

**Encourage Higher Education**

Amazing Mentors! As you all know, there is life after high school, even though that notion can be difficult for our youth to imagine. We want all of our youth to understand that the sky’s the limit and options are endless once they set their minds on a goal. Of course support is imperative for accomplishing educational goals, especially when no one in their family has received a diploma or degree. It is for that reason that we would like to provide you as mentors with some resources and ideas on how to encourage higher education.

Below are some ways to help youth of **all ages** to begin to prepare for life after high school.

* **What do you want to be when you grow up?** If your youth has no idea what they’d like to do for a career, begin by asking them what they used to dream about becoming when they were little. If they are still unsure of a career, their favorite subject in school is a great place to start the brainstorming process, even if their favorite class is recess.
  + **Baby Steps**…If after discussing their options for pursuing higher education your youth appears to show no interest in college, think about visiting the library together. You can both select a book the two of you can read when you are apart, and discuss when you are together. This has the potential of sparking an interest in learning, and can promote academic success and college readiness.

* **Knowledge gives direction**. Encourage your youth to make an appointment with their school advisor to find out if they are on track to graduate on time, and what tests they need to take in order to apply for college. That way they have an accurate picture as to which college will be the best fit. Trade schools can also be an avenue to explore, as many youth excel at hands on careers. Acquiring a trade can be a stepping stone to a future college education.
  + College Planning Timeline: This timeline will help keep our youth on track during high school. <http://www.petersons.com/college-search/planning-list-students-parents.aspx>
* **Seize the moment**! This is a great opportunity to share your personal experiences in regards to your education and career choices with your youth. Sometimes you can have the most impact when you speak from your heart and own experiences. Feel free to share those choices you made and challenges you have faced. It makes you more human and relatable.
* **Field trip!** Visit trade schools, community colleges, state colleges and universities. Exposure to campuses and college students can be exciting and motivating to youth. *(We would be happy to link you to trade schools and colleges to schedule a tour)*
* **Time to apply!** When the research and field trips have been done, it is time to help your youth figure out the application process for the college of their choice. Sitting together at the library and working through the application could be the most important part of the process. As you know, documents can be confusing and yet have to be done correctly for any chance of acceptance. Modeling patience will be very important and leave a lasting impression.

**Thank you for all that you do to better the lives of youth! We appreciate you!** **Note from Match Coordinators: The above topics are simply suggestions. We would love to hear about any fun and/or meaningful experiences you have with your youth to pass along to other mentors. As always, we are here to support you as you build your mentoring relationship. Please do not hesitate to contact us at 303.756.9285 if you have specific questions or just need additional ideas along the way.**