



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT™
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Reach & Rise

Frequently Asked Questions

This is for you to keep, you do not need to submit it with your application.

WHY WAS THE MENTORING PROGRAM CREATED?

- Reach & Rise mentoring program was established to serve the needs of young people confronting socio-economic challenges.
- To offer over-stressed families a resource to help meet their children's needs.
- To provide youth with positive, growth-inducing relationships with adults through mentoring.
- To make a difference in a child's life.

WHAT TYPE OF YOUTH DOES THE PROGRAM SERVE?

- Youth ages 6-17.
- Young people experiencing challenges with low self-esteem, poor academic progress, peer difficulties, family conflict and/or poor decision making, for example.
- Youth from a wide range of ethnic diversity and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Youth encompassing a variety of family backgrounds: intact families, single-parent families, blended families, foster homes, and/or grandparent or other relative-headed families.

HOW ARE YOUNG PEOPLE REFERRED TO THE PROGRAM?

- From YMCA Programs
- From the YMCA community, friends, family, and/or self-referrals.
- All referrals to Reach & Rise go through an application process and an initial telephone and/or face-to-face screening with the Program Director. This process helps determine whether or not each child is appropriate for the program. Those children assessed to have mental health problems not appropriate for our program will be referred elsewhere. The types of issues not likely to be handled by our mentors include: acute depression, homicidal or suicidal behavior, drug/alcohol dependence, and violent behavior.

WHO ARE THE MENTORS?

- Volunteers from the local community who wish to make a positive impact on young people.
- Adults ages 23+
- Adults from varied cultural, educational and professional backgrounds.
- Mentors are often recruited within the YMCA membership, community agencies, local corporations and universities.



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WHAT IS EXPECTED OF MENTORS?

- Mentors fill out a volunteer application and speak with the Program Director for an initial screening.
- Mentors commit to spending 1-3 hours once a week with a youth for one year.
- Mentors will complete 15+ hours of paraprofessional counseling training before being assigned to a young person (usually over the course of 4-5 weeks).
- Mentors will need to a fingerprint security screening and reference checked before being matched.
- Mentors must have a clean driving record if they plan to drive their mentee.
- Mentors must have valid auto liability insurance and driver's license.

HOW ARE MENTORS SUPPORTED ONCE THEY'VE COMPLETED THE TRAINING AND HAVE BEEN "MATCHED" WITH A YOUTH?

- Reach & Rise is committed to on-going training and support for all volunteer mentors, and the Program Director is actively involved in goal-setting and on-going planning with all mentors for their mentees.
- Mentors are invited and encouraged to attend ongoing mentor support group meetings, which are led by the Program Director. This continuing support is considered vital because it provides structure for the mentors as well as on-going training and development of mentoring skills. Individual telephone support is provided on a monthly or as needed basis. The Program Director can serve as a liaison between the mentor and the mentee's family to work through any issues that may arise in the mentoring relationship.



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Should I Become a Mentor?

These questions are things to consider and help you decide if being a mentor is right for you.

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- Do you genuinely like children?
- Do you like child-centered or adolescent-type activities?
- Are you flexible? Can you tolerate disappointments?
- Do you get frustrated easily? Can you be patient when things are unpredictable?
- Can you be non-judgmental? Do you believe there is a right or wrong way to do most things?
- Can you be friends with a child and his/her family who are different from you socially?
- Are you dependable? Can you be counted on to do what you've said you will do?
- Do you have friends who meet your own adult social needs? Or are you hoping a child will be a companion for you?
- Do you have a sense of humor?
- Is becoming a Mentor something you've given some thought to about how it will impact your life over the next year & discussed it with others?



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Reach & Rise Volunteer Job Description

Objective: The Reach & Rise mentoring program trains adult volunteers to provide mentoring services to young people ages 6-17 for one year. We aim to help youth develop tools to cope with issues such as low self-esteem, family and peer conflicts, problems at school, and to improve their decision-making skills.

Time Commitment:

- 15+ hours of training
- 1-3 hours each week with child (flexible - scheduled by mentor and child)
- Optional Mentor Support Meetings
- Monthly phone check-in with Program Director

Reports To: Reach & Rise Program Director

Principal Activities: Developing supportive, consistent mentoring relationship with a child through recreational play and paraprofessional therapeutic techniques. Help children explore and cope with social and/or family struggles.

Position Requirements:

- Must be at least 23 years old
- Desire to work with youth and have interest in counseling/mentoring
- No prior felony convictions
- Must submit to fingerprint screening for security purposes
- Proof of auto insurance, copy of current driving record, and NO DUIs (if you plan to drive with mentee)
- One-year commitment to meet one time a week for 1-3 hours (on average)

Training and Support:

Mentors attend a 15 hours of training over the course of approximately 4-5 weeks to prepare mentors for the mentoring relationship such as information about the program, expectations, basic therapeutic concepts, relationship building, understand risk factors/mental health issues, how to handle safety issues, etc. If accepted into the program, mentors are then matched with a child. Optional mentor support meetings with your fellow mentors facilitated by Program Director are also available.

Signature _____ **Date** _____



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Reach & Rise Mentor Application

Thank you for your interest in becoming a mentor with the YMCA's Reach & Rise mentoring program. It is a great way to make a difference in a young person's life. This application is designed to provide information to help us match you with the most appropriate child and your answers will be kept confidential. **For security & safety purposes, all mentor applicants will need to have fingerprints done and cleared before being matched with a youth.** If you have any questions, please contact the Program Director.

Please mail, fax, or email your completed application and a copy of your driver's license and current auto insurance to:

Krystal Bravo, MHS, MSCC
YMCA of Greater Hartford
241 Trumbull St, Hartford, CT 06103
P: (860) 522-9622 ext. 2310 / F: (860) 522-1314
krystal.bravo@ghymca.org

Mentor Information:

Name: _____ Date: _____

Gender: M F Age: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home #: _____ Work #: _____

Cell #: _____ Email: _____

Best Way to be Contacted: Home # Cell # Work # Text Email

Best Times to be Contacted: _____

Occupation: _____ How'd You Hear About Us? _____

Please Answer the Following Questions:

Do you have any felony convictions? YES NO

Have you ever abused or molested a child? YES NO

Do you have a clean driving record? YES NO If no, explain: _____

If you have a car, can you provide proof of liability car insurance? YES NO

Why do you want to become a Mentor? _____

Would you be a positive role model to a child? What qualities do you have that will help mentor a child?

Why do you think children "act out" or get in trouble? _____



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Do you have any experience working with, volunteering, or spending time with youth? If yes, explain:

Please describe any **other** volunteer experiences you have: _____

Do you have any academic pursuits/experience that is related to working with youth? If yes, explain:

Who was a mentor for you as a child? What qualities did they have that helped you? _____

Please describe your relationships with your family (e.g. parent(s)/guardian(s), siblings, etc.) both **past & present**. Include how you were disciplined as a youth and by whom. _____

Please describe your relationship with a best friend and/or significant other? _____

Please describe past and current patterns of drug and alcohol use: _____

What are some of your interests & hobbies (things you would like to do with your mentee)? _____

Do you have a preference as to the age, gender or ethnicity of the youth you'd work with?

You just finished the first step toward applying to be a mentor & we look forward to getting to know you!
Your application will be reviewed by the Program Director and you will be contacted regarding an interview, training group dates, & additional steps needed to complete the application process.
YMCA reserves the right to terminate a volunteer at any time if needed.

Mentor Applicant Signature

Date

PRIVILEGE AND CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: Please note that the information contained on this document is protected and confidential. This document is intended for use by an authorized employee or agent of the YMCA. Any dissemination, distribution or copying of this document is strictly prohibited. If you have received this document in error, please notify the sender or intended receipt immediately.



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Reach & Rise National Code of Conduct

The following policies are intended to assist staff and mentors in making decisions about interactions with youth. For clarification of any guideline or to inquire about behaviors not addressed here, contact your Executive Director or Supervisor.

Please note that this National Code of Conduct for Reach & Rise mentoring program may include certain exceptions to your Association's Code of Conduct or abuse prevention policies. Please note the differences and add them to this portion of the document.

For example: Nashville YMCA states the following:

3.2 Being alone with a single child—At no time should YMCA staff or volunteers be in a situation where they are alone with a single child. The YMCA will make every attempt to design and structure its programs to eliminate the potential for a staff member or volunteer to be in a one-on-one situation.

3.7 Special Standards—the following YMCA programs vary from this policy because of unique program design and special standards for supervision have been developed and are detailed in their staff manual.

- *Group Home*
- *Last Child on the Bus*
- *Mentoring Program*

Reach & Rise provides the highest quality services available to our youth. Our commitment is to create an environment for youth that is safe, nurturing, empowering, and which promotes growth and success for the youth who participate in our program. Any type of abuse will not be tolerated and will result in immediate dismissal from the program. Our program will fully cooperate with authorities if allegations of abuse are made and investigated.

The Code of Conduct outlines specific expectations of staff and mentors as we strive to accomplish our mission together.

1. Youth will be treated with respect at all times.
2. Youth will be treated fairly regardless of race, sex, age, or religion.
3. Staff and mentors will not swear or tell off-color jokes.
4. Staff and mentors are prohibited from babysitting, or having contact with youth outside of the regularly scheduled mentorship meetings and activities.
5. Staff and mentors will not discuss their sexual encounters with or around youth or in any way involve youth in their personal problems or issues.
6. Staff and mentors will not date or become romantically involved with youth.
7. Staff and mentors will not use or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the presence of youth.
8. Staff and mentors will not have sexually oriented materials, including printed or internet pornography, in the presence of youth and will not have inappropriate information on their public profiles.
9. Staff and mentors will not ask youth to keep any secrets.
10. Staff and mentors will dress conservatively in the appropriate clothing and avoid wearing provocative and revealing attire including midriffs, tank tops, halter tops, short shorts, or short skirts.
11. Staff and mentors will not stare at or comment on the youths' bodies
12. Staff and Mentors will not take mentees to their homes or spend time with them in the mentee's home alone (without parent/guardians there).
13. Staff and mentors will adhere to uniform standards of affection as outlined as follows:



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Physical Contact

Our program has implemented a physical contact policy that will promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting youth and mentors from misunderstandings. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by all mentors working with youth:

<i>Appropriate Physical Interactions</i>	<i>Inappropriate Physical Interactions</i>
Side hugs Shoulder-to-shoulder or "temple" hugs Pats on the shoulder or back Handshakes "High-fives" and hand slapping Verbal praise Touching hands, shoulders, and arms Arms around shoulders Holding hands (with smaller children in escorting situations)	Full frontal hugs Kisses Touching bottom, chest or genital areas Showing affection in isolated areas Touching knees or legs Wrestling Piggyback rides Tickling Allowing a child to cling to a mentor's leg Any type of massage given by or to a youth Any form of affection that is unwanted by youth Compliments that relate to physique or body development

1. Staff and mentors will avoid affection with youth that cannot be observed by others.
2. Staff and mentors will not engage in inappropriate electronic communication with youth.
3. Staff and mentors are encouraged to meet with youth in a public setting that is easily visible to others.
4. Staff and mentors shall not abuse youth in any way including the following:
 - Physical abuse: hitting, spanking, slapping, unnecessary restraints.
 - Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, cursing.
 - Sexual Abuse: inappropriate touch, exposing oneself, sexually oriented conversations.
 - Mental abuse: shaming, humiliation, cruelty.
 - Neglect: withholding food, water, shelter.
5. Youth are prohibited from engaging in the following:
 - Hazing
 - Bullying
 - Derogatory name-calling.
 - Games of truth or dare.
 - Ridicule or humiliation.
6. Staff and mentors will report concerns or complaints about other staff and mentors, other adults, or youth to their supervisor or coordinator.
7. Staff and mentors who work in the program may not have engaged in or been accused or convicted of child abuse, indecency with a child, or injury to a child.
8. Staff and mentors agree to cooperate fully with any investigation of suspected child abuse and failure to do so may be grounds for termination.

Mentor Signature

Date

