



STARS MENTORING PROGRAM

411 S 1st Ave, Albert Lea, MN 56007

Phone: 507-383-5272 Email: director@starsforkids.org

March 17, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

Our young people deserve every opportunity to succeed. With Success Through Adults Reaching Students (STARS) Mentoring Program, we are a one-of-a-kind program serving rural communities. STARS helps fill gaps in services for our young people to thrive in their journey to adulthood.

STARS empowers at-risk Freeborn and Faribault County youth to make positive life choices by providing guidance and support from a caring adult mentor. Mentors and mentees participate in fun shared activities monthly and discuss a variety of skills-building topics. For those who are mentoring, the relationship can build leadership and management skills, expand a mentor's professional network, and provide an empowering opportunity to give back to the communities.

Research confirms that quality mentoring relationships have powerful positive effects on young people in areas of personal growth and development. It is a proven strategy for preventing youth from engaging in alcohol and drug use, skipping school, and other delinquent behaviors. Young people participating in quality mentoring programs are also more likely to do better in school and have aspirations for college and careers, ultimately strengthening our communities.

Our rural communities are fortunate and thankful to receive support from the YIP grant funding; a matching grant. The funding provides the leverage needed to continue this critical mentoring program. STARS is in full support of the Youth Intervention Programs (YIP) grant funding of \$3 million in new annual funding.

Respectfully sent,
Watsana Thiravong