funders as the home of a needy population of children, even though we know there are plenty of such children here.

After two years, we had dropped the elementary hands-on science clubs and were only doing mentoring at Scarlett Middle School. Unable to support a recent graduate as a coordinator after 2008, we offered fewer services and events—and these things were missed. Knowing how much we had been able to do previously, we were disappointed to see our programming withering away.

Less capable mentors. We never expected our college-age mentors to be fully formed adults; rather, we considered their guidance and development to be an important part of our mission. But, after a good 15 years doing this work, we have noted a trend towards less maturity and sense of responsibility among this young adult group. We suspect this is a culture-wide phenomenon, that their increasing self-absorption is encouraged and reinforced by the explosion of social media; a generation that posts or twitters its every thought and action is bound to be a bit self-centered. Virtual interactions are really no substitute or training ground for face-to-face interaction, so many young people have stunted social skills in person. Whatever the cause, we experienced a growing incidence of college-age mentors failing to live up to their commitments to children, not showing up, not calling to say they could not come, refusing to take part in training seminars, and generally not getting the benefit from the mentoring experience that they should have. Our perception, that fewer of them truly follow through on their expressed intentions than even five years ago, was borne out by our survey data.

Inability to develop a stable donor base adequate to support our programming ambitions. Given our track record of solid accomplishments and successful grant proposals while at the university, we had hoped to garner more support as we established our new identity. We were unable to do so. We explored numerous partnerships and funding avenues, many of which were successful for a short time or to a small degree, but inadequate funding always limited our programming. Even our mentors often wondered aloud why we needed money at all, given that they were unpaid. The simple answer is that quality programming requires professional support, as does the recordkeeping and reporting that funders deserve and require.

3. What We'd Do Differently, Given the Chance

“Lessons Learned” have always been an important part of our reporting, and it seems especially valuable at this juncture to communicate our best advice on how to do what we have done *better*.

Go where we will be true partners, involving all stakeholders in planning and program revisions and adaptations. Repeated turnover in administrators at Scarlett MS, with accompanying changes in philosophy and priorities, impaired our integration with the building’s staff and programs. An add-on program of which few are aware can never be as effective as one that is understood, welcomed, and integrated by all, where appropriate. We believe inadequate common planning was the root of our inadequate integration into the site. Earlier in our history, while still at UM, we facilitated the development of many coalitions and shared programs with a variety of partners. What made them successful was the formalized and ongoing participation of all stakeholders. Stakeholders who accept their responsibilities work in concert to design and adapt programming, to support it financially, and to celebrate its successes. Even the best program in the world—if it is dropped in from the outside and run by outsiders—will never be as effective as a jointly developed effort.

Require professional development; build in reflection time. We found—unequivocally—that mentors who took part in ongoing training, especially for more than one year, developed into exactly the kind of thoughtful, versatile, and useful mentors that every parent and teacher would want for their children. *The difficulty was in getting volunteers to commit nearly as much time to training as they did to direct interaction with their mentees.* The value of such time was emphatically not immediately obvious to many of them. Even those who did attend were not always truly engaged in what should have

been an interactive process. When it worked well, it was magical: people gained invaluable insight into both their children and themselves.

We must reflect upon our experiences to truly learn from them. If time for such reflection is not built into our schedules and required, it tends never to occur. Requiring it became more and more difficult; even when present, today's young adults are often engrossed in their smart phones or laptops. Just as they came to need this guidance more, they were also less receptive to it. Our program began to lose both effectiveness and integrity without it. Things began to fall apart without it. Our conclusion: Either require ongoing training of college-age mentors or look elsewhere for mentors.

Be more ambitious, not less. Our reaction to the change we perceive in young adult mentors is conflicted: on the one hand, we think it might be better to have closer to a 50:50 mix of college-age and community adult mentors, to raise the general level of peer expectations and modeling. But then we are pulled to consider how much those young people *need* what *Reach Out* participation can give them. Our UM students wanted to do more than they had in high school community service projects and student organizations. They wanted to have a real impact and realized that several years and stages of building upon one another's accomplishments would be required. This worked for a while, with the baton being passed from one age group to the next. It took them time to grow into that leadership role; they learned by doing that it takes many years and many hands to truly change children's lives. This kind of maturation takes both experience and guidance. We noted a huge shift, after we left campus, when the director no longer had open office hours. Fewer students rose to become great leaders without that quantity of interaction. There was another downward shift in the past two years, as many student mentors chose not to participate in our training/professional development workshops. They needed the spur of such contemplation and conversation to grow.

College students need to be part of such a culture and movement and program — one that will be there before them, with them, and long after them. They should be able to come back, to share how they keep learning and growing, with their younger peers and the kids — as several of our alumni have done. Ideally our model would encompass a "mentoring center" transcending programs and generations to anchor mentoring for both college students and children, as well as to be a source of support for families and teachers.

Integrate personal and career exploration for students. We believe that career exploration is important not just for helping our young people to map out life paths, but also to provide meaning for what they are learning. Our development of curriculum and activities focused on both self-discovery and career exploration for a 2009 summer program was an informative and encouraging implementation of our theories and perspectives. During this eight-week workshop series, participants developed a *career direction*: a sense of initiative and personal responsibility regarding their future; a framework for exploring personal strengths and interests, broad career fields, and how the two might intersect; and definite ideas on how to further explore and properly prepare themselves for desired careers. The self-exploration activities brought them acute insights into their character, strengths, and skills that will serve them well in seeking and performing future work. What could be more integral to adolescent development than deciding who you are and want to become? And what decisions could more powerfully affect motivation and performance in school?

D. Appendices

- List 23 foundation, corporate, university & government supporters, 164 individual donors, and many individuals and businesses who gave us in-kind goods and services;
- Name 294 individual volunteer mentors who served from Fall 2003 through Spring 2010;
- Offer moving testimony from a mentor on how the experience changed him and his life; and
- Excerpt survey responses from mentors, children, and parents over the past seven years.

II. *Reach Out* Philosophy and Model

A. Who We Are and What We Do

Michigan Reach Out has recruited, trained, and supervised volunteer tutor/mentors from the University of Michigan student body and the community at large to serve students at Scarlett Middle School, part of the Ann Arbor Public Schools, from 2002 through 2010. *Reach Out* has its roots in the UM College of Engineering, beginning when the K-12 Outreach program of the Center for Ultrafast Optical Science (CUOS) started a tutoring program in 1995. A year later, the UM student *Reach Out* group was created. When CUOS was no longer required to do outreach, the staff was laid off but, at the insistence of the student volunteers, the nonprofit version of *Michigan Reach Out* was created in 2002. We have now survived eight years as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Although our active tutor/mentoring program at Scarlett came to an end as the 2009–2010 school year ended, we believe that the lessons we have learned over the years should be shared with others who desire to create or improve tutor/mentoring programs. That is the primary purpose of this final report.

Reach Out's programs began with a math/science focus, since the Ultrafast Science Center was tasked to do something about the overall poor math and science literacy levels of American students. Clearly, more of our K-12 students must become able to pursue these fields of study if our state and our nation are to survive in a global economy. But in the transition from university sponsorship to nonprofit work, we gradually shifted our focus to another glaring problem in our community: the often significant achievement gaps for minority, poor, disabled, and English language-learning students. These students have, traditionally, been left far behind in our public schools—even in an excellent system like Ann Arbor's. Beginning in 2005, Scarlett Middle School began partially funding our efforts through federal Title I funds, so our student clients eventually became entirely Title I-qualified students: economically disadvantaged, English language-learning, and/or those with disabilities.

These students obviously had language, skill, or knowledge gaps, with which weekly tutoring could help. But our mission has always included more than simply academic support. Our mentoring model addresses other reasons for poor achievement: lack of confidence, no sense of personal agency, poor motivation, no vision or plan for the future, and lack of soft skills needed to study well and to interact productively with teachers. No curriculum can provide all of those keys to success in school and in life. Caring mentors in long-term relationships can. *Reach Out* volunteers specifically aimed to help our mentees develop self-awareness and take charge of their lives and futures.

What made our program different from many tutor/mentoring programs was the long-term commitment and the ongoing training of our volunteers. While both of these aspects might be expected to deter volunteers, we found that the level of time and responsibility we expected helped to weed out the less committed, to make those who stayed more effective, and—most importantly—to make the volunteer experience much more satisfying. It takes time for mentoring relationships to develop, and volunteers can become discouraged at the extent of their children's problems and at their own seemingly limited ability to truly help. Specific training and the power of a long-term relationship, however, made it possible for them to truly change lives. That is why they kept coming back and why they recruited their friends: the experience is as rewarding and life-changing for them as it is for the children they serve.

With *Reach Out* training, our tutor/mentors helped children to explore their learning styles, their personal gifts and talents, their interests and passions, and their beliefs and values. We assisted teens in making informed and positive choices—choosing friends, handling conflict, communicating with

adults, and becoming effective problem-solvers. We helped them with time management, studying and test-taking skills. We helped them fill the gaps in basic skills that held them back. We guided them in how to find careers they would love and brought career exploration presentations to them, so that they could develop dreams for their future and plans for how to get from where they were to where they wanted to be. We looked at them as whole people, not just students, and attempted to help them plan and lead successful lives.

B. Values and Principles

We all have subconscious beliefs and values, but they have no power until we think about them explicitly and consciously. We must choose and define our values before they can affect how we behave, how we think of ourselves, and how others interact with us. Our behavioral choices must reflect our beliefs and values if we are to enjoy self-respect and integrity.

In working with children, a sincere desire to help them is not enough. Plenty of motivated volunteers and almost all educators have this desire, but clearly many children are not learning or maturing as we would like. In order to really make a difference for kids, we must have a guiding vision first, before we design programs or implement interventions. That vision is based upon assumptions about what is going wrong, what children need to succeed that they are not getting, and how the missing elements can best be supplied. Here are the assumptions from which we in *Reach Out* proceed:

- *Children are more than students; they are complex, whole beings.*
- *Learning is more important than test scores; not everything worth learning is easily measured.*
- *Children's academic failures have complex origins and require complex solutions.*
- *All children have the potential to succeed, but their needs differ and some will require more time.*
- *Indomitable will can overcome adversity – and anyone can acquire it.*



C. Programming Implications

1. What is going wrong or is missing for children who are not succeeding?

Answers to these questions must absolutely be grounded in research. Public education in this country has a long history of fads and crazes and panaceas that come and go with the regularity of the rising and setting of the sun—and with just about as much effect on how well children learn. It is fairly easy to see the flaws in reform models of long ago (such as the well-intentioned but chaotic “open classrooms” of the 1970s, for example). It is much more difficult to see with clarity how the orthodoxy of the moment is flawed. We will boldly assert our own analysis, even though it contradicts nearly every assumption underlying the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Race to the Top (RttT) reform models under which we labor today.

Children are complicated beings who are more affected by their homes and families than by the comparatively brief time they spend in schools. If their basic needs in Maslow’s hierarchy (Huitt,

2007) are not met, it will be difficult or impossible for them to make school a priority. As one mentor wrote:

"He has lost both of his grandparents this year. It has been very hard on him. Everything in his life, and his mom's, is changing without them. I think he is angry, and right now he is very withdrawn and doesn't want to do any school work. I don't think his teachers understand."

The recent *Ann Arbor News* article (<http://www.annarbor.com/news/homeless-after-parents-deported/>) about a young woman who stayed behind when her illegal-immigrant parents were deported to Guatemala, and who managed to graduate from Huron High School, also illustrates this point. She was briefly one of our mentees at Scarlett. Her younger sister was with us for five semesters—until she left the country with her parents. Even though the parents were very supportive of their children and delighted in participating in our family events, they and their girls obviously had other important things on their minds at all times.

Children from poorer households begin school behind wealthier children, and the achievement gap grows over time. NCLB and RttT assume, rightly, that differences related to socioeconomic status can be overcome, but they also assume that what it takes to do so is harder-working, better-qualified teachers who are motivated by either greed ("pay for performance") or fear ("failing" schools will be shut down and their teachers fired). We believe these notions are wrong—and no research has shown that these models work. The "Texas Miracle," the "Blueprint" reform in San Diego schools, and the Bloomberg business model in New York City schools, which proceed from these assumptions, all produced "progress" that turned out to be illusory. Improvements in state test scores were traced to changes in student population, were less than they had been in the years before "reform," or were not at all transferable to other assessments, such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). [All of these assertions are supported in exhaustive detail in Diane Ravitch's *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*.]

On the other hand, plenty of research explains achievement gaps as direct consequences of the enriched environment of wealthier children: they travel, visit museums, go to summer camps, participate in sports and arts programs outside of school, are exposed to much larger vocabularies, and have all kinds of reading material in the home.

For example, the longitudinal Beginning School Study, started in 1982 and ongoing, of hundreds of poor, middle-class, and wealthy children in 20 Baltimore City public schools demonstrated something important, as reported in 2007 by Entwhistle, Alexander, and Olson in a journal article titled, "Lasting consequences of the summer learning gap." The children who were studied began first grade in different places, and the achievement gap between high- and low-socioeconomic-status children nearly doubled over the elementary school years. But neither differences in native ability nor in teaching quality explained this phenomenon. Because they were given the California Achievement Test at the beginning and at the end of each year, test results could show that poor children actually "out-learned" rich ones during the school year (at least insofar as CAT reading scores can indicate).



During the summers, however, the poor children fell behind and the more privileged ones surged ahead. The achievement gap really stems from what is *not* happening for poor children when they are not in school.

But there is also evidence that these differences can be compensated for. The KIPP charter schools (Knowledge Is Power Program, <http://www.kipp.org>), for example, seem to do very well with disadvantaged children—but those children spend *more than twice as much time* in school, including much longer days, Saturdays, and summer sessions. Simply addressing the books-at-home gap, however, can have startlingly large effects on children's reading skills. Many studies have found strong correlations among the number of books in the home, the amount of voluntary reading done by children, and their tested reading levels—and this can be fixed. Rich experiences can help to make up for deficiencies at home, whether due to lack of English speakers there or to all the things missing in households that barely get by economically. Mentors can provide some of these missing elements: thoughtful, engaged conversation; personal guidance on dress and behavior norms; trips to recreation centers, sports arenas, museums, libraries, farms, college campuses; education about sleep, exercise, and nutrition; exposure to cultural values for education, self-direction, delayed gratification; the ineffable power of someone else's encouragement and faith in you.

This is a lot to ask of teachers, who are already expected to get through a vast curriculum, but this kind of enrichment is perfectly suited to long-term mentoring programs. That is what *Reach Out* was designed to do: to give children whatever they need that they are not getting, so that they can grow as complete and competent individuals. Research has also shown (Scales and Gibbons, 1996) that a single caring adult can be the critical ingredient in making children resilient in the face of adversity. Parents and teachers most often fill this role, but mentors can, as well—and are not stretched nearly as thin as parents and teachers.

We recognize that under-performing children also have strictly academic needs. Their knowledge and skill deficiencies are often appalling, and specific tutoring can be helpful in overcoming them. But no one knows better than we that *tutoring will never be enough* by itself. Much of the homework children need help with is far beyond their abilities and knowledge, at that frustration level where they will (sensibly) give up. Cognitive psychologist Daniel Willingham (2009) asserts that our brains are wired to avoid work that is either too easy or too hard: "We quickly evaluate how much mental work it will take to solve the problem. If it's too much or too little, we stop working on the problem if we can." If we want children to be persistent (and we *do*), their assignments must be just challenging enough. That is why simple tutoring, as an add-on and uncoordinated with classroom teachers, can never be very effective.

2. Rationale for strategies and objectives

Mentoring is the answer to unfilled needs that are holding our children back:

- Affective issues vitally impact academic achievement: student views of their own abilities, the responsibility they take on for their own lives and futures, their aspirations, and their network of support when they need help.
- Attention to motivation through career exploration can improve student willingness to expend the effort required to master difficult, technical subjects.
- The consistent emphasis on *relationship* and multifaceted interventions can be as powerful as highly qualified teachers and rigorous curriculum in furthering academic achievement.
- Encouragement and reinforcement of parents and extended family in their support of children's learning and aspirations can make a critical difference in children's lives.

If children believe that effort matters as much as talent, view failure is an interim step on the journey of learning, sense the confidence others have in them and learn to share it, and experience success in achieving smaller goals, then they will be able to tackle the longer-term task of catching up to their peers academically.

3. What kind of mentoring works for at-risk youth

We now know quite a bit about what works in mentoring. A review sponsored by Child Trends (Jekielek, *et al.*, Jan 2002) of rigorous evaluations of ten programs, conducted by Public/Private Ventures, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, and Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., found these characteristics for programs that worked:

- ***Whole-child focus***

Mentoring was but one component of a more comprehensive intervention in the lives of at-risk children. "While both are important, social activities appear to be more important than academic activities for establishing trust and creating close and supportive relationships.... Having very high expectations may not be a good thing; trust is more important."

- ***Duration***

The longer the relationship, the more significant positive effects on youth became. The best results came with a duration of more than a year. Brief relationships could actually be harmful to children.

- ***Developmental approach***

"A developmental approach to mentor-mentee relationships produces better relationships for the mentees than a prescriptive approach." "Developmental" volunteers allowed their expectations and interactions to vary according to their perceptions of what their mentees needed. They did not try to impose a preconceived "solution." When in doubt, they were "more likely to consult caseworkers for reassurance or advice." Their mentees "demonstrated a pattern of seeking help independently and voluntarily divulged difficulties in their school or personal lives, allowing the volunteer to provide guidance and advice."

"Prescriptive" volunteers, on the other hand, pursued their *own* goals for the match. Even though these goals were worthy, such as improved academic achievement, both they and their mentees experienced frustration and dissatisfaction with the relationship. "Often, these prescriptive relationships developed growing tension, which led, in part, to their frequent demise. Two-thirds of the prescriptive matches no longer met nine months after the first study interview, whereas only about 10 percent of the developmental relationships had ended."

- ***Training***

The more hours of training mentors received, both before and after matching, the longer the relationships lasted. "Further, developmental relations are more likely to form in programs in which mentors have training."

- ***Family involvement***

Mentors who knew and interacted with their mentees' families had longer-lasting and more effective relationships.

- ***Match supervision***

Supervision of the match was the program practice *most* associated with a high rate of interaction. Frequent communication with caseworkers or a program director seemingly encouraged more frequent meetings with mentees, which is highly associated with mentoring effectiveness.

It is also worth mentioning that these evaluations found that “cross-race matches are as successful as same-race matches; matching by gender also had no effect on relationship quality.”

4. What “works” means

A more recent review and meta-analysis (Wheeler, *et al.*, 2010) defined effective mentoring in terms of these **youth outcomes**: for which they found significant effect sizes:

- less truancy and fewer unexcused absences from school
- higher perceived scholastic efficacy (self-perception of academic abilities)
- less school-related misconduct
- increased peer support

This review of three separate, large-scale, random-assignment studies of the effectiveness of school-based mentoring programs for youth,



however, did *not* find significant effects on academic achievement or other outcomes. The reviewers tried to “make sense of mixed findings” by noting the variations in program design and implementation that might account for varying results. They ignored, however, what we consider the most important characteristics of effective mentoring: the duration and closeness of the relationship. All of the randomized studies looked at effects after *less than one year* of mentoring: with average durations of 5.3, 5.8, and 5.9 months. Our experience confirms that, unless the mentor is very practiced, the mentoring pair is barely achieving an effective rapport by six months. In the second and third years, on the other hand, matches have been extremely effective—“life-changing,” according to mentee and parent reports.

We in *Reach Out* believe that the most important outcomes our mentoring can offer to young people are an increase in their sense of control over their own lives and a belief in their own ability to make a difference in how well they do. Internal motivation and self-confidence are needed before they can catch up academically. As David Willingham put it: “Slow learners are not dumb.... [They] have the same potential as bright students, but they probably differ in what they know, in their motivation, in their persistence in the face of academic setback, and in their self-image as students.... To help slow learners catch up, we must first be sure they believe that they can improve, and next we must try to persuade them that it will be worth it.” This takes time—more than six months.

5. How much mentoring costs

What does it cost to run a mentoring program? Even if one leaves out the question of efficiency (what it *should* cost), the answer is not simple. Many of the goods and services required are donated: volunteer mentor time, of course, but also facilities, office expenses, volunteer background checks, transportation, advertising, fund-raising expenses, etc. In fact, according to one review, the average program receives donated time and services worth \$1 for every \$1 in its budget.

Although its data is more than ten years old, this analysis from Public/ Private Ventures (Fountain & Arbreton, 1999) provided excellent data on what it costs to run mentoring programs from

The average annual dollars spent per youth served in one-on-one mentoring programs was \$1,030—not including donated goods and services.

a sample of 52 programs in a much larger database, with annual budgets ranging from under \$500 to \$6.5 million. Because volunteers typically work just a few hours a week and even many paid staff are part-time workers, the analysis quantified data in terms of full-time equivalents (FTEs) on a 40-hour-week basis. The average annual budget cost (actual dollars spent) per youth served in one-on-one mentoring programs was \$1,030. Adding donated goods and services (estimating volunteer time at the average staff annual wage of \$23,000), approximately doubled the value of services provided.

In the case of *Michigan Reach Out*, we estimate the value of goods and services donated at significantly more than 100% of the actual dollars spent. These “off-budget” costs include home office spaces; computer / printer equipment and supplies; telephone and broadband access; postage; binders for handbooks for each mentor; significant paper and printing for handbooks, flyers, forms, brochures, newsletters, and business cards; photo processing (before we went digital); daily snacks in the MRO room; food and supplies for family events; the real value of accounting and tax services that we received at minimal cost; transportation (personal and car-pooling); the time (plus gifts, hand-outs, and refreshments) of scores of workplace tour providers; the copying costs, background checks, tutoring space, and family event accommodations provided by Scarlett; the many hours the small staff worked without pay; and—of course—the thousands of hours that hundreds of volunteer mentors spent in orientation, in ongoing training, at school and family and career exploration events, as well as in direct service to children as weekly academic tutors. We believe that all of these goods and services would easily cost an additional hundred thousand dollars per year, if they were paid for instead of donated.

In addition to receiving more donated goods and services than the average mentoring program, *Michigan Reach Out* has operated with considerably less staffing and funding than the averages cited by Fountain and Arbreton. The numbers in the following data will look somewhat different from those elsewhere, since our programs run on a school-year basis and our financial reporting as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization must be done on a calendar-year basis. For our first three years as a nonprofit organization, we continued to serve Ann Arbor Public Schools at no direct cost to the district, although Scarlett Middle School generously provided a classroom, copying, and background checks for our volunteers. AAPS began supporting us through Title I funding in the fall of 2006, and continued to do so through the end of the 2009–10 school year: a total of four years. During this period, Fall 2006–Spring 2009, with fewer than 3 FTE paid staff annually, we spent an average of \$543 per child per year. Of that amount, \$266 per child per year came from AAPS funding.

The average annual dollars spent per youth served by Michigan Reach Out was \$543—not including donated goods and services.

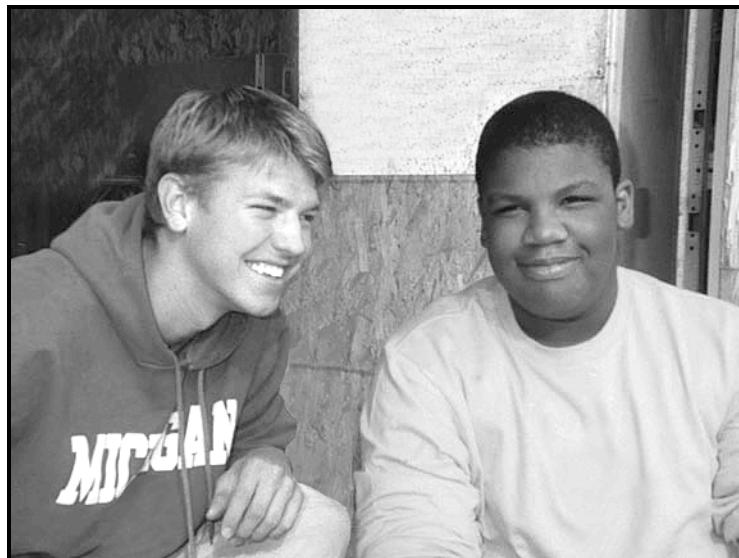
Revenues & Expenditures, Fall 2006 through Spring 2010

	Total Revenue ¹	AAPS Revenue (included in total)	Number of Children Served ²	Total Expenditures ³
Fall Semester 2006	\$40,154	\$6,800	48	\$22,087
Spr 2007–Fall 2007	\$55,225	\$18,500	73	\$56,366
Spr 2008–Fall 2008	\$42,385	\$18,000	73	\$58,571
Spr 2009–Fall 2009	\$30,760	\$18,500	48	\$27,926
Spr Semester 2010	\$11,661	\$9,500	26	\$17,119
4-Year Totals:	\$180,185	\$71,300	268	\$182,070
Annual Averages:	\$36,037	\$17,825	67	\$36,414

Average Annual Expenditure per Child (\$266 from AAPS Revenue) **\$543**

- 1 Includes individual, corporate, foundation, and public school donations; does *not* include gifts in kind or donated services
- 2 Child counts are by unique individual; numbers will vary depending upon period used (semester, calendar year, or school year) because each child will be counted only once per period. Most children were served for more than one year.
- 3 Includes payroll, employer FICA and unemployment, payroll services, postage, materials, software, plaques for some mentors, family event and corporate fees, website expenses, fundraising expenses, brochures and newsletters; includes *no* benefits

As you can see, our expenditures exceeded our revenue, as we gradually spent down our foundation-supplied seed money. Our paid staff routinely worked more hours than they were paid for, without any benefits, and we could never afford corporate insurance.



III. Services We Provided

We have more detailed records for the past five years than for the first three. From 2002–2005, our database manager was dealing with the critical illness and death of her spouse; our paid staff has always been so small that some of the recordkeeping she should have done simply was not. Once we began to receive some Title I funding in the fall of 2005, however, we made certain to keep excellent records, including every meeting with every child we served.

A. Direct Academic Tutoring Services

- 280 individual Scarlett students were served by *Reach Out* mentors from Fall 2002–Spring 2010.
- 190 individual Scarlett students met 4,427 times (an average of 23.3 times over 2.9 semesters) with *MRO* mentors from 2005–10, since we began to receive some Title I funding and to record every meeting.

Counts¹ of Children Served by Semester and by School & Calendar Years

School Year	Fall	Spring	Unique Individuals for School Year	Calendar Year	Unique Individuals for Calendar Year
2002–03	42	46	47	2002	42
2003–04	88	52	92	2003	91
2004–05	41	26	41	2004	72
2005–06	82	82	92	2005	90
2006–07	48	61	64	2006	93
2007–08	32	42	46	2007	73
2008–09	44	36	48	2008	73
2009–10	27	26	32	2009	48
				2010	26
Annual averages		58		76	

1 Includes only mentoring pairs who met at least three times; some children had more than one mentor at a time

The majority of the academic tutoring offered by *Reach Out* volunteers took place in the *Reach Out* room at Scarlett MS after school. Meetings typically lasted 1-to-1-1/2 hours. The numbers at right are slightly lower than in our annual reports, because we have removed any matches that did not meet at least three times.

Direct Academic Tutoring in MRO Room

	# Children	# Meetings	Meetings per Child
2005–06	92	1,510	16
2006–07	64	832	13
2007–08	46	649	14
2008–09	48	808	17
2009–10	32	628	20
5-yr. Totals:	282¹	4,427²	16 (annual average)

1 Counts each child once for each year of participation; 190 children were served overall, 84 for more than one year

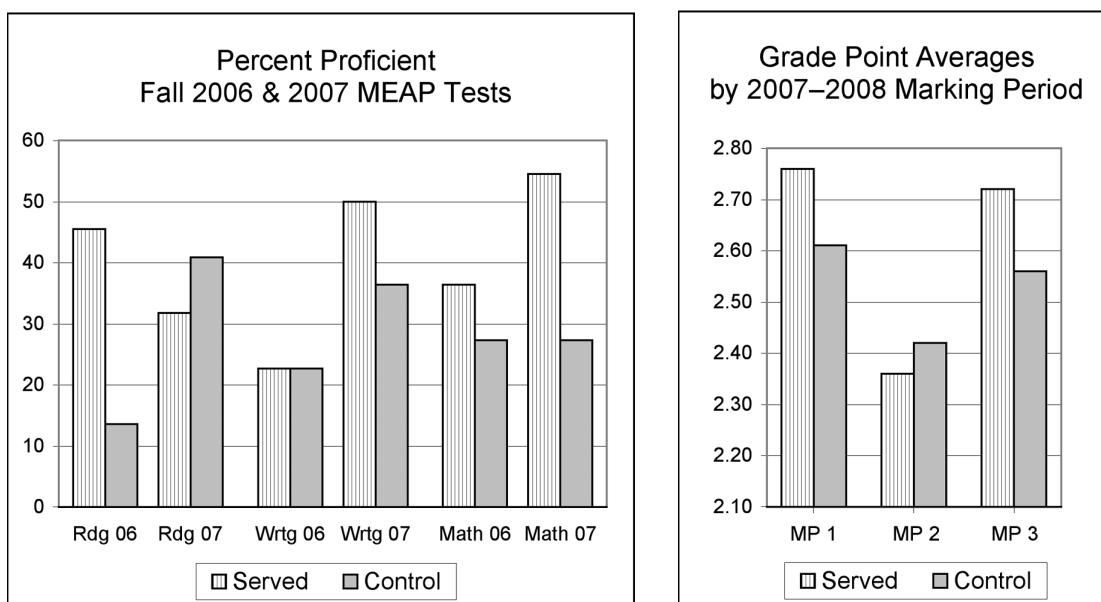
2 Not included in this figure: Mandarin- and Spanish-speaking bilingual tutors met at least weekly with their mentees during class time—three each in 2006–07 and 2007–8, and two in 2009–10.

Academic Achievement Data

The 2007–08 school year was the only year that we were given access to demographic data, grades for three quarters, and test scores for all Scarlett students long enough to create “well-served” and “control” groups that were fairly well matched by gender, ethnicity, special education status, English proficiency, and “free or reduced-price lunch” (that is, economic disadvantage) status. Thus, we were able to tease out differences in performance that may have been partially attributable to the support of *Reach Out* volunteers.

Our database contained 22 seventh- and eighth-grade children who had met with tutor / mentors an average of 53.3 times over 5.4 semesters—what we considered “well-served” by our program. We were unable to find an exactly matching control group, since we served the majority of some subgroups; in particular, there were not enough English language-learning students of the same proficiency levels to serve as controls. But our control group of 22 was a fairly good match. It included one student who met five times in one semester with a tutor / mentor, which we do not consider to be significant support.

The Served group included 15 ESL, 7 Special Education, 14 Free / Reduced, 12 male and 10 female, and ethnicities of 1 white, 8 Hispanic, 6 black, 2 Asian / Pacific Islander, 2 Middle Eastern, 1 multiracial, and 2 other. The Control group included 10 ESL, 7 Special Education, 18 Free / Reduced, 12 male and 10 female, and ethnicities of 9 Hispanic, 9 black, 1 Asian / Pacific Islander, 1 Middle Eastern, and 2 other. These numbers are small, so inferences may not be highly reliable. The following charts summarize the performance of these two groups.



Generally speaking, the Served group slightly to significantly outperformed the Control group, in Reading, Writing, and Math MEAP testing for the immediately past two years, as well as in grade point averages for the first three marking periods of the 2007–08 school year. Reading MEAP scores declined from 2006 to 2007 for our group, however, while the Control group showed considerable improvement. Writing and Math scores for the Served group showed sizeable improvement. GPA data is harder to interpret, given the range of variables that might affect it. We believe the small sample sizes limit the usefulness of this data, but we were pleased to see some evidence in student performance measures for the efficacy of the support offered by *Reach Out* tutor / mentors.

Our analysis differs significantly from that in "Review of Three Recent Randomized Trials of School-Based Mentoring" (Wheeler, *et al.*, 2010). While we emphasized matching groups on the basis of gender, ethnicity, special education status, English proficiency, and economic disadvantage, our "served" group contained only those who had met with mentors for a significant amount of time, and our "control" group actually contained one student who had met with a mentor a few times before dropping out. This student was included because we considered that intervention insignificant, and because it was difficult to come up with enough high-needs, at-risk controls without him.

The three studies in the meta-analysis, on the other hand, all used an "intent-to-treat" model in an attempt to avoid biasing the results. In our opinion, this statistical approach was invalid. The studies' "treatment" groups contained 7%, 10%, and 17% who were *never matched* with mentors. The "control" groups contained more than 34% and 35% who *had mentors* from elsewhere or, in the third case, 100% who received supportive services ("i.e., educational enhancement activities, supportive guidance, enrichment activities, and/or tutoring"). How is one to see an effect from mentoring when the two groups differ so little on the intervention being evaluated?

Academic Enrichment

In 2005–06, our University of Michigan student organization (also called *Reach Out*) successfully applied for grant funding through the Michigan Student Affairs Office to pay for two events meant to coordinate with Scarlett's NASA Space Grant programming that year and to pique interest in possible career fields that might motivate study. Twenty-five children attended our UM NASA space presentation, and 42 enjoyed a presentation (with live animals) on reptiles by the Exhibit Museum of Natural History.

Through 2008, most tutors provided significant help to their children for science fair projects, especially during evenings and weekends (usually at the child's home), including "shopping for materials." By 2005–06 and 2006–07, 100% of *Reach Out* mentees participated with our help, even the ESL and Special Ed students that were not required to do a project. In 2007, two were awarded "1st Place"; our students earned a first place, a third place, and five honorable mentions in 2008. In our spring 2009 evaluation surveys, though, eight mentors volunteered that they missed the school-wide science fair. They felt we had made real gains with our children in being organized, pondering fields of interest and then projects to do, researching projects, carrying them out, writing about them, *et al.* They saw this as a worthy long-term project that made a difference for them and their kids, beyond just getting homework done.

In the 2010 survey, one mentor wrote: "We should have done so much more with the teachers. I remember when they had to do science fair projects. That was great. So many of us got to know the science teachers. We were there for weeks and weeks to help our kids pick a topic they liked, research it, get the stuff we needed, do the experiment, write the paper and do the poster. We were really working with some teachers. We were at the houses doing the stuff. We really needed to keep involved with the parents and teachers on projects the kids liked to do."



B. Training and Professional Development for Mentors, Students, and Parents

Even before we had read the results of rigorous evaluation (Jekielek, *et al.*, Jan 2002) of many mentoring programs, our own beliefs and values had guided us to develop a whole-child mentoring model. Consequently, we incorporated and continued to add to and refine a robust regimen of professional development for our mentors. Initial contact with potential mentors served to weed out many of the less dedicated, since we required a commitment to stay with a child for at least a year and an investment of three-to-four hours in a comprehensive orientation before matching. There is simply too much mentors need to know before they can be effective in working with at-risk youth.

1. Comprehensive Orientation

Our orientation attempts to cover

- Our definition of Intentional Mentoring: an ongoing structured relationship between trusted and trusting individuals who grow and develop in a holistic partnership that includes academic, emotional, social, spiritual, and physical realms
- Our fundamental mentoring strategy: Both partners develop competence and character by discovering our individual gifts, talents and passions; dealing with personal pain, roadblocks and life struggles; defining our own priorities; becoming effective problem-solvers; and determining realistic short- and long-term goals.
- The typical phases of mentoring relationships: getting acquainted; building (and rebuilding) trust; establishing roles and rhythm; determining and pursuing personal goals; working and learning together; separations and eventual parting; and (we hope!) beginning again with a new pairing.
- *Reach Out* beliefs and values; defining personal beliefs and values; how your actions do and should reflect your values. If teens do not “nail down” their own beliefs, values, and desires, then their weak sense of self, insecurity, and role confusion will leave them unable to plan confidently to take control of their futures.
- Mentor roles and responsibilities: exactly the kinds of actions and commitments we expect of them
- Adolescent stages of development: cognitive, psychosocial, and spiritual
- Essential external and internal assets teens should be developing
- Specific goals for Scarlett children: academic competence and confidence; mastering the job of “learner” (including study skills, dress requirements, and physical prerequisites such as exercise, nutritious food, and adequate sleep); social skills for navigating the school system and dealing with parents and peers; life planning and career exploration
- Learning theories and paradigms

We believe that effective mentors must appreciate the challenges and uniqueness of adolescents. Adolescence is a period of rapid and profound developmental changes. Teens are making huge leaps in cognitive and moral reasoning, decision-making skills, and social maturation. Periods of such change offer both opportunities for growth and vulnerability to influences from family, peers, authority figures, and others. Teens can exhibit extraordinary problems with regulation of emotions, risk-taking behavior, and impulsiveness, because their brains are not yet mature. This is why they are so vulnerable to depression and suicide, why substance abuse can be so serious for them, and why this abuse acts to delay normal growth and development. Major developmental achievements are directly dependent upon the physical maturation of the brain and include the ability to foresee

consequences of actions, the patience to delay gratification, and the ability to manage the expression of (not to repress) emotions. But modeling by and “rehearsal” with a mentor can accelerate the development of these adult skills.

The self-centeredness, self-consciousness, flair for the dramatic, and hypersensitivity to hypocrisy that are emblematic of teens are qualities that mentors should expect. Patience with teens who lack the mature social skills to disagree tactfully is a necessity. Modeling the behavior you expect of them is more effective than direct instruction. Asking perceptive questions can help teens to see other points of view and that not everything and everyone revolves around them.

2. Regular Workshops

Clearly, we are unable to fully cover, and mentors are unable to absorb, as much as we'd like in a single orientation session. They are given a thorough handbook on all the above and more, for reference throughout the year when they have questions or concerns and cannot immediately contact a *Reach Out* advisor. We also deepen and reinforce their understanding with a series of workshops throughout the year on topics meant to increase their effectiveness:

- Intentional Dialogue & Active Listening
- The “Power of What I Say”
- Learning Styles
- Talents, Interests & Passions
- Healthy Relationships & Boundaries
- Understanding Feelings & Emotions
- Finding a Career I'll Love

You will note that these interactive sessions do not have an academic focus. They were in addition to the regular weekly meetings between mentor and child that were focused on homework help, studying for tests, and tutoring in basic skills, as well as the coaching by our director and our site leader on specific academic strategies. All such professional development was intended to facilitate closer and more lasting mentoring relationships—because, as noted earlier, duration is the single best predictor of mentoring effectiveness.

Hours of Training and Professional Development

	Family leader inservice/planning¹	Mentor orientation²		Workshops: tutors	parents³	children³	Number of Workshops
2005–06	418	340		240	34		3
2006–07	192	322		300		42	5
2007–08		301		203	3	32	5
2008–09		364		279			7
2009–10		301		388.5*		390.5*	6
Total Hours	610	1,628		1,180.5	45	464.5	26

1 Family Leaders were experienced mentors intended to mentor new mentors; we could not sustain this structure

2 Many more volunteers were oriented than actually served—a “cost of doing business” with volunteers. Many decide, after realizing how large a commitment is involved, that they are unable to make it. For others, schedule or personal problems ultimately preclude service. In 2009–10, we had more volunteers than qualified Title I children.

3 Parents and children were included by popular demand

* 2009–10 workshops explained separately, on following page.

2009–10 Workshops & Training

In our final year, we did not do formal “workshops” but rather wove the substance of them into after-school sessions in the *Reach Out* Room. This was an adaptation of the weekly seminar model that had worked so well in the 2009 summer program that we designed for the Washtenaw 2009 Youth Action AmeriCorps*VISTA Program. Spreading the content over several weeks, Director LaSovage took the first 15 minutes of a session to introduce a concept one week; helped mentors and mentees to define principles and facts about it the next week; and during weeks three through six encouraged them all to integrate concept and skills into their lives. Part of this integration was to select a SMART (smart, measurable, achievable, realistic, with a timetable) goal and to keep a journal sheet for each marking period, as a tool to keep goals in mind. Former Principal Carol Shakarian used this format with parents, kids, planning center, teacher meetings, and committees, as part of the Turning Points model, and we continued to use it with every progress report or report card.

In September, mentors and children reviewed their roles and responsibilities, our *Reach Out* family code of behavior, how to care for themselves as “learning machines,” and what organizational skills might help them to keep up with their academic work. Children were encouraged to define their feelings, to note how they act upon them, and to brainstorm what they could change in order to achieve better grades and behavior assessments from their teachers.

Talents, passions, skills, and interests were explored as an opener to the concept of life and career planning. Life goals were discussed in terms of what brings lasting happiness and satisfaction, versus the shallow rewards of money and fame. Ways to explore possible careers through volunteer work and research were brainstormed. Participants were led in defining their ideal future community, as an important adjunct to career choice.

The idea of preferred Learning Styles was introduced and then extended into the Holland Code and the Bolles Parachute for temperament as tools for self-exploration. The group went through our Beliefs and Values/Compass Worksheet to help them define what is important to them and then to evaluate whether they were living their own values. They made specific plans for changing behaviors to align with values. Twelve parents shared at our Thanksgiving Potluck that they had gone through the worksheet at family gatherings and loved it. A whiteboard in the *Reach Out* Room became a year-long site for articulating just how and how well people’s actions followed—or did not follow—their expressed beliefs and values.

Regarding Boundaries, we defined healthy ones and discussed the trouble that can ensue when they are not maintained. Real-life issues with parents, teachers, and—in particular—friends were shared.

The strand on communications skills (active listening, mirroring, and validation) was a revelation to many participants. They confronted the habits of feigning interest or giving partial attention to others while actually being engaged with distracting thoughts or technology. It was a continuing struggle to achieve the ability to listen and mirror without offering personal experiences or advice.

At times, though, sharing of personal experiences made the group very effective, as the concepts we discussed were seen through real-world events. One UM student shared testimony about underage drinking and the consequences he was facing; a child lost a grandparent; one of our students was found with marijuana; one of our children was bullied badly—all of these experiences were springboards for reflection and discussion. Several mentors told how lost they were, close to graduation, and how they wished they had done this learning and searching earlier, so as to get a grip on what they wanted to work at in their lives.

This new format did not generate 100% participation. Rather, our “veteran” mentors and children chose to attend more often than once a week so as to invest time in these small-group activities. In

general, newer mentors chose not to take part and therefore did not benefit; however, some of their children did choose to attend alone. This model did not allow for parental participation. We believe the ideal might be to combine the longer workshops as done in the past with short integration sessions as weekly follow-ups.

3. Match Supervision

As supervision of the match is the program practice *most* associated with a high rate of interaction between mentors and mentees, which fosters the long-lasting relationships that are most effective, we take this guidance requirement seriously. A site coordinator was always in the *Reach Out* Room on mentoring days for advice and general supervision. Regular workshops were occasions for sharing among mentors and with the director about both problems and successes.

But the majority of this supervision was weekly interaction with site coordinator Lee Harkaway (and, in earlier years, fellow coordinator Lisa Goulet) and one-on-one interaction with Director LaSavage. As an example, during our most recent school year (when the number of matches was down from historical levels), 32 different tutor/mentors met with LaSavage a total of 78 times in person or on the phone, and 24 communicated with her via email a total of 128 times about concerns with children, teachers, parents, and their mentees' friends.

C. Family Events

In line with our research-based strategy for involving parents in the mentoring relationship, we regularly sponsored family events at Scarlett and in the community. Not included in the summary table below is the number of parents who attended Scarlett's Fall Capsule Night or Parent-Teacher Conferences *because* their children and mentors were going together.

Every fall, we offered either a family picnic, an open house, or a farm visit in October, all involving food, interactions with horses and other animals, and seasonal crafts. A total of 219 children and adults attended in the past four years.

Our annual Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner in November at Scarlett was very popular with students, their parents, and their siblings. Entire families attended to meet the mentors, to share a meal with them, and to do crafts and play games afterward. Over the years from 2005–2009, a total of 635 people brought food and enjoyed the fellowship of these dinners.

Winter or spring Gala Celebrations brought another 314 attendees, often including mentor parents who wished to contribute to our expenses. Seven mentoring pairs went to UM's Challenge Day together, and 17 pairs attended its Celebrate Diversity Day. Smaller-scale outings for ice skating and wall-climbing were arranged for five pairs apiece.

In an attempt to foster relationships and spur maturation, we tried arranging service projects for mentors and children in 2007–08, when 242 participated in two projects to prepare packs of clothing and food for the homeless. Twice, in December, we supplied materials for children and mentors to work on together to make gifts for the children's family members.

Reach Out Director LaSavage interacted regularly with parents and guardians via phone and email. For example, during 2009–10, 18 parents exchanged 49 mails and 5 parents shared 14 phone calls with LaSavage about kids, discipline, teachers, homework, study skills, communicating with kids, and setting boundaries and consequences.

D. Career Exploration Activities

We believe that one of the most important outcomes of mentoring for teens should be the assumption of responsibility for their own lives and futures. We all know examples of people who succeed despite the worst adversity, because no one or nothing can stop them. Determination, persistence, and a belief that effort brings results can do more than any in-born talent or inherited advantage to influence life outcomes. Conversely, as any teacher can tell you, no one can pour knowledge into an unwilling or unmotivated student.

Motivation springs from a sense of self-efficacy (that one controls one's own destiny) and a future orientation toward some attractive goal. Persistence comes from practice: trying, failing, trying again, and occasionally succeeding. A child needs at least intermittent reinforcement from success in order to develop persistence. That is why it is so important that, no matter how far behind he or she is in school work, assignments are calibrated to be *just difficult enough*. Our mentors do what they can to help children succeed academically, but this may be beyond their control. The older at-risk students are, the deeper the hole they may find themselves in.

We can, however, more directly influence the motivation that can arise from a career or life goal. Let's face it: many academic subjects require plain hard work and boring practice. But so do athletic and musical skills, so these are not insurmountable barriers. We assert that finding a passion and pursuing it as a career may be one of the best motivators existing—certainly better than the prospect of fame or money that children tend to mention first when asked what they want to become.

One cannot aspire, however, to a career he or she has never heard of. Accordingly, we regularly sponsored tours and job shadowing at work places, as well as career presenters in the *Reach Out* Room at Scarlett, to expose children to a variety of broad career fields that might interest them. From 2005–10, we organized 24 individual tours or presentations attended by 396 mentors, children, and parents. One of the most popular was a visit to the Chrysler Proving Grounds in Chelsea, where children, mentors, and parents learned about a variety of jobs related to auto development and testing; they also enjoyed tours of several labs and trips on the test tracks. Visits were also made to Herb David Guitar Studio, UM Hospital Orthopedics, Purple Rose Theater, Pattco, Inc., UM Nursing and Med Flight, Dascola Barbers, Kilwin's Chocolates, Curves Fitness, and Ann Arbor Airport. In each case, packets of information about a variety of jobs were prepared for participants by our community partners; in addition to specifics about their own businesses, several shared the life of an entrepreneur and what it took to succeed in business for oneself.

From 2005–2010, we organized 24 individual tours or presentations attended by 396 mentors, children, and parents.

When it became too difficult to organize these expeditions, we pulled back to presentations made at Scarlett after school in the spring. Again, a variety of community partners shared information and activities on these careers: the "Job" of College Student Athlete; Elevator/Escalator Sales, Repair, Techs; Mechanical, Auto, and Civil Engineering; Pharmacist and Pharmacy Tech; Sheriff and Detective; Judge Magistrate; Nursing and other health fields; Youth Pastor; Counselor; Veterinarian and Vet Tech; and Entrepreneur.

While we were unable to offer it for the past two years, a mentor's mother had helped us to organize a *Reach Out* Day at Washtenaw Community College from 2003 through 2008. From 30 to 80 teens, parents, siblings, and mentors attended every year, touring labs and doing activities planned by faculty members in many career fields.

E. Services to Mentors

From our beginnings at the University of Michigan, we had intended our mentoring programs to be as valuable for the mentors as for their mentees. Over the years, the great majority of our mentors have been UM undergraduates and graduate students, with a few from other colleges, a couple from Ann Arbor high schools, and a moderate number of community adults.

Because of our origins at UM and the fact that the founders of the student *Reach Out* organization were our work-study students, the *Reach Out* staff has always mentored our college-student volunteers. Much of our professional development and career exploration activities were designed as much to help them personally as to make them better mentors.

University students are not that much older than their mentees, and they face many of the same developmental challenges. They are still establishing their own identities, deciding who they are and want to be. Many are confronting their own motivational problems regarding academic work. Having been generally excellent students in order to get into UM, they find it difficult to make themselves study the way they used to—because they are ready to be *more* than students. As with our middle-school mentees, their academic performance problems are rarely rooted in academic preparation or support, inherent capacity or aptitude, or amount or efficiency of effort. When they do poorly at the university, it is often because of what is missing from their lives. Our focus on them as students only tends to make them even more self-centered than is normal for their age, when what they really need is to look beyond themselves and to think of others. The human connections built in the mentoring process actually make them better students. They are so relieved and “made whole” by developing empathy and concern for others that they are freed and inspired to study for their own internal reasons. Working with youth and acting as role models for them energizes, motivates, and matures them. Being useful to others is deeply satisfying, and learning that paves the way to constructive citizenship. Nothing expresses this effect better than an anecdotal account from one such mentor. Because we did not want to abridge his powerful writing, we have included it in full as Appendix D and encourage you to read it.

Additionally, many of our mentors’ career visions are no clearer than those of their mentees. Their rationales for choosing college majors have often been flimsy or overly influenced by someone else’s dreams for them. Our workshops, while designed to help them guide teens through the developmental tasks of adolescence, also resonate deeply with them, given the life choices they are also making. Our career exploration activities also give mentors windows into various career fields, which helps them to see possibilities and to make connections that can affect their own futures.

Folowing are examples, from 2009–10, of the kinds of personal, academic, and career guidance and services provided to mentors by the *Reach Out* director:

- Recommendation letters: 16 written for mentor alums and 9 for current mentors (each preceded by a personal interview)
- Reference phone calls and emails: 14 for alums and 14 for current mentors (for internships, jobs, Teach for America, Americorps, Peace Corps)
- Career guidance: five alums and seven current mentors engaged in personal, telephone, and email conversations about life planning and “what to do next.”
- Learning styles and study skills: six mentors met at least twice for skills, tips and strategies to help with their own learning.
- Met with six current mentors two or more times to help them take what they now know about learning styles and apply for their own learning.
- Legal trouble: three current mentors were on probation for alcohol-related offenses and met with director at least twice apiece to discuss these problems.

- Personal problems: five were counseled on date rape, casual sex, or unwanted pregnancy. All were given information for UM Health Center and counselors and frank discussion about *Reach Out* expectations for our mentors and their responsibilities as role models.

Obviously, our mentors, too, have required ongoing mentoring.



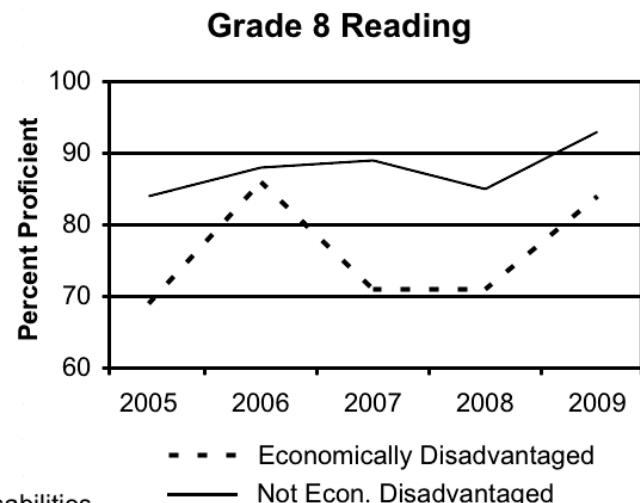
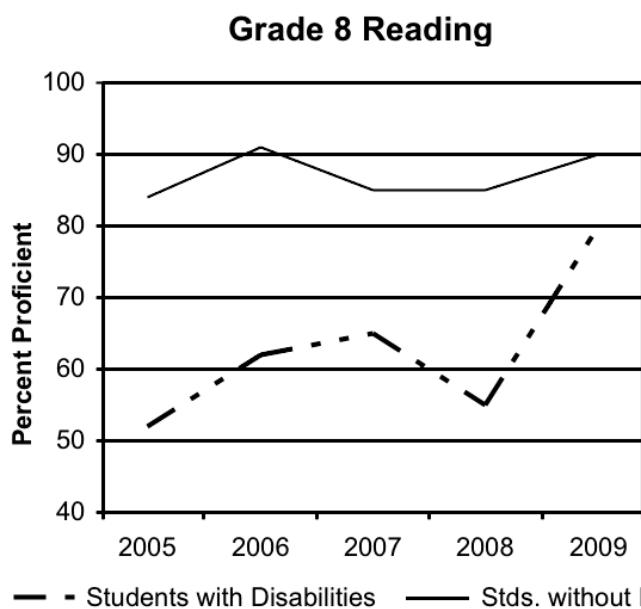
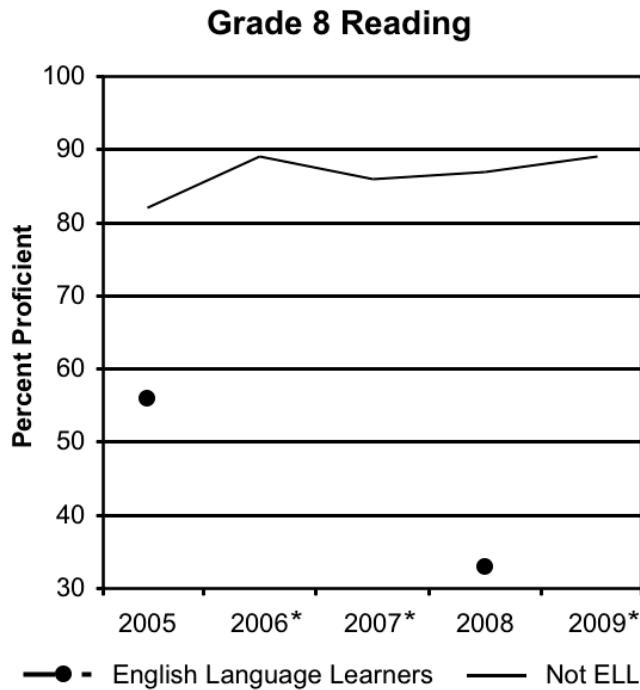
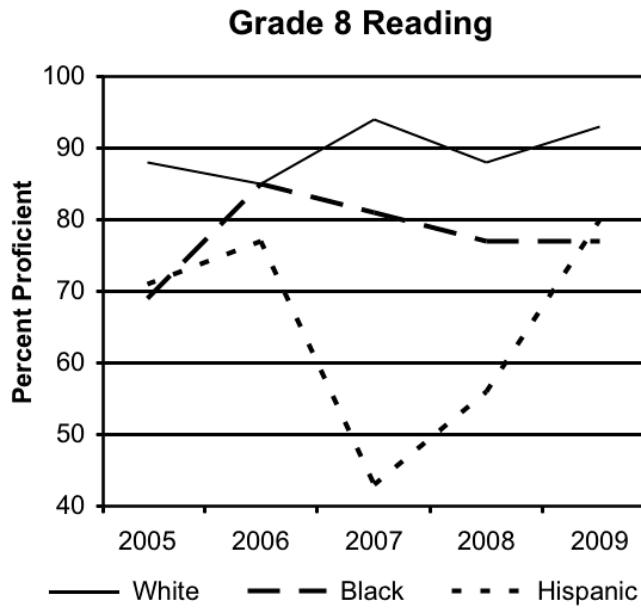
IV. Interpretation: What We Have Learned

A. Successes

1. Some closing of achievement gaps

Both the administration of Scarlett Middle School and *Michigan Reach Out* had hoped that serving Title I-eligible children with our tutor-mentors would result in improved achievement test scores and

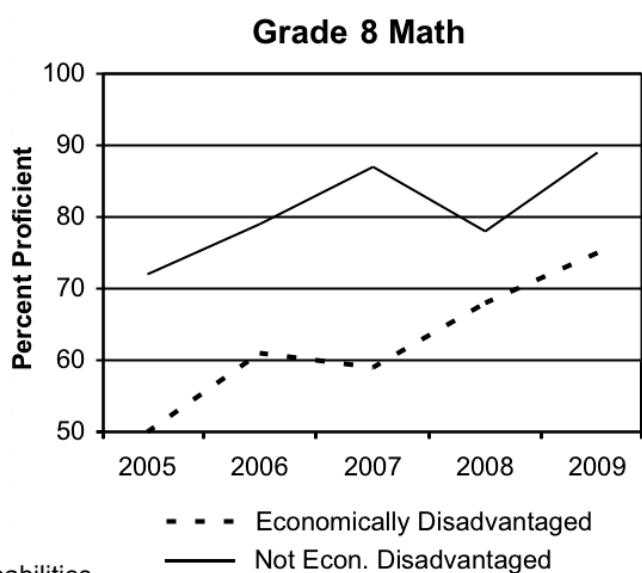
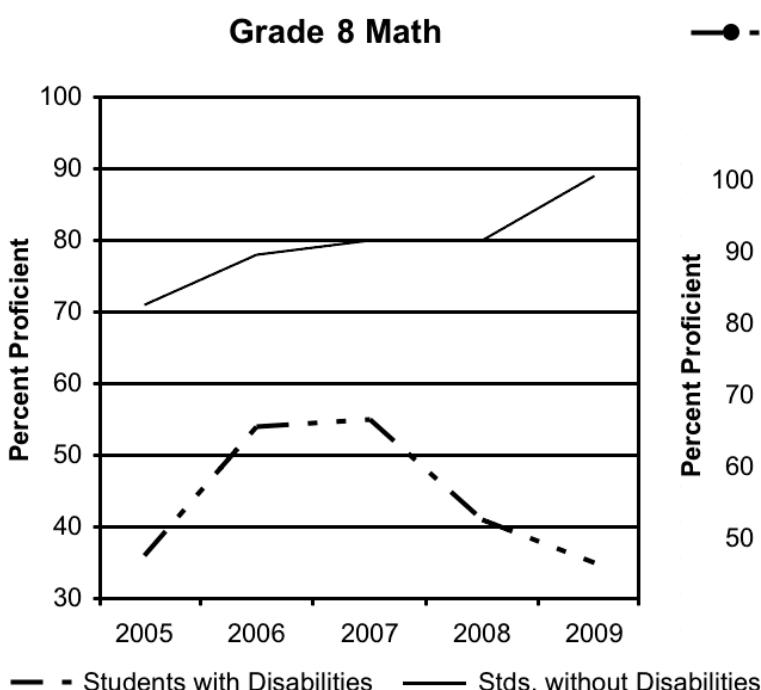
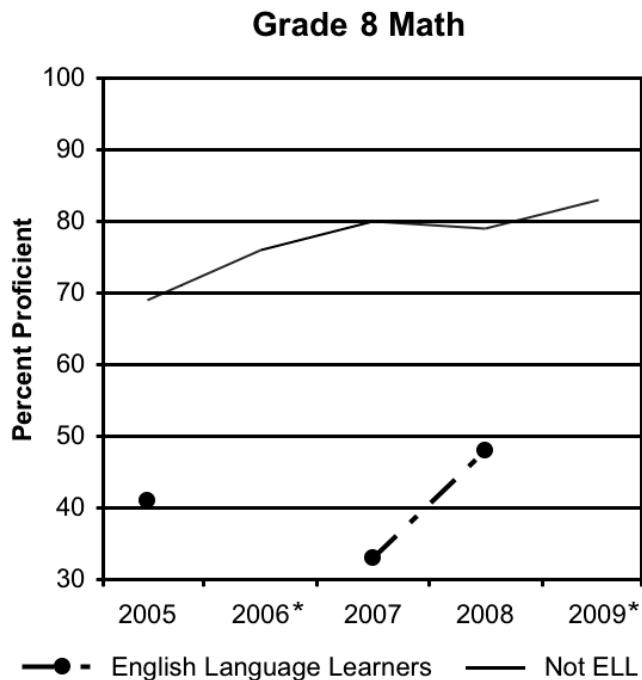
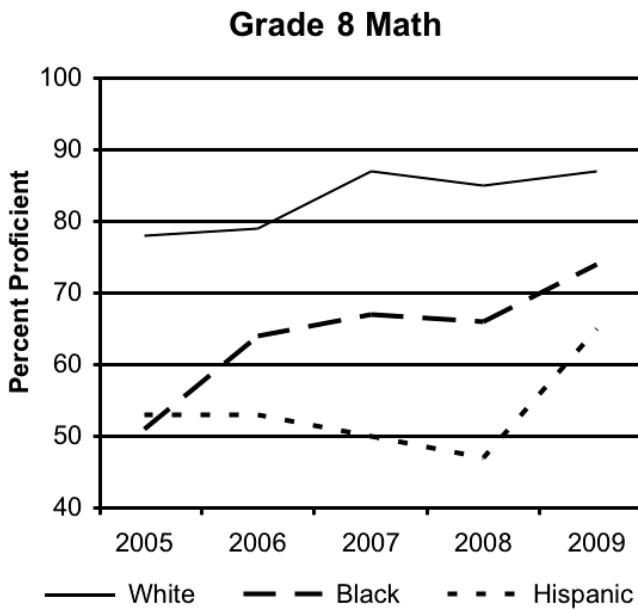
Percent Proficient on Reading MEAP Tests by Subgroups, 2005–09



* Note that, in some years, there were not enough English Language–Learners for valid percentages.

reduced achievement gaps between them and the rest of the student body. Title I is meant to give extra help to students who need it due to their status as economically disadvantaged, disabled, or English language–learning. While there is no racial criterion, a disproportionate number of these children are also either African American, Hispanic, or both, and AAPS has been quite concerned with those achievement gaps, which is why we have also charted their test scores over time. Most of our mentees were in more than one of these categories.

Percent Proficient on Math MEAP Tests by Subgroups, 2005–09



* Note that, in some years, there were not enough English Language–Learners for valid percentages.

The scores for eighth-graders, which should show the greatest cumulative effect of mentoring, are mixed. There was a generally upward trend in **reading** scores, except for black students. Gaps for students with disabilities and for economically disadvantaged students closed significantly. By eighth grade, there are generally too few English language-learners for valid statistics. The few data points we do have are for very few students and therefore difficult to interpret.

There was a generally upward trend in **mathematics** scores, as well, except for students with disabilities. This may be attributable to the more rigorous courses pushing down into middle schools as the Michigan Merit Curriculum requirements are implemented in high schools. There was significant closing of achievement gaps for African American and Hispanic students and for economically disadvantaged students. And, again, the data for English language-learners was limited.

These scores, of course, are those of *all* Scarlett children, not just those served by *Reach Out*. We do not have the data access needed to chart that information. Ideally, we would chart trends for a cohort of our mentees as they moved up through the grades. Even if we had that data, however, we would still be unable to take credit for any success demonstrated by it, as the interaction time with mentors was a relatively small intervention among many. Still, the indications of successful learning offered by these scores, however limited they may be, are at least encouraging.

2. Significant parental involvement

Our model deliberately seeks the involvement of parents and guardians, for several research-based reasons. One-on-one mentors are more effective in producing positive outcomes for their mentees if they know their children's parents (Jekielek, *et al.*, 2002) well. Reaching out to parents socially spurs them to become more involved with their children's academic lives and with the school, as well as prompting some to attend our workshops and to consult with our director. Non-experimental analyses (Jekielek, *et al.*, 2002) suggest that "mentoring improves parental relationships and scholastic confidence, thereby ... increasing the value he or she attaches to academic activities, and raising grades."

The numbers reflecting this involvement of parents, grandparents, and other guardians have already been cited under **Family Events**. We are extremely proud of how many of them—often busy, working-class parents, often with limited English skills—we were able to draw into our activities over and over. They repeatedly volunteered in our end-of-year surveys (see Appendix E.3) that we made them feel welcome at and connected to the school. Many had never been to an open house or parent-teacher conference until solicited to go with their child's mentor. Almost universally, they were pleased with and grateful for the direct help offered to their children, the support in learning the unwritten rules of school, and the transformation they perceived in their children's attitudes, confidence, and sense of responsibility.

Many parents took advantage of every opportunity offered to get together socially and to explore colleges and careers, often bringing younger siblings with them. We were touched by how much they appreciated the simple crafts, games and other activities offered at family events. Clearly, there is a need for these community-building events that is rarely met—at least for our population of parents.

3. Maturation of college-age mentors

As we had planned and hoped for, many of our college-age mentors were spurred in their own development by their experiences with *Reach Out*. Our evidence for this can only be anecdotal, but it is nevertheless powerful. *Reach Out* has drawn attention for the number of University of Michigan recruits to Teach For America and the Peace Corps who come from our ranks. They have found service to others gratifying and hunger for more. Our alums have participated in and even created service organizations, in addition to finding work in the public service arena. Examples:

- Member of the Board of Directors for Children's Brittle Bone Foundation.
- Volunteer at the Ronald McDonald House in Lincoln Park
- Doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, researching the factors that promote long-term, high-quality mentoring relationships, which have proven to be most effective in terms of youth outcomes.
- Volunteer with Metro Achievement Center in Chicago, which offers tutoring program and character development classes for children and teens.
- Member of the *Reach Out* Board of Directors (several in turn, over the years).
- Mentor in the Cabrini-Green tutoring program in Chicago
- Math tutor to high school and college students in Toledo
- Developer, with City of Toledo, University of Toledo, K-12, and business partners of summer engineering program for high school students.
- Organizer of fundraising event for Children's Health Care of Atlanta.
- Featured in the Campus Compact Member Spotlight.
- Recipients of Super Mentor Award from the Washtenaw Mentor Council.
- Volunteer with School on Wheels, a Los Angeles-based tutoring program for homeless children.
- Principal Intern at high school in Chicago, as part of collaboration among Teach For America-Chicago, the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and Chicago Public Schools to create a new generation of school leaders for Chicago's most challenged schools.
- Award from UM Ginsberg Center for "Outstanding Community Impact - Student"
- Volunteer with Chicago organization Build On, focused on empowering at-risk children to improve the local and global community through service
- Award from UM Ginsberg Center for "Outstanding Community Impact - University Organization" (the student *Reach Out*).
- Program Coordinator for the nonprofit organization Aging with Dignity.
- Big Brother of the Year for the Big Bend region of Florida; member of its Board of Directors

It takes time for mentoring relationships to develop, and volunteers can become discouraged at the extent of their children's problems and at their own seemingly limited ability to really help. Specific training and the power of a long-term relationship, however, make it possible for them to truly change lives. That is why they kept coming back and why they recruited their friends: the experience was as rewarding and life-changing for them as it was for the children they served. That is why dozens of mentors have chosen to continue meeting with their mentees on their own through high school—or at least as long as the mentors remain in the area. We hear back from now-distant alumni that they remain in touch with their one-time mentees, many years later, often through Facebook. They *know* they have made a difference. It is edifying to read of the impact that their short time with us has had on their lives—and how they are living out the same values as adults.

4. Our model has been shared with and adopted by others.

Although we have had less time for networking and outreach than during our university years, we have still managed to influence other people and organizations in our field.

- Director LaSovage was an original member of the Mentor Michigan Providers Council, a body of 20 mentoring experts from across the state that developed Mentor Michigan Quality Program Standards for Youth to help parents and guardians as well as those running mentoring programs understand what quality mentoring looks like. The definition of mentoring, standards of quality, and outcome measures for youth are essentially identical to our own. You may find these standards at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MM_Standards_7-26-05_131821_7.pdf.

- The Connecticut Governor's Annual Mentoring Partnership Conferences brought her to the state several times for presentations. The Governor's Prevention Partnership chose the *Reach Out* program for statewide replication and brought LaSavage back to provide workshops for partners on how to establish, implement, and evaluate programs.
- Program Coordinator Shara Cherniak and Dr. Jerry Miller negotiated to offer a *Reach Out* section for the Fall 2005 Psychology 211 course at UM, with Shara as our group leader. Due to our level of workshops and training, our mentors were not required to do a mid-term. Forty hours in the field were required; they included seeing mentees twice a week, attending our training, in-services, family events, and weekend outings.
- Our major fall 2006 orientation session had 82 attendees, nine of them visiting from Flint's Kettering University to see how they might create a similar program there.
- Former mentor Justin Schott, after receiving his master's from UM's School of Natural Resources & the Environment, started a program called the Interfaith Youth Energy Squad (IYES) for the Voices for Earth Justice organization to train youth aged 14–19 in Wayne and Oakland Counties to perform basic energy audits and retrofits for low-income families. Justin wrote: "While helping curb global warming pollution and saving families \$400–500 per year, IYES aims to serve as a springboard to successful, sustainable careers for youth whose prospects and support may be limited. By working closely with volunteer crew leaders, the program incorporates a significant mentoring component, which stems directly from my experience with *Reach Out*. We're also emphasizing job skills [résumé-writing, practice interviews, and applying for jobs and further education]. These elements of the program are very much inspired by my service with *Reach Out*, by observing a youth development program that really works."
- The Center for Independent Learning hired Director LaSavage as the Project Manager for the Washtenaw 2009 Youth Action AmeriCorps*VISTA Program, which was designed to recruit, place, train, and support up to 20 young adults in summer jobs with youth-service and nonprofit organizations. While the summer associates did perform jobs benefiting their organizations and the community, the primary goal of the project was their own development. We intended the program to run much like a college service-learning course, with individual knowledge and skills developed through the medium of community service work. Accordingly, LaSavage developed a curriculum, workshops, and activities to foster growth in self-knowledge and self-direction, in addition to the specific job-related skills and lore common to internship programs. The eight-week Personal and Career Discovery workshop series was based on *What Color Is Your Parachute? For Teens* by Richard Nelson Bolles and Carol Christen with Jean Blomquist and on *Michigan Reach Out* workshops on career- and self-exploration and on communications skills.

We post our orientation and some training materials on the web and encourage their free use. We are frequently contacted with thanks, questions, and requests for updated versions. We take seriously the adage that there is no limit to what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit. The 3–4 million page views of our website annually, more than half of them by repeat visitors, demonstrate that others are making use of our resources.

5. A heartening variety of donors supported our efforts financially.

Our major funding came from an original donation by the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation; this was intended as seed money for our transition from university sponsorship to independent status. Significant grants came to us from the Pfizer Foundation, through the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, the Downtown Ann Arbor Kiwanis Club (a steady partner during our UM years), and the Rotary Club of Ann Arbor. Several local businesses sent small but regular donations. Special mention goes to the UM chapter of *Pi Kappa Alpha* fraternity (also a long-time partner from

UM days). The “Pikes” provided not only many mentor volunteers and two current board members, but also serious, ongoing efforts to raise funds for us. More than once, we were the beneficiary of funds raised during Greek Week when *Pi Kappa Alpha* took top place. More than once, we benefited from the major Pike charity fundraiser, Comedy Night. Similarly, we received major assistance from sales of the UM Business School’s student publication, *The Monroe Street Journal*, before it went to online publication and no longer generated significant income. The Michigan Student Assembly supported specific enrichment programs through small grants to the student *Reach Out* organization, as did the Ann Arbor Public Schools Educational Foundation and the City of Ann Arbor.

The Ann Arbor Public Schools was a sustaining supporter for the last five years through an allocation of Scarlett Middle School’s Title I federal funds for disadvantaged students.

Most heartening of all, however, was the ongoing and growing support from mentor “alumni” and their family foundations. Many of them, while stretched by student loan payments and beginning families of their own, still sent us small checks every year, along with encouraging notes about how much their own experiences as *Reach Out* mentors had meant to them.

And, of course, many family and community members wrote checks to us because they believed in what we do, even though they had no connection to our programs.

Appendix A lists dozens of organizations and nearly two hundred individual donors who have supported us financially.

B. Disappointments

We are emphatically *not* blaming anyone for “falling down on the job.” We believe the program was remarkably successful for many mentors, children, and families. Our consideration of weaknesses is done in the spirit of accountability and in order to leave a record so that this valuable model can be implemented better in the future. Integration problems are probably inevitable in a collaboration: each organization has a different focus, culture, and values. It would be surprising if all of us could effortlessly jump aboard exactly the same bandwagon. But just plugging in volunteers without true integration makes them less effective than they might be in a truer partnership.

1. Mismatch between MRO and Site

There was an evident mismatch between our values, beliefs, and objectives and those of Scarlett Middle School. This is not intended as a criticism but as a plain statement of fact. The school, its teachers, and the school district (just as all public schools in the nation) are figuratively under the gun. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act mandates that *all* of our children will be proficient in reading and math by 2014, and that adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward that goal will be made *every* year—by *every* subgroup of students. The NCLB push for tutoring as a solution to subgroup achievement gaps conflicts with our values and principles regarding holistic mentoring. Philosophically, we cannot be simply tutors, yet that is what Scarlett came to want us to be.

This is neither our fault nor the school’s. It is a consequence of the national culture’s acceptance, in recent years, of notions of accountability that are rooted in and even defined by standardized testing. When test scores come to matter more than anything else, children’s performance on them becomes the top priority. And there is no question that these tests have become very high-stakes, indeed. Failure to make adequate yearly progress on them, by every subgroup of students, results in increasingly harsh penalties for schools—quite a few of which are now in the final “restructuring” phase in which faculty and administrators are fired. The newer Race to the Top (RttT) legislation set up a competition for federal funding that encouraged states, including Michigan, to begin to evaluate teacher performance partly on the basis of such scores—again putting jobs at stake. Naturally, when

test scores count so much, efforts are redoubled to improve them. Unfortunately, the short-term perspective this system engenders has led us to choose test preparation over whole-child solutions that might be more effective in the long run.

Early in our collaboration, *Reach Out* Director LaSavage was part of the school improvement team and attended all of its meetings. She also served on the school's Turning Points Design and Implementation Teams. *Reach Out* volunteer leaders promoted community service, the technology infusion project, the NASA project, and a Scarlett *Reach Out* newsletter. Our CJ Johnson developed a spreadsheet for tracking improvements in Attitude, Attendance, and Achievement; he and mentor Julia Power worked with then-Principal Carol Shakarian on this quantitative data.

Back then, mentors were trained in how to help children use their laptop computers for study, research, and organization purposes; how to utilize SQ3R and other study skills appropriate for their child's learning style; how to organize thoughts and write a meaningful essay or short paper; and how to better manage time. In addition, mentors were provided information and training about the AIMS and Turning Point model in order to better support teachers and children with teaming and learning strategies.

In our 2006–07 end-of-year report, coordinators Lee Harkaway and Lisa Goulet noted a high level of support from teachers and counselors. All science teachers provided their science fair overviews and expectations for tutor/mentors. Coordinators and tutor/mentors felt very comfortable going to teachers for advice, help, and direction. The majority of all teachers were much more available to coordinators and tutor/mentors that year. Counselors were very helpful in making initial matches and registering parents and children. They often made phone calls to parents to follow up on commitments, etc. Candy Justyna was always accessible and we were pleased to match most of her ESL children that year. Three tutor/mentors worked with English language-learning children during her class. The majority of staff "went out of their way" to help coordinators with social and emotional issues of our children. Scarlett secretaries often went above and beyond to help *Reach Out*: providing student lists and course schedules, alerting us when children were moving, letting us know when parent/guardian phone numbers had changed, and providing report cards and progress reports for tutor/mentors and children to review (agreed upon by parent signature). They also assisted with family events and outings by collecting RSVP forms. Custodians Sally Johnson, Deb Edwards, and Neda Stinson were tremendously helpful with our potlucks and family outings, as well as with several moves of our room during the renovation process.

Gradually, though, this kind of integration into the life and culture of the school was lost. There was increasing emphasis on "homework help," to the exclusion of those less directly instrumental skills. While many mentors expressed alarm at their mentees' deficits in basic math and reading/writing skills, they didn't think they could fix this. As one wrote: "At first I was all about the grades. I wanted his report card to be all A's and B's and then I would feel successful. Then I came to see that so much of his homework is way over his head. It's like he is treading water but he can't swim a lap." And yet, mentors also noted how low the bar was for their children compared to what they had experienced: "I couldn't believe the level of learning being expected of him. I had to learn and do so much more in middle school and so is my sister now. That concerns me." Many of us believe that diagnostic and prescriptive computerized learning programs could really help with remediation—and that an opportunity was wasted during the years these children had their own laptop computers. Scheduling of Elevate Math (cyber-tutoring from India) at the same times and days as *Reach Out* was an insoluble conflict. Conflicts with sports programs also caused many children to drop out of *Reach Out*. By 2009–10, we had many more trained and willing volunteers than Title I-eligible children to match with them.

2. Gradual loss of program elements

When we had the luxury of university sponsorship, and the access to federal grants that came with that, we were able to develop a really rich array of programming: preschool play groups; elementary-age hands-on science clubs and summer science camps; middle school career clubs and youth task forces and one-on-one mentoring; high school academic and career mentoring. Programs evolved in collaboration with partner sites and volunteer desires to do more. Our model of providing opportunities and support through community volunteers from preschool through college seemed almost within reach.

On our own as a nonprofit organization, however, we have been unable to bring in the same financial backing. As we pulled back to working only in Ann Arbor due to limited resources (where before we had worked in Detroit, Pontiac, and Ypsilanti, as well), our resources became even more limited. Ann Arbor is simply not seen by potential funders as the home of a needy population of children—even though we know there are plenty of such children here.

The first major program we dropped, due to logistical complexity, was the elementary hands-on science clubs. After two years, we were only doing mentoring at Scarlett Middle School. Eventually, we were no longer doing holistic mentoring. Unable to support a recent graduate as a coordinator after 2008, we offered fewer services and events—and these things were missed. By the spring of 2010, survey responses from our Scarlett children had changed in character. Typically, in response to “What I wish my mentor and I could have done this year is ...,” students wished for more fun, non-academic activities such as weekend trips to amusement parks or sporting events. This year, many children who had been with us more than one year, or who had had relatives with us earlier, expressed disappointment at missing activities we had done before but could not do this year. For example, ten wished we had done the Washtenaw Community College tour that had been a tradition. Ten wished they had been able to go on workplace tours (the Chrysler Proving Grounds visit, in particular, lives on in folklore!) and to have career presenters in the *Reach Out* room, as we used to do every spring. Ten wished for more family activities at

Scarlett, like our Thanksgiving Potluck, which were always well attended by parents and siblings. To our surprise, eight missed the community service projects we used to organize. Four missed “that guy” who used to organize trips to Ann Arbor Airport and then explain how math they were learning in school is applied by pilots in their work. [Sadly, pilot Jerry Hartweg, who volunteered with *Reach Out* for more than a decade, died last year.]

Knowing how much we had been able to do previously, we were disappointed to see our programming withering away.

3. Less capable mentors

We never expected our college-age mentors to be fully formed adults; rather, we considered their guidance and development to be an important part of our mission. But, after a good fifteen years doing this work, we have noted a trend towards less maturity and sense of responsibility among this young adult group. We suspect this is a culture-wide phenomenon, although perhaps intensified in Ann Arbor as the cost of attending the university rises relentlessly and discourages the less privileged from coming to UM. Popular culture commentary is replete with tales of “helicopter parents” who



keep their children infantilized by doing too much for them, by protecting them from experiencing failure (and so growth), by keeping them overly dependent, and by living vicariously through them — see *A Nation of Wimps* (Hara Estroff Maran, Broadway, 2008), or *Men to Boys: The Making of Modern Immaturity* (Gary Cross, Columbia, 2008) or *The Price of Privilege* (Madeline Levine, Harper, 2008).

These young adults are also the products of a system that has continuously measured and evaluated their academic performance, and they've got the test anxiety to prove it. All the pressure has distorted their ethics and priorities, as evidenced by the epidemic of cheating in schools and on campuses. Perhaps they learned this from their parents, who would pull any strings to get them out of trouble or into the right college.

We suspect that their increasing self-absorption is encouraged and reinforced by the explosion of the social media that dominate their lives. A generation that posts or twitters its every thought and action is bound to be a bit self-centered. Virtual interactions are really no substitute or training ground for face-to-face interaction, so many young people have stunted social skills in person. Nor are we the only ones to have noticed this. A colleague in a similar field wrote the following (private communication):

“It’s not just in classes, either. I manage an educational outreach project that manufactures museum exhibits for the local children’s hands-on museum. We are required to hire undergrads (after all, *they* are supposed to be getting something out of this, too) and over the four years I’ve been associated with the project I’ve seen a serious decline in the quality of the hires. We have kids (and they are kids) who are incapable of engaging in an open design process—it’s their ideas or nothing—and any hint of criticism or even an alteration of their ideas results in sulking and an unwillingness to participate. And these kids are getting paid for the hours they put in! Lest you think I run a tight ship, my emphasis is always on hearing all sides of the issue, making it very clear that everything is up for negotiation (all they need to do is put together a persuasive argument), and I spend a lot of time leading the group to come to consensus (as opposed to me laying down decisions, which is fully within my rights to do, and would be a lot more time-efficient).

“It’s very difficult to have to try to help these kids so late in their development—these are skills they should have developed ten years ago. It’s incredibly hard for these young men to receive critiques from a woman: I think they’re expecting some sort mothering and hand-holding. I feel almost like I’m performing community service, because I keep thinking about the poor employers who are going to be saddled with them.”

Whatever the cause, we experienced a growing incidence of college-age mentors failing to live up to their commitments to children, not showing up, not calling to say they could not come, refusing to take part in training seminars, and generally not getting the benefit from the mentoring experience that they should have. The number who come to us to do court-ordered community service (due to minor-in-possession or other such charges) had increased—and this is clearly not the best motivation for such work.

We are not quite the curmudgeons this section would indicate. These are, of course, generalizations that do not apply to many dedicated individual mentors. We still find young adults to be idealistic and willing volunteers—much more so than the average adult. It is simply our observation that fewer of them truly follow through on their expressed intentions than even five years ago. Our perceptions, again, were borne out by our survey data. This past year, our “veteran” children, who were with a mentor for the second or third year, had decidedly more positive experiences than new children with new mentors. Two, for example, expressed great disappointment at how much their university mentors had promised them, compared to what they had delivered. What they learned from them is the importance of keeping one’s promises to children—because these young men had not.

We believe that all of the foregoing is an eloquent argument for just how much a program like ours is needed. Our ideals and aims could not be better expressed than they were by a veteran mentor in a speech to the UM Board of Regents just a few years ago:

"Reach Out does more than expand our personal networks. It also gives volunteers the gift of personal transformation. You are well aware, I am sure, of the immaturity, narcissism, and lack of ethics that have become rampant in my generation. I am here to tell you that we are the solution. Reach Out volunteer work brings us out of our selfish bubbles and turns us into community activists. We literally learn how the other half lives—and how we can make a difference in less privileged lives. We also learn, on a visceral level, how satisfying it is to make such a difference in the world. It is easy, in an era of constant bad news, to become depressed and feel helpless about the state of things. But we get past that by taking effective action. We will always be contributors to public life, wherever we live after our college days are over, because of our Reach Out experiences. The intellectual, emotional, social, and ethical growth prompted by our training and our volunteer work does as much to make us "the leaders and best" as anything that happens on campus. We tend to join Reach Out with some vague notion of doing service, but we get back as much as or more than we give. We become empowered, self-directed, responsible adults committed to contributing meaningfully to our communities."

This is how powerful our mentoring model can be. For another perspective, please review a similar commentary from this past June in Appendix D.

4. Inability to develop a stable donor base adequate to support our programming ambitions.

The late Ted Doan of the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation provided generous seed money for the establishment of the *Michigan Reach Out* nonprofit organization. Given our track record of solid accomplishments and successful grant proposals while at the university, we had hoped to garner more support as we established our new identity. We were unable to do so. Certainly, the cachet of the University of Michigan "brand" must have helped in our previous efforts, while partnership with the Ann Arbor Public Schools—emphatically *not* perceived as under-resourced or as serving a needy student population—most likely hurt our nonprofit fundraising efforts.

We explored numerous partnerships and funding avenues, many of which were successful for a short time or to a small degree, but inadequate funding always limited our programming. Even our volunteer mentors often wondered aloud why we needed money at all, given that they were unpaid. The simple answer to that is that quality programming requires professional support, as does the recordkeeping and reporting that funders deserve and require.

As far back as our 1998 report (<http://www.reachoutmichigan.org/reachout-eval-98/lessons.html>), we noted the importance of a paid staff to support volunteers. Staff is needed to train and support new volunteers in a consistent and reliable way that cannot be expected from other volunteers. [It is worth mentioning that the primary author of this report, no longer being paid by *Reach Out*, took much longer to produce it than she should have, having been repeatedly drawn away by a paying pursuit.] By our 2000 annual report (<http://www.reachoutmichigan.org/report00/intro.html#C>), we were noting that "One lesson we have



learned about building learning communities is that our success is very dependent upon the stability offered by the continuing presence of the same people year after year," because it takes so long to establish trust with our partners. In our final UM report (<http://www.reachoutmichigan.org/report02/IIPt2.html#A3>), we laid out the invariable stages through which volunteers go, detailing the kinds of support they need at each stage in order to stick with it until it becomes an inherently rewarding experience. We found that we could not offer the necessary consistency and stability while also constantly chasing after funding.

Places we looked for sponsorship or partnership:

- University of Michigan: The Edward Ginsberg Center, the Center for Educational Outreach, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Vice President for Research, the Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, the School of Education, and outreach arms of the Stephen M. Ross School of Business, the College of Engineering, the School of Public Health, and the Life Sciences Institute.
- Eastern Michigan University: Gear-Up, Institute for the Study of Children, Families, and Communities
- Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living
- Washtenaw County Workforce Development
- Ypsilanti Chamber of Commerce
- Washtenaw County Big Brothers/Big Sisters
- Washtenaw Intermediate School District
- Pfizer was a reliable funder for four years—until it left Ann Arbor.

C. What We'd Do Differently, Given the Chance

"Lessons Learned" have always been an important part of our reporting, and it seems especially valuable at this juncture to communicate our best advice on how to do what we have done *better*.

1. Go where we will be true partners, involving all stakeholders in planning and program revisions and adaptations.

This is not intended as a slap at Scarlett Middle School or its personnel, many of whom were very welcoming and accommodating to us. But repeated turnover in administrators, with accompanying changes in philosophy and priorities, impaired our integration with the building's staff and programs. We have been frankly amazed that we could have worked in the school for eight years and still have so few staff members aware of who we are and what we do. This was a waste of opportunity to truly collaborate on our common mission. An add-on program of which few are aware can never be as effective as one that is understood, welcomed, and integrated by all, where appropriate.

Such integration would, ideally, include these kinds of elements:

- Include *Reach Out* staff in staff meetings and school improvement planning.
- Encourage teachers to communicate regularly with mentors regarding children's individual needs.
- Invite mentors to join parents for conferences with teachers, IEPC meetings, etc.
- Incorporating our World of Work career exploration, talent and skills identification, temperament/personality surveys, shadowing/tours as part of Career Pathways or, as we did at Slauson MS years ago when part of Health and Life Skills course.
- Join our parental-involvement efforts (workshops, family events, World of Work opportunities) with the mission and activities of a school's PTO or PTSO.

We believe inadequate common planning was the root of our inadequate integration into the site. Earlier in our history, while still at the University of Michigan, we facilitated the development of many coalitions and shared programs with a variety of partners. What made them successful was the formalized and ongoing participation of all stakeholders.

Our children, teens, and college students need guidance and care to develop into whole, competent adults who can enjoy gainful employment and work constructively and collaboratively to improve their communities and society as a whole. Families and school or college personnel alone cannot give our youth and young adults all that they need, so other stakeholders must step in to help. Since the successful raising of our collective young is society's most fundamental—even indispensable—task, we are *all* stakeholders.

Stakeholders who accept their responsibilities work in concert to design and adapt programming, to support it financially, and to celebrate its successes. There is no perfect model for rebuilding community around our children, teens, and college students and nurturing their development of character, and leadership and life skills. A community follows the values and passions of its members; each community's approach and methods are different. But even the best programming in the world—if it is dropped in from the outside and run by outsiders—will never be as effective as a jointly developed effort.

To explain better what we mean by this, we will review some of the program adaptations we made during our first few years as a nonprofit:

- In the fall of 2004, with no funds for program coordinators or site leaders, we decided to organize mentors and children at all sites within small Family Groupings. Each was led by a volunteer Family Leader—a mentor who had been with our programs at least one year and who made the commitment to attend bimonthly Team Meetings for ongoing training, planning, and sharing.
- In coordination with Scarlett priorities that year, our mentors were trained in how to help children use their laptop computers for study, research, and organization purposes; how to use SQ3R and other study skills appropriate for their child's learning style; how to organize thoughts and write a meaningful essay or short paper; and how to better manage time. In addition, mentors were provided information and training about the AIMS and Turning Point model in order to better support teachers and children with teaming and learning strategies.
- In an attempt to help and involve families at little expense, we hosted "brown bag" lunch and dinner workshops on Keys to Youth Development, Learning Styles, Multiple Intelligences, Temperament Surveys, Tips to Help Children Explore Broad Career Options, Intentional Dialogue Skills, and Building Character and Integrity for Ourselves and Our Children.
- When new children arrived at Scarlett knowing no English, our Mandarin- and Spanish-speaking mentors met them in class several times a week instead of after school.

We tried, in short, to meet the needs and serve the priorities of the Scarlett community. More such coordination and integration would have made for a stronger program. One lesson we have learned—or tried to—over and over is to avoid dollars with strings attached. Our dependence upon Title I revenue pulled us away from the holistic mentoring model in which we so strongly believe. There is surely a way to support such programming—we simply haven't found it yet.

2. Require professional development; build in reflection time.

In our very early outreach days at UM, we were so busy *doing* that we did little or no training. It did not take long for us to realize the importance of preparing our volunteers and then supporting them in their work, as well as in their growth into ever more effective mentors. Our training regimen grew

organically, added to as particular needs became evident. Our orientation, in the end, became truly comprehensive. It covered so much that we had to send volunteers away with an extensive handbook for later reference. Similarly, our series of workshops expanded, and each became better and more focused over the years. We found—unequivocally—that mentors who took part in such ongoing training, especially for more than one year, developed into exactly the kind of thoughtful, versatile, and useful mentors that every parent and teacher would want for their children.

The difficulty was in getting volunteers to commit nearly as much time to training as they did to direct interaction with their mentees. The value of such time was emphatically not immediately obvious to many of them. Even those who did attend were not always truly engaged in what should have been an interactive process. When it worked well, it was magical: people gained invaluable insight into both their children and themselves.

There is a reason why education has not become an “efficient” process between a solo learner and a computer: just as in the time of Socrates, we learn a great deal from questioning one another and sharing what we know and want to know. Ideally, group dynamics has a synergy that cannot be duplicated via technology.

And in an era of ubiquitous technology and round-the-clock connectivity, time to slow down, to stop *doing* and to merely think, is more vital than ever. We must reflect upon our experiences to truly learn from them. If such time for reflection is not built into our schedules and required, it tends never to occur. Requiring it became more and more difficult; even when present, today’s young adults are often engrossed in their smart phones or laptops. Just as they came to need this guidance more, they were also less receptive to it. We believe that our program began to lose both effectiveness and integrity without it. Things began to fall apart without it. Our conclusion: Either require ongoing training of college-age mentors or look elsewhere for mentors.

3. Be more ambitious, not less

Our reaction to the change we perceive in young adult mentors is conflicted: on the one hand, we think it might be better to have closer to a 50:50 mix of college-age and community adult mentors, to raise the general level of peer expectations and modeling. But then we are pulled to consider how much those young people need what *Reach Out* participation can give them.

Our program filled an expressed desire of our UM students to do more than they had in high school community service projects and student organizations. While many undergraduates continue that pattern, creating new organizations that die when they graduate, ours wanted much more than a résumé-building club or project. They wanted to have a real impact and realized that several years and stages of building upon one another’s accomplishments would be required. This worked for a while, in both the student *Reach Out* organization and in the fraternity that long collaborated with us, where the baton was passed from one age group to the next.

Why did this process not continue indefinitely? Well, it was never smooth. Each cohort differed in maturity and ambition; some students were better leaders. It took them time to grow into that role, beginning as naïve but well-intentioned do-gooders and progressing into adults who perceived the complexity and interacting parts of the puzzle. In a typical evolution, they gradually came to realize that there is no one, valid target to blame for children’s difficulties in school, nor is there any simple solution. They learned by doing that it takes many years and many hands to truly change children’s lives. This kind of maturation takes both experience and guidance. We noted a huge shift when we left campus and the director no longer had open office hours for student interaction. Fewer students

It was difficult to get volunteers to commit nearly as much time to training as they did to direct interaction with their mentees.

rose to become great leaders without that quantity of interaction. There was another downward shift in the past two years, as many student mentors chose not to participate in our training/professional development workshops. They needed the spur of such contemplation and conversation to grow.

College students need to be part of such a culture and movement and program — one that will be there before them, with them, and long after them. They should be able to come back, to share how they keep learning and growing, with their younger peers and the kids — as several of our alums have done. Ideally our model would encompass a “mentoring center” transcending programs and generations to anchor mentoring for both college students and children, as well as to be a source of support for families and teachers.

An ongoing Center would connect to students to a “big cause”; provide role models among their own older peers; offer a rite of passage toward increasing responsibilities with children, families, and research; and afford opportunities to return and connect with the young ones. It would help them to see they are also being mentored — by peers and by those of us hired to work with them. Required training and reflection would be institutionally valued and expected. Connection with children and parents *and* with a new mentor to whom they pass on their charges has built some very strong support networks for all involved.

We know how well this model can work. When we still had more extensive programming, the community (Kiwanis) career mentors for our middle and high school mentees also, in many cases, found appropriate job shadowing opportunities for the UM academic mentors of their students. The undergraduate mentors were themselves explicitly mentored. A Center could coordinate community and business people mentoring the college students, those college students mentoring secondary students, and those secondary students mentoring elementary students. Everyone would share and plan family events, workshops for life and leadership skills, and career exploration opportunities. We have actually done all of this, although not always simultaneously, and the synergy is powerful. Why think small?

4. Integrate personal and career exploration for students.

We believe that career exploration is important not just for helping our young people to map out life paths, but also to provide meaning for what they are learning. Every teacher has heard, “When are we ever going to use this stuff?” and many parents have confronted a teen’s unwillingness to pursue rigorous science and math study over more “fun” electives. We believe that students are much more interested and motivated to work hard at learning when they see a connection between academic subjects and attractive careers. When teens are intrinsically motivated—doing something for their own reasons—they no longer need our prodding or nagging. Moreover, neurological research shows that, even if a topic makes sense to a learner, it must also have personal relevance in order to be remembered. So, understanding the real-world applications of academic learning can actually make for more effective study.

Our development of curriculum and activities focused on both self-discovery and career exploration for the Washtenaw 2009 Youth Action AmeriCorps*VISTA Program was an informative and encouraging implementation of our theories and perspectives about what many others consider a frill or unnecessary add-on to mentoring programs. [For a full report on this program, please see http://www.reachoutmichigan.org/docs/SYEP_Rpt_09.pdf.] Through this eight-week workshop series, we expected our young-adult participants to develop a *career direction*: a sense of initiative and personal responsibility regarding their future; a framework for exploring personal strengths and interests, broad career fields, and how the two might intersect; and definite ideas on how to further explore and properly prepare themselves for desired careers. Although our Summer Associates (SAs) ranged in age from 18 to 24, they—like most of their generational peers—had not done some of the tough

developmental work of adolescence: reflecting on who they are and want to become, establishing their own identities. Many of our SAs were or had been college students, but their choice of a course of study tended to precede any substantial self-analysis and to have been made for invalid or superficial reasons. They had habitually worked hard to please and meet the expectations of others, but they didn't really know what they want out of life. They resisted even thinking about such questions. So, a primary goal of the discovery workshops was to spur their growth in autonomy and purposefulness.

All of those who attended six or more of the sessions called their summer experience life-altering. Our guided exploration experiences were meant to bring home to them that *they must act* to shape their own lives. As we expected, our workshops began with resistance and resentment; it took time, repetition, and challenge to produce authentic engagement. They had never before been in a situation where they were given the permission, the time, and a framework for discovering themselves. They felt personally validated and found meaning in their past experiences. The tell-your-story part of the self-exploration activities brought them acute insights into their character, strengths, and skills that will serve them well in seeking and performing future work.

What could be more integral to adolescent development than deciding who you are and want to become? And what decisions could more powerfully affect motivation and performance in school?

We see a need to share these workshops on wide-ranging personal development themes with parents and children. The knowledge, insights, and skills engendered by "Understanding Feelings & Emotions" and "Intentional Dialogue & Active Listening" workshops, for example, have implications for parent-child, child-teacher, employer-employee, and child-child relationships. Anything that militates toward more competent and successful human beings will make for better students, as well.

Most children reported that they had never been on a college campus; those who have been were overwhelmingly there for athletic events. We see a continuing need for the kind of group lab and library tours we used to do, so that children can picture themselves as college students one day.

Many of our Scarlett children and their parents are at a loss to do long-term planning for post-high school education or careers. Children who would be the first in their families to attend college clearly need more experienced guidance, as parents are unsure of post-high school educational options and confused about the differences among kinds of degrees. College-educated parents tend to think in terms of majors and jobs about which they already know; they could use help looking at the different pathways possible for their children. Many parents know people with degrees who are unable to find work in their field or at all, or who are very unhappy with their jobs or fields. This leaves them confused by all the societal pressure for children to "go to college," as if that will set them up for life. We believe there is a need for more workshops exploring talents and careers, as well as more World of Work volunteers to share both broad and specific career information and advice.

Personal and career exploration are not nice-to-have adjuncts to mentoring—they are prerequisites to changing teens' lives for the better in all realms, including academia.

"This was like an epiphany. We all have stories. We need to look at what we've been through and how that shaped us into who we are becoming. I was trying to bury a lot of things. I feel like I'm free of the bad hold some things had. I didn't want to write anything down. But we have to, to talk to ourselves and see it. And then I didn't want to share it—but we need to. And it was one of the best things I've done." – Summer Associate, speaking of self-discovery workshops

V. Appendices

Appendix A. Supporters Who Have Funded Our Work

We include the following lists and our volunteer lists both as another thank-you to our generous donors and volunteers, and as an illustration of the virtual “cast of thousands” that has kept us going. The especially generous donation from the Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation was essential to establishing *Michigan Reach Out* as a nonprofit. We are also pleased at how many “alumni” volunteers and their families have continued to send us financial support, a clear indication of the value they—who know us better than anyone—put on what we do.

Foundation, Corporate, University & Government Grants and Gifts:

Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation
Ann Arbor Smiles Dental Group
Ann Arbor Public Schools
Ann Arbor Public Schools Educational Foundation
Black & Veatch Corp.
City of Ann Arbor
Colonial Square Cooperative
Herbert H. and Grace A. Dow Foundation
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Olivia Maynard
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John & Carolyn Sampselle
Madelyn Satz
Martin & Miriam Satz
Edith Semark
Dennis & Susan Shackelford
Karl & Sandra Shargabian
Clifford & Ingrid Sheldon
Linda Sietz
Moussa Sissoko

Deborah Snell
Dan & Tracey Stephenson
Max & Sue Supica
Stephen Syrjamaki
Martha & Gary Toth
Rosanna Toth
Joan Toy
Kristi Vilminot
Jane Viventi
Lisbeth Wagner
Randy & Rita Whitcomb
Alfred Wich
Joseph Wich
Lura Williams

In-Kind Supporters:

Rachel Burkhardt hosted annual farm visits as family events, with animal interaction and seasonal craft projects.

Linda Chapekis provides accounting and tax preparation services.

The First United Methodist Church of Ann Arbor allowed use of their facilities for meetings and training.

Bob Kegerreis produced three professional documentaries on *Michigan Reach Out*.

Tom McCartney printed brochures and newsletters for many years.

Scarlett Middle School allowed us to use copiers, a laptop computer, and the building for meetings, in-services, etc., in addition to providing a *Reach Out Room*. They also conducted background checks for staff and volunteer mentors.

Lee Harkaway and **Lisa Goulet** made the SMS *Reach Out Room* (actually, a series of rooms during construction there!) a welcoming and safe place for after-school activities of all sorts, with work hours and donations far exceeding their pay.

Margaret Green, with help from her daughter **Julia**, organized five Washtenaw Community College *Reach Out Days*, to explore educational opportunities at both WCC and Washtenaw Technical Middle College.

Brandt and Adria Clark brought horses to orientations and family picnics for trust exercises. In showing us how horses can be led to do things they are afraid of by a calm and confidant person, they made us think about our own attitudes and demeanor in helping the young people we mentor.

Scarlett custodian **Deb Palmer**, who participates in a greyhound rescue group, brought several of these beautiful dogs to interact with us at family picnics. Some of our children shared that they had never before been around dogs that they weren't afraid of.

The entire **SMS custodial team** could not have been more helpful and accommodating over the years.

Richardson's Barnyard in a Box came to a *Reach Out Open House*, helping to attract many complete families.

Susan Manney, whom Jeannine just happened to meet at a Kiwanis presentation, was a fantastic volunteer solicitor for new World of Work resources.

Many friends provided food, supplies, transportation, and other needs.

Appendix B. Our Amazing Volunteers

Due to incomplete data for the 2002–03 year, we are including only those volunteers from fall 2003 through spring 2010. We apologize to those we missed but want to ensure we do not inflate our roster with those who were oriented but never actually met with children. We are certain that all the following did act as tutor/mentors, many of them for several years. These folks are the structural pieces we glued together to make an effective program.

Newaj Abdulah	Philip Comerford	Lisa Goulet
Waqas Ali	Benjamin Cook	Rachel Goulet
James Altman	Eli Cooke	Steve Graves
Kelly Anderson	Rachel Craft	Katherine Gregg
Brook Anton	Kate Crawford	Emily Grekin
Jennifer Anzo	Emily Criste	Kristen Grimshaw
Jamaine Arrington	Anne Cunningham	Mandi Gross
Jared Averbuch	Doug Cunningham	Jeffrey Gross
Melissa Azul	Sheyi Davies	Sandra Haber
Jessica Baker	Michael Dawes	Michael Haffty
Crystal Baker-Burr	Massimo DeGaudenzi	Greg Hall
Mike Bakun	Sharon Derocher	Tahee Han
David Barney	Mark Diebel	Suzanne Hansma
Ashley Baum	Maureen Donegan	Lee Harkaway
Lauren Benson	Ashleigh Dowell	Sheila Harkaway
Neal Bhagat	Brian Duchemin	Nate Harness
Goral Bhatt	Deandra Duncan	Mark Harris
Caren Bieterman	Quang Duong	Lindsay Hayes
Josh Boeve	Ben Dykstra	Eric Garde Haywood
Mickey Bohn	Emily Eller	James Heike
Alessandra Bouffard	Karl Emerick	Gwen Hekman
Casey Bourke	Edward Emery	Jo Hekman
Elli Brodsky	Jeffrey Ermak	An-Li Herring
Jeff Brow	Becca Evans	Lauren Hirt
Amber Burkhardt	Quintin Evans	Michael Hoang
Maya Burns	Athena Eyster	Mark Hodges
Daniel Butler	Christopher Fecteau	Jenny Huang
Brett Cain	Emily Fehlberg	Emily Hunt
Michael Calabrese	Robert Feinland	Werlson Hwang
Tony Calabrese	David Flood	Sairus Indorewalla
Evan Carter	Jessica Forestier	Joseph Ives
Veronica Castillo	Robert Fowler	Eric Jackson
David Catalan	Nicole Fretter	Jared Jaffe
Olivia Chadwick	Courtney Fritz	Arvind Jayaraman
Hyewon Chang	Emily Gansel	Brigid Jennings
Jing Chen	Perry Gast	Sanju John
Juline Chen	Christina Gerazounis	Adam Johnson
Shara Cherniak	Lindsey Giacherio	Amy Johnson
Chung Cho	Michelle Gilmore	CJ Johnson
Jon Choi	Ina Gjeci	Katie Johnson
David Cholok	Alexander Glaros	Jessica Jolly
Jenne Christenson	Sean Goldin	Carl Jones
Amy Chung	Jonathan Goldstein	Cara Jordan
Rose Cicala	Julianne Gonda	Stafford Jordan

Karin Jors
Becca Julian
Rachel Karabenick
Sarvin Kashani
Corey Kasperski
Jason Kehrl
Emily Kennedy
Susan Kennedy
Erin Keyes
Arif Khan
Husnah Khan
Shravya Kidambi
Hannah Kim
Robin Kim
Seung-hee Kim
Susan Kim
Michael Kimani
Alison Kolody
Jacqueline Kontry
Candice Korkis
Dani Krumholz
Ruchi Kumar
Jennifer Lamoureux
Hannah Laughlin
Brett Lavery
Hosup Lee
Mia Lee
Angie Leenhouts
Miriam Levine
Michael Lipsitz
Sumona Majumdar
Augustus Makris
Divya Mandava
Alicia Manders
Steve Margiewicz
Maggie Master
Lance Maynard
Charlie McCarren
Lindsey McCormick
Neha Mehta
Kristen Metzger
Renee Middleton
Megan Milazzo
Alexandra Miller
Mike Miller
Peter Milonas
Lena Mortis
Neal Mugve
Eddie Muransky
Rain Murthy
Ajit Nalik
Ram Narayan

Charu Nautiyal
Ryan Neesam
Julia Nelson
Christie Nichols
Nicholas Niemuth
Jerry Nordblom
Daniel Nye
Koko Ochabanna
Donovan O'Neill
Brooke Ormond
Lisa Oshinsky
Maggie Paczkowski
Laura Padalino
Abhaya Pandit
Nicole Pando Girard
Anjanee Parmar
Marci Paskowitz
James Pauer
Jennifer Pennell
Louise Peterson
Meghan Petoskey
Jessica Petrus
Alex Pevzner
Bryan Phelps
Donald Pipino
Natassia Polyne
Kate Porpatich
Julia Power
Jasmine Pruitt
Paul Pulice
Keesha Pulse
Nabeel Qadri
Brendon Quilter
Rachel Ramaswamy
Priya Rao
Rachel Reading
Brandon Refabsells
Eric Rentsch
Kathryn Rolph
Cassandra Rondel
Sara Rust
James Ryans
Kirk Rzasa
David Sabbagh
Yuriy Sardarov
Aaron Schlesinger
Justin Schott
Zac Schwartz
Brianna Scott
Blake Searight
Jonathan Sebolt
Gloria Shan

Becky Shapiro
Ardaman Pal Shergill
Keli Shllaku
Ali Shriberg
Heather Siegelhelm
Rolf Sievers
David Simison
Stephen Sinas
Atishay Sinha
Shecari Sorrells
Shantel Spears
Stefanie Stachura
Lauren Stanek
Loren Steinke
Mitchell Stempien
Andrew Stephan
Jasmine Stone
Christine Strawn
Rebecca Stursberg
Nellie Summerfield
Olga Sverdlov
Mariko Sweetnam
Jonathon Swinton
Jonathon Tap
Celeste Taruc
Brad Taube
Alexi Taylor-Grosman
Jessica Templeton
Jesse Tevelow
Caitlin Thelen
Elizabeth Thomas
Taylor Decker Thornton
Suzanne Torrenga
Adam Trombley
Dawniece Trumbo
Breanna Turcsanyi
Doug Urquhart
Raina Vachhani
Abby Vallabhaneni
Lindsey Varvil-Weld
Jane Viventi
Shaan Wadhwa
James Waldeck
Emily Waldinger
Mandi Walker
Joseph Wendahl
Kyle Whisler
Stefanie Wiener
Brittney Williams
Courtney Williams
Malaia Williams
Camran Wilson

Lily Wong
Yasufumi Yamazaki

Mina Yang
Lisa Yang

Carlen Zhang
Alice Zheng

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Appendix D. Testimony from Reach Out Mentor

Nothing can quite capture the character of a holistic mentoring relationship, with its positive effects on both parties, quite like an anecdotal account. This one came from a two-year veteran mentor when he realized we would not be back for his final year at the University of Michigan.

9 Jun 2010

I first joined our program at the beginning of my sophomore year with hopes of gaining a stronger sense of connectedness with the U of M campus. To be honest, my expectations were pretty low upon entering. In the previous year I had floated around from one service group to another; just about all of them were letdowns. Most were small groups of strangers that got into a car and traveled to give a hand in the less fortunate areas of Michigan. While the work itself (working with elementary students in Detroit) was rewarding, there was no clear mission or sense of togetherness. I can remember coming back to campus feeling somewhat under-enthused and missing my high school days when I was connected and accounted for in my community. I just couldn't find that here at U of M. Moreover, I was woefully homesick all throughout my freshman year, so the inability to find a fulfilling organization was just another blow to my psyche at the time.

The next year, after much deliberation, I decided to return to U of M for my sophomore year. However, things got off to a rocky start—I came just short of making the highly competitive Club Soccer team here on campus. I was devastated because I was still desperately homesick and unable to find any group that would help give me a sense of connectedness. In an impulsive decision, I packed up my suitcase and went home with intent of never returning to U of M. Somehow with excessive pride, and a bit of coaxing from my parents, I found myself sitting on a plane bound once again for Ann Arbor.

One of the first things I did when I returned to campus was attend your orientation for *Michigan Reach Out*. As soon as I entered the undersized, yet colorfully adorned, basement room in that church, I knew I had stumbled upon something special. I remember feeling shocked at just how thick the Mentor Handbook was. This type of organization was a good sign. I also remember our group discussion about beliefs and values. You really emphasized the importance of setting goals and maintaining integrity. This really hit home with me at a time when I needed all the inspiration I could get to not drop out of my third semester. You implored us to be reflective and honest in our self-evaluations and to never give up.

While your workshops that year were a huge reason why I stayed at the University of Michigan, the relationship I built with my mentee has been a reason why I have come to love it here.

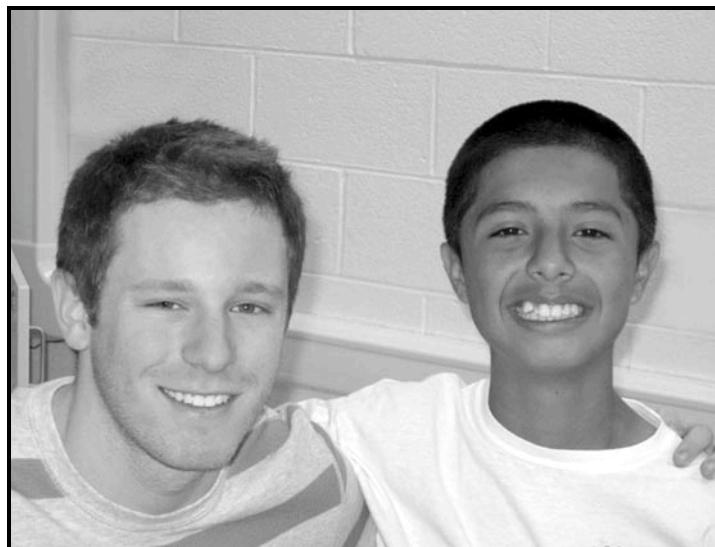
[My mentee] and I met about two years ago during both of our first years in *Reach Out*. Lee must have really done her research on me because [we] were a perfect fit since day one. In just two years we've worked on his organizational skills, his behavior in the classroom, whom he chooses to associate himself with, the importance of investing time outside of the classroom and many other things. It is no exaggeration when I say that he has expanded in each of these areas. This year he's been writing down his assignments in his planner, studying for tests during the weekend, and making wiser choices about whom to sit next to in class. But most importantly, he sees the bigger picture. We often talk about where he wants to go to college and the priorities he will need to uphold in high school in order to get there.

Throughout the past two years, [he] has become somewhat like a little brother to me. Whether it has been our frequent outings at U of M, going to the mall together, attending his after-school sporting events, going to his band concerts with his family, or going to see the Detroit Pistons play, we've established a deep trust and understanding. I'm convinced that all of the hours we've spent together have been just as beneficial to me as they have been to him.

It goes without saying that I will miss *Reach Out* a ton in my senior year at U of M. Also, it will be incredibly different without seeing Lee every Tuesday afternoon in the *Reach Out* room. I'm definitely going to miss her jokes and upbeat presence and I'm sure all the mentees will miss her empathy and the compassion that she demonstrated day in and day out!

Thank you Jeannine, Lee, and Martha for the time, dedication, and energy you guys have invested in the program. I can only hope that I've given back half as much as *Reach Out* has given me.

Sincerely, Jeff B.



Appendix E. Cumulative Survey Results

1. Mentor Survey Responses, 2005–10

We used a survey instrument developed in 2006 by former *Reach Out* mentor Karyl Shand Askew, who is pursuing a doctorate in educational psychology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. It asks volunteers to rate themselves of various categories of perceived efficacy and solicits anecdotal reports through a few open-ended questions. Data below includes only the questions that were used every year; open-ended responses are representative samples of a much larger volume.

Mentor Perceived Self-Efficacy	% Agreeing
I can help my mentee understand his or her responsibilities as a student.	99%
I can act as an advocate for my mentee in school-related matters.	95%
I'm not sure how to work with my mentee to identify a starting point for his or her personal growth.	85%
I can help my mentee develop a personal awareness of his or her learning style and strengths.	82%
During our sessions, I am able to promote my mentee's own problem-solving through good use of open-ended/process questioning skills.	85%
I feel capable to listen to and assist children with their personal issues.	77%
I believe I have the necessary skills to be an effective mentor.	89%
I can act as an advocate for my mentee in non-school related matters.	85%
I can use my knowledge of child development in supporting my mentee.	71%
I am continually finding better ways to be an effective mentor.	84%
I believe I welcome and can listen to my child's questions and ideas.	98%
When my mentee talks with me, I use good listening skills.	100%
I can help my mentee understand the importance of his or her choices.	74%
I am very effective in monitoring my mentee's academic growth.	70%
When meeting with my mentee, I can communicate how our meetings have promoted my own personal growth.	64%
I can manage our sessions well, so that we accomplish assignments or goals.	88%
I am able to use my mentee's tests to assist him or her in observing his or her own academic growth.	76%
I can facilitate discussions with my mentee about his or her choices or behavior that I find troubling.	83%
I have established a meaningful relationship with at least one parent or guardian.	63%

To document how the *Reach Out* experience impacted the growth and development of mentors, they were asked which of the following abilities they believed it had helped them to explore or to develop.

Mentor Development of Leadership & Life Skills	% Checked
Ability to develop personal character — knowledge of beliefs and values.	91%
Ability to embrace and appreciate personal and others' learning styles and strengths.	87%
Ability to develop skills and strategies to navigate the formal educational system.	65%

Ability to identify education and skill needs or weaknesses and to seek out resources.	66%
Ability to motivate and inspire self and others.	80%
Ability to be tenacious and perseverant.	71%
Ability to understand and learn from adversity, problems, and roadblocks.	82%
Ability to understand self and others' passions, dreams, and hopes.	85%
Ability to build and maintain relationships by developing genuine trust and rapport.	78%
Ability to embrace and appreciate diversity.	88%
Ability to be open-minded and receptive to new ideas, ways of doing things or interacting with others.	89%
Ability to be a leader and visionary for family, community, state, nation, and world.	54%
Ability to be a genuine and authentic long term mentor.	74%
Abilities to be an effective listener and communicator.	90%

Open-Ended Responses (selected but representative excerpts)

What I like best about being a mentor is...

I can make a difference in a young person's life.

Brings balance into my own life and reminds me what's really important.

I have a real commitment to somebody besides myself now that I want to live up to.

We talk about the real things going on in her life. I don't have many answers, but I am there to listen and to validate that these really hard things are going on.

The opportunity to see if I can really commit to someone and to a program. Everything I have done up to *Reach Out* has been temporary or something, frankly, to put on my resume. I let my kid down a lot last year. I've grown up a lot and now I feel responsible to be there for him and to keep my promises. I am so glad I have done this for two years and I wish I could keep doing it because I know I'm still a work in process.

The satisfaction of knowing that I have made a difference in someone's life and seeing the gradual growth of a child who didn't imagine that this was possible. It took this (third) year to finally get a rhythm, be responsible to one another, set goals and push to meet them. It takes time — a lot of time.

The chance to see learning from a different angle and seeing how my mentee employs different learning techniques than I do to reach the same ends. I would have written him off as just not being very bright ... but he is very hands-on and conceptual. I have learned that I'm not smarter just because I can listen, memorize, and do well on tests. In fact, he often shows me that he is learning with much more understanding, and he'll remember more long after the class than I did.

She, her friends, and her family all are trying hard. This makes me appreciate more what I have and see that I should not take it for granted and should always try hard, too.

We (Jeannine and I) have talked about internal motivation and self-confidence. I now realize that I can't make the girls be motivated or make them try harder. But I can instill by my presence, my praise, and my listening to them that I value them and believe they are capable.

This is a voluntary program for them, too. We've had a hard time because there are so many other programs or sports they could do. They shouldn't have to make these choices, in my mind, and mentoring should be a priority for the teachers and coaches.

Helping me mentee become a better student. I think our comparing school to a job is a good thing. We've worked hard to see we need to respect teachers and that butting heads with them will only impact us negatively.

I couldn't believe the level of learning being expected of him. I had to learn and do so much more in middle school and so is my sister now. That concerns me.

You can't rush bonding experiences and building trust in a relationship.

Getting away from campus and into a more normal life setting is important, It helps me remember campus life isn't real life.

I thought I'd just be a tutor. But I have learned there is so much more to helping a kid.

What I have learned about myself from my mentee is ...

Patience, perseverance, following through on commitments

My success in being a mentor isn't measured by his getting good grades. I'm trying to help him learn how to succeed in different classes and with different teachers. Working on helping him own his own behavior and choices of what he does in class is step #1.

I took a lot for granted and thought that kids like him just don't try hard enough. It is much more complicated than that....

What it means to really commit to someone and mean it.

I can really teach someone — and how hard it is to really teach for meaning and understanding, not to just do the assignment or get a grade.

I want educational equity and social justice — I say that all the time — and I am learning that it won't happen unless we all do things like *Reach Out* and help one child and family at a time.

How underestimated my child is to her teachers and parents. She is so much more capable than they think. I admire my child for not giving up, given that so many others have told her that she can't do well in this or that class.

I had no idea how important being a mentor is. I don't want to let my child down; this is a real test for me.

My mentee brings out the best in me — attributes that I want to have and didn't think I really did.

I recognize I have a lot to learn about how to motivate other people. If I had it to do all over again, I would be a much better mentor. I think you grow up a lot freshman year.

I think the kids learn a lot when we are honest about bad decisions we have made and what the consequences are and how we are trying to dig out and be a better person. And he looks up to me more because I have shared this with him.

At first I was all about the grades. I wanted his report card to be all A's and B's and then I would feel successful. Then I came to see that so much of his homework is way over his head. It's like he is treading water but he can't swim a lap. The focus shouldn't be all about the grades. I care more now about helping him catch up and learning study skills he can keep using. And helping him see that his character is important. No teacher will help a kid who talks back or is disrespectful. I am happy that his cards have more comments about him being on time and participating in class and asking for help.

How important perseverance is. If you are constantly with people who don't think you can learn or achieve or do something, you eventually wear down and believe them and give up.

How important it is to have someone who truly believes in you and your abilities to learn and make something of yourself someday.

Both kids and college students should spend plenty of time knowing their dreams and passions, but just going through school and college to get a good-paying job is what we are taught to do.

I somehow figured out on my own how to do better on tests. But now I see there are really skills and strategies out there to try if you know how you learn. When I was a TA, I don't think I really helped many of my students. Now I'm more open to a variety of ways to think and learn about things.

Different home lives. I really took for granted my family and how I was raised. As I have gotten to know my kid's mom, I really can't believe how she is doing so much and keeping it all together.

Overall this has been a very fulfilling experience. I have learned so much about my character and what it means to be "the leader and the best." I have eaten a lot of humble pie out here with our kids.

I am very grateful for this experience. I have learned things that I never even knew were there to learn about kids who are struggling in school, different families and how hard their lives are.

What I wish my mentee and I could have done this year is ...

Many shared the need for some program/strategy to deal with holes and gaps in basic math skills.

More World of Work exploration and going job shadowing.

Wish we could have made more academic goals and achieved them.

Work somehow on basic math and reading skills: he is so far behind.

I wish we could have done more things with her family.... I don't think they have known about what is there at UM like the free museums or concerts.

Many wish they could have exercised together.

Many note great concern their mentees' low-level basic reading, writing, math skills; they are concerned that their children can't make it through high school and meet the new requirements for graduation.

Many see need to have something for mentees to help them with basic math and reading/writing skills. They don't think they can do this and mentor: so much time on remediation takes away from what they want to and can do as a mentor.

I didn't try hard enough to get to know my mentee's parents. Other mentors have talked about what they do. I just didn't make it a priority.

Focus more on career options. I think that if he had a career that he wanted to go into and he knew what was required, he would be more motivated to get good grades. I didn't really buy into this theory earlier. But I now think that just working to get grades hasn't really impacted or motivated my mentee.

More time on test-taking, note-taking, and general organization skills. Just keeping up with homework assignments took up our time. But these things would, in the long run, be more important. Teach-them-to-fish kind of thing.

Some educational trips together planned by *Reach Out* or a group of us. My mentee and his family haven't been to museums, zoos, book talks, library programs.

Go take tours of colleges around here so he and his parents could see what they are like. Maybe talk to a counselor and meet some instructors in careers he is interested in.

Play sports or do something fitness-related. Our kids don't run, bike, jog, play outside.

More academic work. We need a math and reading self-paced or individualized program that we can work with, the kids can do on their own, and their teachers can do some with in class. Our kids are so far behind in so many basic skills. I spent time on homework and keeping up. He needs to learn the skills that will get him on track with his grade level.

Math and study skills. My kids really need help with whole numbers, fractions, basic things like that. And they need help with how to study. How to write a good paper. How to use grammar. How to write good paragraphs. I don't know how they get away with what they turn in sometimes.

I feel as if the teachers are giving up on our kids when they don't understand the material immediately, which is what results in the poor grades. I'm surprised so many of our kids even keep trying when they just keep failing.

More time with his family. He has lost both of his grandparents this year. It has been very hard on him. Everything in his life, and his mom's, is changing without them. I think he is angry, and right now he is very withdrawn and doesn't want to do any school work. I don't think his teachers understand.

What I learned the most from my mentoring training program is ...

How to think about my talents first, and *then* look at careers and jobs.

How to help my mentee think about his choices — like friends, how he acts with teachers and his parents, what he wants to do later on in his life, and how what he does now will help or be negative.

Being able to understand the difference between my mentee's childhood and my own.

There are many skills that aren't taught at home or in school or college that we need: communication skills, managing our emotions, goal-setting, problem-solving.

I don't know why I picked my major or what careers are possible for me, and that's a scary thing.

I am way too busy and don't take time out to just think about me and who I am.

Kids learn things that they are interested in and hands-on; we need more programs and schools to do learning this way so they can succeed.

Building a relationship takes time, personal investment, and a level of trust.

Learning styles are very real. I frustrated myself and him trying to use study strategies that work for me but don't for him.

Really impacting a child's life is hard work and takes a lot of time.

Learning for meaning is the important thing. He needs to really learn skills and not just go on with the next new thing.

We mentors do get more out of mentoring than our kids.

Most of us don't take the time to think about and then write down and share with someone what we really believe or what our real values are.

In my three years with *Reach Out* I think the training has been very important. When I was a freshman I didn't think so. But now I know this is really important if we want to be effective mentors.

Active listening and "I" messages are important. And I have to work on really listening. I have to work on giving specific praise, too. I think I will be a much better communicator if I can get these to be natural for me and how I interact with other people.

Goal setting. I like getting their report cards and doing the goal sheet and letting them think about what they are happy and sad/disappointed about. I am doing this process more with myself, too.

I now have techniques that work in different kinds of classes, and I have cut down the time I used to spend thinking I was studying.

I wish we would have kept doing all the workshops. I can see a difference between us who have been mentors a long time and the new mentors: we do have different and more skills and knowledge

Developmental phases and how our kids' brains work and how they learn.

How important sleep, exercise and diet are for our bodies to be learning machines. I have changed many of my habits here, and I hope my mentee has, too.

How to be an active listener. Talk less. Listen more. Let each of us be our own persons. Value different ideas and perspectives.

This has been a totally foreign experience for me. I came in thinking I would just help a kid with math and science. There is so much more that they need, and probably is more important in the long run.

Middle school and high school students look up to their peers more than anyone. They don't see consequences for their actions. Often they don't think rationally but instead are very emotional. They want to belong and fit in.

Peer pressure at all stages of life can be paralyzing and not beneficial for us or our kids. We need someone older to help us step back and see where we are, and what our choices are, and what doors we open or close with these choices.

When we live our beliefs and values, we will have to give up some things and some people. But the important thing is that we will be who we want to be and not what others want us to be.

Please describe the additional outings you have done with your child.

Note: Mentors with children 2+ years do much more outside of school.

Fishing; canoeing; bowling; shopping and hanging out at the mall; movies; playing basketball, video games; Whirly Ball; making dinner at my apartment.

Studying at UM or Mallett's library.

Taking tours at UM, EMU and WCC.

Panera's, Starbucks, Ben & Jerry's to hang out.

UM football or basketball game; professional sports in Detroit: Red Wings, Pistons, Tigers.
Family dinners; family movies; family birthday parties for their children; family to see UM campus.
UM Art and Natural History Museums; AA Hands-On Science Museum; AA Summer Art Fair; Neutral Zone Poetry Slam; Toledo Zoo; concert at Hill Auditorium.
Church /temple with child's family; youth group potluck and movie; to mentees' athletic events and out afterwards.
Hiking; to the Arb to walk; to UM or Washtenaw Rec Center to work out together; indoor rock climbing; a ropes course; doing 3K run for cancer.
Their mentees and parents went to mentors' UM graduation and out to dinner with them and their families afterward.
Lunch with kids at their school; sitting in on mentors' UM classes, especially science labs.
Farm, AA Airport, and Chrysler Proving Grounds <i>Reach Out</i> trips three years ago.
Cooking at Ronald McDonald House; cooking with mentee and his mom for the Thanksgiving potluck.

Please describe the relationship(s) you have formed with your child's family.

Note: Mentors with children 2 or more years typically have close relationships with families; several have also helped older siblings with looking at colleges, completing applications, etc.

I have had a hard time getting to know my child's parents; language is a problem.

Having Power School access helped them talk to parents about grades, missing homework assignments.

Child moves from one parent to another often.

Her mother and I email regularly and we talk at least once a week on the phone. And I see her at least 2 times a month when I go to their home. We are close. We work together on goals with her. I back-up the mom on things like curfew and studying at home and doing chores. She backs me up on doing homework, keeping her planner up to date, getting enough sleep and eating a good breakfast, and reading for enjoyment once a week. We have become a good tag team.

His family and I have a close relationship. We have been together for 3 years now. I'm pretty up to date with his mom's progress in school and his sister's somewhat turbulent experience in high school. I'm allergic to the animals in their house so when it is nice out, we meet and eat on the deck. We have gone out for lunches and dinners. We always go to *Reach Out* family events. I go to his games when I can and usually sit with his mom and dad. I go to his concerts with them. We are close.

I speak with his mom at least 2 times a month. We email pretty regularly. I have been to the home at least once a semester. We have tried to figure out how to help him take on more responsibility for himself to do and turn in homework, to do his chores at home. We used to always check on him with Power School. But we have talked and we have to help him take on the responsibility of doing his work and getting it in on time and knowing his grades. This will be a process I think that we have to wean him off of so he'll be ready for high school.

I have gotten to know the mother well in the last 3 years. The abuse and problems that have gone on are so serious. I have learned a lot about what my mentee has grown up with. I have learned how hard it is to get help and how hard it is for mothers to get out of bad situations. I'm not sure things are much better but I think in some small way I have been helpful for (mentee) and her mom.

I have met his father a couple of times but I predominantly talk to his mother. Email very often. Text often. We keep in contact. We need to so we are on the same page with what he chooses to do all the time. We are trying to be consistent. What I say, mom backs up. What mom says, I will back up. He tries to work us against each other. We think this is very important for him to learn. We talk. We are on his side but we want the truth.

His mother really likes me and confides a lot to me about what she is dealing with and what (child) is doing. She is working two jobs and trying to take classes at WCC. And she has the kids. Sometimes I have picked the kids up from games because she couldn't. I think I have helped her with the kids the last couple of years. I haven't seen the dad. He sees the kids sometimes but not very often. I try to go to his and his brother's games when I can.

Helping mom think about options for discipline and setting limits.

Very good. His mother is very welcoming and his grandparents are friendly and active in his life. Everyone is kind and appreciative of my time.

Describe the relationship you formed with your child's teachers, counselor, or principal.

I see my mentee in the class so I know the teacher and what is going on.

I meet with his/her teachers often and I am in email correspondence with them.

Many have communicated "several times" with teachers about basic skills, homework assignments, projects, comments on report cards

Some have met with school psychologist about children's learning problems and disabilities.

Several note trying to help their children advocate for themselves with teachers: ask for meetings and prepare for what to share with teachers.

I know all of their names and I have met them. I went to open house with my child and his mom. Two years ago, I think that the teachers were more willing to work with us. This year has been really hard. He is flat out way behind in basic skills. He's been moved along and he really is at frustration level in most everything. And so am I.

I meet frequently with (child's) math teacher and we discuss options for making up tests, getting basic skills she may have missed, and getting more after-school help beyond my time. He cares a lot about our kids. I have heard other mentors share that he is super to work with. I concur. Other teachers I can't even get an appointment with. I'm very frustrated about that.

I have worked a lot with his science teachers for the past two years. They seem to like *Reach Out* and I think they both liked me and knew I was serious about being a mentor. I haven't been able to get a relationship with other teachers. We really needed one with his math and social studies teachers. Communication between us and staff is poor. Power school helps, but we need to meet face-to-face and with our kids.

I have met with all her teachers at least once each semester and they are aware of (child's) goals and my goals for working with her and them. We talk about every report card and we write down specific SMART goals for academics and behavior.

I speak with his mom regularly. I have gone to the house twice this year for dinner and to hang out. She doesn't like to go to teachers and conferences. I think I should have stepped up to make appointments and gotten us all there to talk to the teachers this year.

I have spoken to all teachers to let them know I am here to help my mentees. They have all been very warm and receptive. I do think we should go ahead and help kids with student-led conferences and also attend parent teacher conferences even if the parents can't come.

It gets beyond frustrating when you try to work on studying, they take a test and fail or do badly on it, and you move to the next chapter and the cycle continues. I have felt like screaming to everyone to just stop. Stop and look at what the kids are really learning and what they aren't learning. Give them time and projects so they can learn some things really well. It has to be better than cruising through, getting bad grades, and learning little.

I have talked with his counselor and teachers several times. I just don't think they know what to do with (child's name). He is a good example for not having his many needs met in the system. I don't think it is that the teachers don't care. I just don't think they know how to help him (and they're responsible for so many other kids). He knows he isn't learning and he believes he is stupid. He isn't. But I really do not know how is best to reach him. I am very sad about this situation.

It felt like we were competing for our kids' time with other after school programs, clubs and athletics. That just isn't fair to us or our kids.

Change won't happen from pointing and shooting darts from the outside. To change schools for our kids we have to get in there and work change from the inside.

We should have tried harder to get a individualized math and reading program that we could support, teachers were using, and the kids could use on their own. It drives me crazy the holes they have in skills. They could get motivated and see their progress if we all worked together.

2. Children's Survey Responses, 2006–10

Insights about relationships with tutor/mentors	% Agreeing
My tutor/mentor has helped me think about the kinds of friends I choose to have and their possible impact on my life and my school success.	83%
My tutor/mentor encourages me to share problems and conflicts I am having and to think about my choices and options for handling them.	91%
My tutor/mentor has helped me think about better ways to listen to and communicate with my parents and teachers.	92%
Being with my tutor/mentor has helped me have a better self image.	92%
Being with my tutor/mentor has helped me have higher expectations of myself for school and for my life after high school.	90%
My tutor/mentor has helped me learn about my own learning styles.	85%
My tutor/mentor has helped me care more about completing homework, giving it my best effort, and turning it in on time.	96%
My tutor/mentor has helped me improve my time management skills.	92%
My tutor/mentor has worked with me on note-taking and study skills.	94%
My tutor/mentor has helped me with test-taking skills.	87%
My tutor/mentor has helped me talk to teachers and/or counselors.	79%
My mentor has helped me understand course material that I felt lost in or just could not do on my own.	100%
When something is bugging me, my mentor listens while I get it off my chest.	84%
My tutor/mentor has lots of good ideas about how to solve a problem.	96%
My tutor/mentor has visited my home and talks with my parents or guardians.	66%
My mentor helped me explore my talents and possible careers.	74%

Open-Ended Responses (selected but representative excerpts)

What I like best about having a tutor/mentor:

Helps me with homework that I don't understand that well. I learned more with him.

He helps me with all my assignments and talks to my teachers. Helps me talk to my teachers.

They help us solve problems.

Having someone to help me and to do fun things with on weekends.

Help with homework and figuring out how to get better grades on tests.

She makes me turn in my homework and re-do it if I get bad grades.

He didn't let me make excuses that I didn't have time to do my homework.

I called her whenever I couldn't do homework and she helped me on the phone or came over or we went to the library.

He helped me go back and learn some things I didn't get before.

She helped me use index cards to write down facts and vocabulary words and stuff I need to memorize for tests.

He helped me get organized – my binders – and he makes me use a planner. Now I like my planner and seeing what I've done or got to do.

Things we did together on evening or weekends:

Cook dinner with him/her at my house or his/her apartment. Movies. Out for lunch or dinner at restaurants. Shopping at the mall. Go to restaurant with my parents.

Go to UM library to study. Go to Starbuck's to study. Go to Shake & Bake to study.

UM football, basketball, women's basketball games. UM gymnastic or swimming meets. Women's volleyball game.

Pinball Pete's. Rock climbing. Roller-blading. Canoeing. Running or UM Rec Center to work out. Ice skating. Sledding. Walk with dogs. Batting cages at Vet's Park.

Concerts. Go to WCC for a jazz concert. Go to Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum. Go UM Dinosaur Museum. Go to planetarium.

We walked around U of M and it was fun.

We went to the fish bowl — a computer lab.

What I wish we could have done this year:

Go to Rachel's farm.

Work harder so I could get A's or B's in Algebra

Go to Cedar Point.

I wish my mentor knew my mom and dad.

More fun things on weekends.

I wish my mentor could see me at school more than one day a week to help me.

We didn't do anything. I wish we did.

We went fishing.

I wish she could go on our family vacation with us. My Mom says I can take a friend and I want her to come with us.

More family activities like the *Reach Out* fall picnic and Thanksgiving potluck.

Ten mentioned: Go job shadowing and have people come to talk about their jobs.

Ten mentioned: Go to WCC like you used to do.

Eight mentioned: Do community projects like we used to.

Form our own team and play in rec program (soccer, baseball, basketball).

Four mentioned: Go out to AA Airport and then have "that guy" come back to teach us pilot math.

What I learned the most from my tutor/mentor:

I can make new friends that are better for me.

I can do my homework. I can catch up when I'm behind on homework.

How to talk to my teachers and my counselor when I am mad or don't understand something. How to go to my teacher when I need help.

How to think first about writing a paper and get your ideas together. How to be a good student. How to get organized and really do my homework everyday.

How to factor equations and lots of math stuff.

How to study better and how to do better on tests.

How school works, how to be nicer to others and teachers.

How to recognize when I need help with my homework and how to try to ask for help.

How to not give up when you are stuck on something.
I should believe in myself when it comes to work.
If we work hard in school, we can get someplace later on. It's like a job we have to do.
If I don't do my homework and turn it in I won't get good grades. I have to get good grades to graduate. You can't go to college unless you get good grades and graduate from high school.
I won't succeed at life and live like I want to if I don't get good grades in school.
School is very important and I better take it seriously.
To not bully and be mean to people.
To not fight with people.
About beliefs and values. I am in charge of my attitude and how I treat people. It's lame to keep making excuses and not try harder in school.
It is true that my actions show what I believe.
Three mentioned Tim McCormick's Never Be Average talk last year; "you have to know and write down your goals every day to be successful and keep trying to get them even when you don't."
Two remember spring 2009 career presenters (judge magistrate) Camille Horne and (pharmacist) Chris Wagner handing out graduation requirements and saying it is up to them to take the harder classes and do well in them if they want doors to be open for them.
I can't let somebody bust through my boundaries and make me do things I know I shouldn't do.
You have to keep up with school to do well. You fall behind and you can't catch up.
Two boys learned their mentors were "smart but not mature," since they had talked a lot about what they would do with them and then hardly showed up. They added that they learned "I need to follow up on what I promise my brother/sister" and "I know how to be a mentor someday because of what he didn't do and what I saw other people do."
Your friends can get you into trouble. Sometimes it's hard but you have to change friends.
Feelings aren't bad or good but they can get you in big trouble. Don't mouth off when you are mad or being stupid. Wait. And don't hit or punch something when you are mad. Wait. Feelings don't stay very long.

3. Parent/Guardian Survey Responses, 2005–10

<i>Goal: Promote Academic Success for Our Children</i>	<i>% Agreeing</i>
Children received help with homework and basic skills from tutor/mentors.	100%
Children improved taking responsibility to turn in and complete assignments.	99%
Tutor/mentors communicated with parents, grandparents or guardians about homework, skills, assignments, and concerns about children	87%

<i>Goal: Help children make more informed and positive choices that impact school success.</i>	<i>% Agreeing</i>
Children tried harder in class - paid more attention, talked less to friends, and arrived to class on time.	94%
Children demonstrated more skills to communicate their needs and problems with teachers and staff.	86%
Children thought more about their choice of friends and how that impacts their academic success.	86%

<i>Other Parent, Grandparent or Guardian Feedback</i>	<i>% Agreeing</i>
Mentor helped child with homework and assignments I couldn't have helped them with.	50%
Mentor can say things I say that my child won't listen (take to heart) from me.	59%
Mentor takes on a role I can't play with my child.	43%
Mentor helps child think about person they want to become, what they want out of their life, what their choices are to get what they want in life.	52%
Mentor helps child look at interests, careers, what it takes to go to college, choices they need to make to be able to go to college.	37%
I appreciate friendship I have developed with tutor/mentor.	38%

Appendix F. Reach Out Board of Directors

Jeannine LaSovage, President, lasovage@reachoutmichigan.org

Executive Director; *Reach Out* cofounder; original UM *Reach Out* advisor

CJ Johnson, Vice President, coleman.johnson@gmail.com

2002–05 *Reach Out* volunteer mentor, site leader, and family leader; University of Michigan graduate 2005; former *Pi Kappa Alpha* UM chapter president; private equity investor in Chicago

Martha Toth, Secretary, webmaster@reachoutmichigan.org

Original *Reach Out* staff member and multiyear volunteer; former teacher; 19-year public school board trustee

Lance Maynard, Treasurer, maynardlance@hotmail.com

2003–05 *Reach Out* volunteer mentor; University of Michigan graduate; M.B.A. with Finance Specialization; business, elementary and academy English instructor in South Korea

Serina Brown, Director, snyours1@yahoo.com

Long-time advocate, supporter, recurring board member, and fan of *Reach Out*; University of Michigan Athletics staff member

Shara Cherniak, Director, schernia@gmail.com

2003–07 *Reach Out* volunteer mentor, family leader, and site coordinator; University of Michigan graduate 2007; teacher in Cabrera, Dominican Republic

Timothy Eatman, PhD, Director, tkeatman@syr.edu

Program Director for Research and Policy, Imagining America; Assistant Professor, Higher Education, Syracuse University

Mark Harris, Director, alanmark@umich.edu

2008–10 *Reach Out* volunteer mentor; University of Michigan student

Jane Viventi, Director, jviventi@umich.edu

2002–04 *Reach Out* volunteer mentor; University of Michigan graduate 2004; board focus: alumni communications and continued support; marketing manager in Chicago