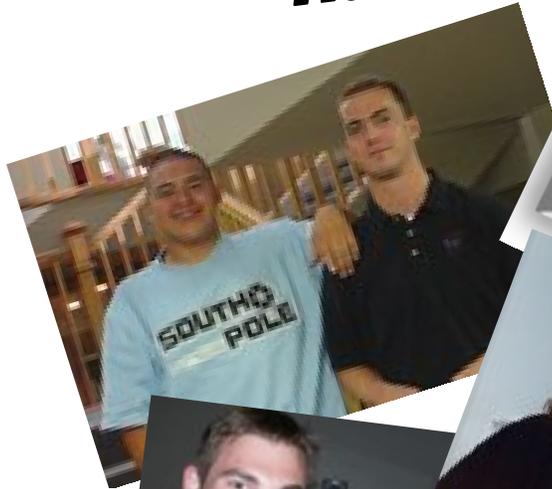


# ***Mentor Recruitment Ambassador Handbook***



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## **Introduction to the Mentor Recruitment Ambassador Role**

Thank you for your willingness to serve your community's children and youth by recruiting more adults to be their mentors. This booklet will provide you with strategies, advice, and tools that will help you succeed in your new role: an ambassador for mentoring.

### ***Why the “ambassador” title?***

Just look at the official definition:

1. A messenger on a special mission

Serve Our Youth Network needs messengers willing to share the truth that mentoring works: it helps young people make positive life choices while building their self-confidence and values. We need recruiters willing to ask the people in their world to consider giving their time, wisdom, and friendship to young people waiting for an adult to care about them. As a Mentor Recruitment Ambassador, or MRA, you are truly a messenger with a special mission!

### ***What is my mission?***

It begins with the goal of recruiting five adults into the interview process with Serve Our Youth Network. Though this goal may sound simple, it won't always be easy. How you achieve this goal is up to you. This booklet explores the many different ways MRAs can help get individuals and organizations interested in mentoring. We hope MRAs will continue in their role beyond their initial five recruits.

### ***How do Ambassadors serve?***

Ambassadors focus on recruiting new mentors from specific groups and settings to which they have access. This book focuses on three common groups:

- Congregations and faith communities
- Service organizations and clubs, and
- Colleges and universities

Ambassadors promote mentoring as a strategy to help youth and refer the people they contact to Serve Our Youth Network. They answer prospective mentors' questions and are advocates for mentoring in their communities.

An MRA is about getting out there, engaging people, and showing them how mentoring can change young people's lives and improve their community.

### ***Do MRAs have to be current or former mentors?***

While it may be helpful in your new role to have served as a mentor yourself, it is not a requirement. The only requirements are the ability to speak knowledgeably about the power of youth mentoring and the desire to meet your MRA goals.

## Overview of Mentoring and Mentor Recruitment

To effectively recruit mentors, you'll need to know a lot about mentoring and the positive impact it has on young lives. The information here is a good starting point. You can incorporate the information here into your presentations and personal appeals to prospective mentors. More resources for learning about mentoring are listed in the Additional Reading and Resources section.

### ***Mentoring Matters***

There is no greater gift you can give to a person than the gift of your time. It is not so much what you do with a young person but that you took time to be with that person. Research shows that mentoring pairs use the trust and friendship they build in their time together to facilitate a wide range of positive youth outcomes.

Simply put, mentoring matters because it works. Studies<sup>1</sup> reveal that young people who have a mentor are:

- Less likely to initiate drug use
- Less likely to initiate alcohol use
- Less likely to hit someone

Additionally, young people have:

- Improved school attendance
- Improved school performance
- Improved peer and family relationships

Mentoring helps youth find their voices, their values, and their vision for the future. A mentoring relationship allows – even compels – you to pass along the lessons of your life to someone who needs them. Mentoring is about sharing your wisdom and experiences, leaving a legacy that will outlive many of your other accomplishments.

- A mentor is a trusted friend and advisor.
- A mentor is someone who listens when someone else talks.
- A mentor guides a young person toward his or her goals.
- A mentor is someone who helps a young person understand and explore the world.

### ***The Benefits of Being a Mentor***

- Increased self-esteem – greater sense of accomplishment and pride
- Better interpersonal skills
- Improved relations with family, friends and coworkers
- Heightened compassion for others

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<sup>1</sup> *Making a Difference: an Impact Study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters*, published by Public/Private Ventures. [http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assests/111\\_publication.pdf](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assests/111_publication.pdf)

Businesses and organizations that get involved in mentoring also see positive outcomes:

- Improved employee/member morale and productivity
- Expanded community outreach and involvement
- Enhanced public image
- More effective employee/member recruitment and retention

Any way you look at it, mentoring is a win-win situation. The people you approach in your Mentor Recruitment Ambassador role will understand this when you enthusiastically make the case and ask for their help. The rest of this booklet can help you do this effectively.

## **Making Recruitment Presentations**

Your MRA role will provide many opportunities to reach out and spread the message that mentoring is a fun, rewarding and effective way of helping youth. These opportunities come in the form of casual conversations with individuals and more formal presentations to the groups you target. This section offers advice on speaking to both individuals and groups.

### ***Recruiting in Personal Conversations***

This is the most direct way MRAs can get new mentor recruits. The following tips can help you make meaningful personal appeals.

#### **Be prepared**

Before talking to your friends about becoming mentors, think through your answer to questions people may have in the back of their minds, such as, “Why should I?” “Can I do it?” “What will I get out of it?” “Will it be worth my time?”

The Ambassador’s job is to give people the information they need to decide. That means learning about mentoring and the programs you will be referring recruits to before engaging them in conversations.

#### **Be persistent**

Most people you approach will not say “yes” the first time you talk to them. More often, recruitment happens over time through a process of questions and answers. Be patient as your prospective mentors consider the opportunity! Quite often prospective mentors wait a year, and sometimes more, before deciding the time is right to mentor a child.

#### **Tips for getting started**

You can open the door in a conversation with:

- “Can I tell you something I’m excited about?”
- “Can I tell you about a new commitment I’ve made?”
- “I’ve taken on a new challenge, can I tell you about it?”

- “I have an opportunity you might want to consider.”
- “I sense you are great with kids, might you be interested in learning about becoming a mentor?”

Someone else opens the door in conversation with:

- “What’s new?”
- “I’ve noticed you’ve been busy lately – how come?”

In any of these beginnings, it is important that you are positive, genuine, and confident about mentoring being worth the time and effort. Give them the youth outcomes mentioned earlier; talk about what mentoring is already achieving in your community. If you are a current or former mentor, draw on your own experience and let them know much joy and satisfaction they will get out of the experience. Be honest that mentoring can be a challenge and that it only works when someone can be committed and consistent. Emphasize that SOY offers mentoring opportunities for different age groups and different backgrounds of kids. Assure them SOY offers training and support to mentors – they won’t be alone on their mentoring journey.

Helping them decide:

Everyone will bring different motivations and fears about mentoring to the table. Over time, you’ll learn to speak to both of these when recruiting.

Ask: “What would it take for you to be a mentor?”  
“What would prevent you from becoming a mentor?”

These two questions will help you address what is really on the person’s mind. You can help them process their issues. Eventually, you’ll have a response to many of the common fears and motivations.

What NOT to say in a conversation:

- “If you don’t do it, no one else will.”
- “You owe me a favor.”
- “You’re telling me you don’t have an hour?”

The goal is to help someone make their own decision not to pressure them into it. Trust the process. If the person’s heart is not in it, they probably won’t pass the screening process. Or their mentee will quickly pick up subtle messages that they really don’t want to be mentoring.

When recruiting mentors, it is vital to find adults willing to make at least a one-year commitment. Research shows that a short-term match (less than 6 months) with a less-than-committed mentor can have very negative effects on the mentee.

Serve Our Youth Network also requires:

- A minimum age of 18 for community-based mentoring, 21-years of age to work with kids in juvenile facilities.
- A personal and growing relationship with Jesus Christ.
- Regular attendance in a local church (exceptions can be made on a case by case basis).
- Love kids (we can't teach that).

***Mentor Matching Process:***

- Initial application & screening
  - Basic application
  - Confidentiality Policy & Standards of Conduct signed
  - Statement of Faith reviewed and discussed (they do not need sign)
  - Three personal references & one pastoral (can be a lay leader at their church or pastor other than Senior Pastor/Minister)
  - Central Abuse Registry, Iowa DCI State Background Check, & Sex Offender Registry Check
  - Car Liability Insurance Waiver signed
- Mentoring Basic Training
  - Offered monthly (during school year) and can complete during screening is complete.
- Mentor Interview/Mentee & Family Referral
  - Completed by volunteer coordinator
- Further background checks
  - FBI Fingerprint Check (national background check)
  - Driving Record Check
- Mentor Agreement
- First meeting
  - Usually meet in mentee's home with family present or some neutral location.
  - SOY Staff present to make introductions
  - Typically go out for ice cream or a coke after introductions.
  - Set up second meeting at the end.

***Recruiting from Groups (formal presentation)***

Recruiting from groups will be a bit different than from personal conversations. The following process is a sample of script you can use when making a presentation.

Introduction

1. Introduce yourself with a few opening words conveying your excitement about the opportunity that will be presented – one that could change lives.
2. Give some background information about Serve Our Youth Network and refer to brochure that you have to further explain the program.

3. Show SOY video (if they have TV & DVD player available). You can introduce it by first asking the question: “How many of you can look back on your younger years and recall at least one adult, apart from your parents, who made a significant impact on your life? Have that person in mind as we watch this video.”

#### Play video

#### Wrap up

1. (If there is time) Ask the audience what was something you learned from a mentor in your life?
2. Affirm the effectiveness of mentoring found on page 2 of this handout, or use any specific results that we provide to you on occasion.
3. Feature mentoring stories from your Serve Our Youth Network, and if you are also a current or former mentor, share a personal story – it shows the audience your own commitment.
4. Highlight all the ways SOY supports its mentors through training (initial training & quarterly trainings) and supervision (a monthly phone call from SOY staff and availability of staff). This will ease some of their fears about the experience (this is where it may be useful to have SOY staff member co-presenting with you).
5. Include some of the benefits that the adults have received by being mentors with SOY (you can highlight benefits on page 2).
6. The call to action: “I would love to talk with anyone here about how you can become a mentor with Serve Our Youth Network.
7. Provide more information and the opportunity to reflect: “Take a brochure home with you. Think it over. We also have a sign-up sheet in the back – I can talk with you later and answer any questions.”
8. Thank them for their time and consideration.

#### Follow-up

- Follow-up with anyone who expressed an interest after the presentation or took the time to sign-up – those are your hot prospects! Once again, it almost always takes more than one presentation or conversation to get people to take the plunge, so be patient and diligent!

#### **Top Recruitment Ideas**

1. **BE A GREAT MENTOR** (either formally through SOY or informally to the youth you encounter in your life). Your life’s example in mentoring is one of the most effective ways to win others to the cause of mentoring.
2. **Talk to your immediate family and friends about the joys of mentoring.** Customize your conversations to take advantage of your existing relationship with them – you likely know what their fears and motivations will be.

3. **Ask the leadership of your church** (or if you are part of a service organization) to consider “adopting” SOY.
4. **Bring a mentoring pair to share their story** with your congregation, work site, social club, or service group. Their stories are compelling and great motivators.
5. **Encourage existing mentors to talk to one friend a month about mentoring.** If they’re hesitant to do so, ask them to create a list of friends you can approach about the opportunity of mentoring.
6. **Expose people to your excitement about mentoring.** Whenever you are asked, “What’s new?” or “What’s happening?” – respond by telling them about your mentoring relationship or your new assignment as a Mentor Recruitment Ambassador. Your prospects will not get excited unless you are!
7. **Remember that diversity matters:** studies have shown that men recruit other men more effectively than female recruiters. If the mentoring program needs male volunteers, consider having a male as part of your recruitment team. Similarly, add as much diversity (race, ethnicity, socio-economic, etc.) as you can to your recruitment team. People respond well when they can see someone like themselves in the mentor’s role.
8. **Develop a recruitment calendar to guide the process.** Keeping the message fresh and in front of people helps move the process down the road. Most people need a few “touches” or “contacts” before they say yes. Make the most of National Mentoring Month in January to highlight mentoring in your community.
9. **Don’t forget to formally “ask”.** Don’t make a general presentation without a formal, personal appeal to get involved. Research shows people respond best to a personal invitation.

### **Troubleshooting: 10 Common Challenges**

1. **How can I maximize my limited time?** Create a contact folder in Microsoft Outlook or a similar program to keep track of who you have already contacted and where they are in the process. Compile an e-mail list and send everyone an E-card. This creates an additional contact with your potential volunteers and saves you the time of calling everyone individually.
2. **How do I find others to help me recruit?** Consider who in your circle may already be tied to children or youth in some way. Possibilities include: parents of young people who have a mentor, current youth group volunteers, and those who already support other social and educational causes in their free time. They probably have a soft heart toward the cause. Ask

your church's prayer team for support. You might want to team with another person or two to encourage and provide mutual encouragement.

- 3. *How do I manage the overwhelming nature of the task?*** It helps to be organized and have a plan. You may want to brainstorm different activities and use a calendar to schedule important deadlines. Perhaps you can recruit a team to help you and break down the tasks into bite-size pieces. Remember, you are not responsible after someone starts the screening process. Be faithful to your role by presenting the need for mentoring and assisting those who respond.
- 4. *How can I make my recruitment pitch compelling?*** Use real-life stories and photos when possible, as that illustrates need and results. Change the names to protect the people involved, if need be. If possible use stories that are personal to you, such as teachers or other adults who made a difference in your life. Or how you've spent time with a young person and saw the positive difference it made.
- 5. *How can I help people who are afraid?*** People have lots of fears about mentoring that go away when they get more information. MRAs should determine the source of the fear and provide solutions. This works best when you have a variety of program options to choose from (informal mentoring, institution-based mentoring, & community-based mentoring).
- 6. *Why aren't people as excited as I am?*** Adults are motivated to serve many different causes that need resources and volunteers, so don't be discouraged if someone doesn't respond immediately. Your job is to present the need for mentoring enthusiastically, believing the right people will respond in the end. Those will be the best mentors. For some people, the offer simply has to sink in, so stay positive and patient.
- 7. *How can I get more people to commit?*** You cannot make anyone commit to mentoring a young person. Your responsibility as a MRA is to share the vision of mentoring and help those interested get connected with SOY. For some, mentoring is a big step and will take some nudging and encouragement. Remember to start small with your initial goal of five recruits. Start with people you already know who might be open to mentoring, so you can have some quick successes. Then move on to bigger numbers.
- 8. *I've asked everybody I know to be a mentors; what next?*** It's time to stretch beyond your personal contacts and look at other groups within your congregation, college or service group. Once you have exhausted those groups, expand to local businesses, clubs or even other congregations. Don't forget other communication platforms within your sphere of influence, like newsletters, flyers, community newspapers, or websites.
- 9. *How do I expand my message to create more interest?*** Think creatively as to how you can expose others to this new and exciting opportunity. Spice up your presentations by having an active mentoring match role play their relationship, and talk about the difference it has made

for each of them. Consider using a film clip as part of your presentation – many mainstream movies feature mentoring themes and relationships. Bring in other youth service professionals to talk about the needs of youth in your community and how mentoring can help.

- 10. How do I stay motivated?** Keep in touch with some of the people you have helped get matched in a mentoring relationship. Be sure to keep in close contact with SOY staff. They can tell you just how great the recruits you have provided are doing.

## **Responding to Potential Mentor’s Fears**

### ***Fear that mentoring is too time consuming***

- Emphasize that the commitment is typically only one hour a week (matches vary, but that is average – not including travel time).
- Equate that amount of time to other tasks (“In the time it takes to watch *Lost*, you can rescue someone else in need.” “Your lunch hour can spur someone’s lifetime.”).
- Build words like “fun,” “simple,” “rewarding,” “time well spent” into recruitment messages.
- Talk about the activities matches engage in – it will seem less daunting if they can picture fun activities.
- Give examples of how mentors can include their mentees in activities *they are already doing*.

### ***Worried about working with youth’s parents***

- Emphasize that SOY focuses on youth needs, not family needs.
- Emphasize that every volunteer gets match support and a staff member who monitors how things are going.
- Clarify mentor roles during presentations. Emphasize that mentors are not surrogate parents.
- Bring in satisfied parents to talk about the positive impact of SOY during recruitment presentations.

### ***Men may be worried about being falsely accused of inappropriate behavior***

- Emphasize the role of program staff in creating a safe, positive experience for all mentors.
- Emphasize policies and procedures related to match supervision (same gender matches, physical touch policy, etc.).
- Emphasize the track record of SOY.

### ***Mentoring is too emotionally involving***

- Be careful about talking about “saving” youth. Mentors are friends & guides, not saviors. There is only one Savior, and the mentors are not Him.
- Have current mentors speak about experience.
- Emphasize the many benefits to mentors.

- Emphasize match support and the training provided to help set healthy relationship boundaries (it's the whole program working with the youth, not just the mentor).
- For heavily male audiences, present mentoring as a solution to social problems, not just an emotional activity.

## Recruiting From a Congregation

1. **Pray** – pray for God to lead you in this new assignment. Pray for young people in your community who need mentors and for the mentors that you will recruit! Prayer can motivate and encourage you every step of the way in your MRA work.
2. **Review the MRA starter kit:** video, brochures, applications, and any other promotional item SOY provides (like bookmarks, t-shirts, posters, etc.). They can be used for making group presentations or left with someone after a personal conversation.
3. **Consider to whom you will be accountable.** Activities within a congregation need to fall under a congregation's leadership structure and follow a chain of command for them to flourish and be sanctioned. Try to get the buy-in of top leadership before moving forward. Find out who can determine if this type of community outreach fits into your congregation's structure. Some ideas for oversight could include: leadership board, mission committee, community outreach or service team, or a pastor or other staff.
4. **Choose the right strategy.** With your leadership group, decide the most appropriate strategy for your congregation. Consider one of the options below:
  - **Congregation-Wide Strategy:** This approach would give broad exposure at every level to engage the congregation. It requires congregation leadership to decide that mentoring will be a high priority for service and outreach. You can use a variety of platforms, such as announcements from clergy, adult class presentations, and newsletters, to bring visibility to SOY's mentoring opportunities.
  - **Group-Targeted Strategy:** This strategy is modified from the congregation-wide. The MRA is invited to make presentations to smaller groups (as opposed to the entire congregations) or is allowed to have a visible recruitment table at events. But the congregation leadership isn't using their role to give a special push.
  - **Personal, "under the radar" Strategy:** Permission is (ideally) given by leadership for the MRA to personally invite members to consider becoming mentors, but there is less emphasis on advertising to the entire congregation or integrating the MRA into church activities. This strategy works well if you have specific, targeted individuals in mind.
5. **Consider a team ambassador approach.** You might want to form an Ambassador team: one or two other people who can also carry the message and share in the responsibilities of mobilizing mentors.

## 6. ***Make a Monthly Plan***

- Your strategy should guide your planning. If you are going to implement a strategy that involves more than personal contacts, you should set up a monthly calendar to coordinate your activities.
- Try to do one recruitment activity a month: a presentation to a group one month, an article in a newsletter the next.
- Whatever your monthly activity, always be ready for personal conversations.

## **Recruiting From Service Organizations**

1. ***Similar to congregations*** (pray go over material, choosing a strategy, getting ready to present, etc.)
2. ***Buy-in.*** As with congregations it is important to get buy-in from the top. But instead of a pastor, you'll need the support of the board of directors. They can give you access to the group and put their official stamp of approval on the mentoring opportunity you are going to tell their members about.
3. ***You may also need to coordinate your activities*** with a community involvement or outreach community.
4. ***Research their prior community and youth involvement.*** Try to build on their history of “giving back” and use language and themes you know have been appealing to them based on the past work they have done in the community.
5. ***Be sure to ask if they have other chapters, sister organizations, or community partners*** that may also be interested in hearing your MRA presentation.

## **Recruiting From Colleges and Universities**

These settings are often quite a bit larger than either congregations or service organizations. Figuring out who to present to (let alone how and when) can be a little overwhelming. The process can be made easier if you:

- Use the campus directory to identify specific student and faculty groups to speak to.
- Determine the rules for presenting on campus or to student groups. The administrative office should be able to tell you how to get access and what is allowed.
- Investigate the various information dissemination methods that may be available to you in the campus setting. Things like student newspapers, campus bulletin boards, college radio, and other college specific resources might be well worth your time.