



To whom it may concern

This letter is to explain the many ways that Kids 'n Kinship's receipt of YIP funding benefits the youth in our program and our community. Kids 'n Kinship has been fortunate to receive funding which helps us improve youths' lives through the presence of a mentor. Our staff work hard to recruit, screen, train and support volunteer mentors who befriend youth.

Youth ages 5-16 in Dakota County area were provided with screened and trained mentors. They receive weekly support and encouragement through their mentoring relationship. Seasonal activities are offered along with cultural and community events. Youth on the waiting list are also provided activities and resources. Support and supervision to the matches occur through timely outreach supervision calls. We provide quarterly Chat group training for mentors on relevant topics: Conflict Resolution, Become a Better Mentor, Expert Panel, and Poverty Simulation.

Specific outcomes show that

*91% of the youth are reducing their isolation through consistent visits with their mentor.

*94% of the youth have established a positive relationship with their mentor.

*96% reported no serious incidences or behavior during the time they were matched with a mentor or a reduction of risky behavior.

In addition, 13% reported seeing an increase in their ability to make positive decisions, and 77% maintaining a similar proficiency. Similarly, 12% reported seeing improved conflict resolution skills, and 77% maintaining that proficiency.

Just one story:

Julie and Ms. Lucita meet weekly and sometimes twice weekly if needed. Ms. Lucita is a great communicator. Day or night I can text her with "Julie needs". She is responsive and helpful in so many ways. They have enjoyed many different activities together including multiple zoo visits, visit to Sea Life, lots of shopping trips for self-care, walking the dog at all different parks, picnic dates to include either meals or just treats, bike rides, and lots of play dates at our home, she even touched up on her Minecraft skills to play with Julie. She never misses a holiday. The list goes on and on and on. Phone calls, texts, video chat. She does it all and we couldn't ask for more.

Ms. Lucita has become part of our family. Julie has excelled in school. She no longer is in special education. She is in mainstream classes with an extra small group on the side for reading and writing. Prior to the match, Julie had lots of physical and emotional behaviors at school. Those have all completely gone away. At conferences at the beginning of November she was described as "Mature, model student, hardworking, caring, and empathetic" Julie has always been a very emotional child. Those emotions are much more regulated and expressed in acceptable ways since the match.

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