

# **RESPONDING TO STUDENT AND COMMUNITY NEEDS**

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# ST. JOHN'S HIGH SCHOOL

- Grades 7-12
- 1200 students
- Multicultural
- 52.2% of the students live below the poverty line (2007)
- 50.2% of the students come from single parent families (2007)
- Many programs
- St. John's Middle Years is a school within a school

# INSANITY 2004-2005

- 266 Suspensions
- Over 2000 Discipline Referrals
- Take a number!

# DEFINITION OF INSANITY

Doing the same thing  
but expecting  
different results!

**IF WHAT YOU ARE  
DOING IS  
NOT WORKING,  
CHANGE WHAT  
YOU DO!**

# IN SEARCH OF A SOLUTION

## INITIATIVES:

- 1) Meet basic needs
- 2) Restitution
- 3) Home visits
- 4) Mentoring**
- 5) Single Mom Support Group
- 6) Single Dad Support Group
- 7) Grandma Support Group**
- 8) Relationship building**

# **MENTORING PROGRAM**

## **PURPOSE:**

To mentor at-risk grade seven students in an attempt to keep them in school.

**Grade 11 – Grade 7**

**Grade 12 – Grade 8**

# MENTORING PROGRAM

## CRITERIA TO BE A MENTOR:

- 1) Good interpersonal skills
- 2) School citizenship
- 3) School attendance
- 4) Commitment to mentoring program

We looked for mentors who had overcome some life challenges.



# **MENTORING PROGRAM**

## **MENTORS RECEIVE:**

- 1) Volunteer Credit (110 hours) – Grade 11
- 2) Peer Tutor Credit (110 hours) – Grade 12
- 3) A letter and a certificate for his/her portfolio

# MENTORING PROGRAM

## PROGRAM:

- 1) Mentors fill out application (teachers pick mentees)
- 2) Initial training – two half days
- 3) Good mentor/mentee match
- 4) Mentors meet once a month with supervisor
- 5) Mentors meet four times a year as a group
- 6) Mentors are to spend a minimum of one hour a week in the classroom with mentee
- 7) Mentors keep a journal
- 8) Participate in celebrations
- 9) Attend field trips
- 10) Further training

# WHY ARE MENTORS IMPORTANT?

- In order to help students become emotionally and physically healthy, we need to help them make healthy choices.
- There are a lot of influences on younger children that encourage them to make poor, unhealthy choices.
- Mentors contribute time and effort in helping younger children/students in one crucial area of their development – their education!

# QUALITIES OF A GOOD MENTOR

- Ability to listen
  - Pay attention
  - Don't interrupt
  - Listen for and validate feelings
  - Ask for clarification
  - Repeat what you heard
  - Make eye contact
  - Pay attention to body language
  - Use verbal reinforcements
  - Lean forward
  - Be honest in what you say

**Listening sustains relationships!**

# QUALITIES OF A GOOD MENTOR

- Trustworthy
- Non-judgmental
- Caring and compassionate
- Ability to empathize with another person's struggles
- Keeping information confidential
- Reliable – Be on time; Keep commitments
- Know boundaries

# I AM A MENTOR – NOW WHAT DO I DO WITH THIS PERSON?

- Talk about their strengths – What is your mentee good at?
- Hobbies and interests
- Talk about people you both admire
- Do an activity together
- Read together
- Talk about consequences of behavior
- Talk about how both of you solve problems
- Be encouraging
- Help your students learn to plan and keep commitments
- Set goals
- Make them feel good about themselves
- Encourage good communication between them and their parents/guardians and teachers

# RESULTS OF A POSITIVE MENTORING EXPERIENCE

- Strong relationships are formed
- Mentee has someone who is in their corner
- Mentee has someone who will listen to them
- Mentee has a positive role model
- Mentee has increased self-esteem and sense of self-worth
- Mentor feels that he/she has done something worthwhile

# GRANDMA SUPPORT GROUP

- St. John's Grandma Support Group started in 2006
- The group has grown from 3 members to 30 members
- We meet the first Thursday of every month
- Phone calls are made at the beginning of every month to remind grandmothers about our upcoming meeting
- Volunteer drivers help drive the grandmothers to our monthly meetings
- At every meeting we share a meal, take part in a sharing circle and/or do an activity
- Activities include: making Aboriginal star pillows, cooking, baking, beadwork, bingo, and fundraising for their "African sisters" and "Aboriginal sisters"
- Christmas and Mother's Day are special celebrations
- Had a granny social on November 12, 2010, called Grannies Gone Global



# MENTORING & SUPPORT GROUPS

- It's all about relationships
- Students connecting with students
- Staff connecting with students
- Staff connecting with staff
- Community members connecting with students
- Staff connecting with community members
- Community members connecting with other community members

# RELATIONSHIPS

“Building and nurturing relationships is at the heart of a successful and happy school.”

Hopkins, 2002

# RELATIONSHIPS

“At the core of what schools are about is relationships. Building trust is the key to relationships. Often schools put curriculum at the center of their purpose. However, I found that you can get the curriculum right, but if the relationships are not right, the school will not succeed.”

Cavanagh, 2009

# RELATIONSHIPS

“Especially for at-risk students, teachers may be their only positive, supportive adult model and thus they have a unique opportunity to help students foster positive representations of themselves, others and relationships.”

Kennedy & Kennedy, 2004

# **CONCLUSION**

**Healthy relationships  
are the key to  
successful mentoring  
and support group experiences!**