

# Mentoring matters!!

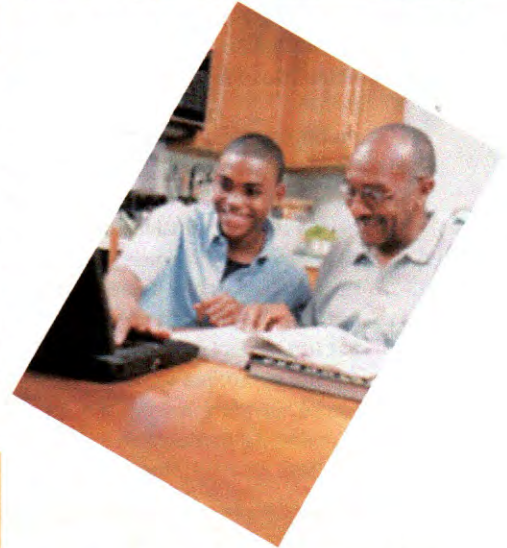
## IMAGINE...

Imagine what it would feel like to have no hope. There can be no darker place. Imagine the feeling of helplessness of being caught in a cycle of poverty and the frustration of knowing that no matter what your potential, your opportunities will be defined by the prison of your circumstances. Imagine the overlooked talent, the anger, the devastation. Then imagine a Bahamian youth who has the ability and character to make a difference in their life, their family and their community, given a chance. Now imagine the enduring legacy you could leave if you could provide them with the chance they need to fulfill their potential.



## WHAT DOES CHANCE OFFER?

Our primary initiative is to discover deserving young individuals from underprivileged areas who have the capacity to excel if they are given the chance and to match them with mostly tertiary-education organisations offering assistance. These organisations may be domestic or foreign. Further, CHANCE takes a long-term holistic interest in the student including mentoring, socialization and actively participating in the student-school relationship. We work with the parents and encourage them to take over this role in the medium term. However, in reality many of the students we target lack a stable home environment and our work in this area has to be available for the long term if needed. CHANCE will typically identify potential students through the public education system, by collaborating with other not-for-profits and by being active in the community generally. It is critical that the students are selected without prejudice or favour and anyone proposing a student must declare all conflicts of interest. More information may be found on our website at [www.chancebahamas.org](http://www.chancebahamas.org)



## WHAT ARE YOUR STUDENT PROGRAMS?

Students are accepted by Chance after a careful selection process. Each student will be matched with two Mentors, working as a team, and undertake a program of orientation and socialisation prior to final assessment for scholarship suitability. These programs are designed to improve academic performance and social competency of the student and to strengthen a sense of family and community. We are currently working with a number of educational and social partners to introduce some exciting opportunities in 2008.

Our scholarship opportunities typically include full tuition, travel, accommodation and text books coupled with continuing mentoring and other support. Scholarship opportunities are extremely hard to secure and mentors play an important role in assessing the students prior to final

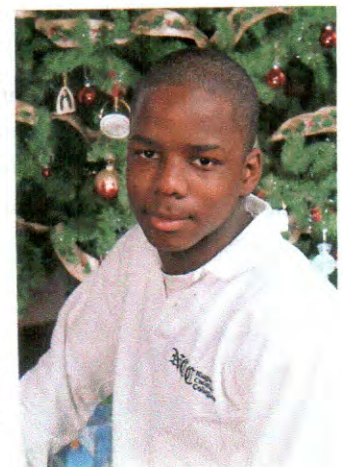
selection and in the student-school relationship.

## WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A MENTOR?

We view the long-term mentoring process as critical to the welfare and success of our Students. Further, we appreciate the enormous responsibility which a Mentor carries especially when the development of a long-term Mentor-Student relationship is so important. It is recognised that many well-intentioned Mentors underappreciate the commitment to sustain a relationship in the long-term and this often leads to increased distancing and frustration on behalf of the at-risk student. We therefore appoint two Mentors to every Student as a means of:-

- minimising the impact of a loss or breakdown of a Mentor-Student relationship
- reducing mentor burnout by enabling "Mentor-Student" holidays
- Providing diversity to the Student in guidance and support
- Reducing the potential for mentor-Student conflict or accusation, incidence or suggestion of abuse

Mentors, like students, have to undertake a careful screening process to ensure that the Mentor fully appreciates what is expected, and is capable and willing to enhance the social and academic opportunities afforded by the Foundation. Mentors will undergo comprehensive training and will have access to online



resource and mentoring support from the Foundation. Mentors will typically commit to one year of mentoring and agree to meet, or be in contact with the student at least weekly. Mentors are also required to agree to strict confidentiality and to document and file all communication with the student, school or parent(s) on a weekly basis. These obligations can and should be shared between the co-mentors.

## HOW DO I QUALIFY?

To be eligible as a Chance Mentor all of the following criteria must be met. You must:

- be at least 25 years of age
- reside in the Bahamas
- be willing to adhere to all Chance Foundation Mentoring Program policies and procedures
- agree to a minimum one-year commitment to the program
- commit to spending a minimum of four hours each month meeting or communicating with the Student i.e. be willing to communicate with the Student weekly
- successfully complete the screening procedure
- agree to attend mentor training as required
- be willing to communicate regularly with the Mentoring Coordinator and submit weekly meeting and activity information, preferably by using the Chance Mentor Active Portal System (MAPS).
- preferably have access to the internet
- have access to an automobile or reliable transportation
- have a current driver's license, auto insurance, and good driving record
- have a clean criminal history
- have never been accused, arrested, charged, or convicted of child abuse or molestation, sexual abuse or any domestic or other violence
- not be a user of illicit drugs
- not use alcohol in an inappropriate manner
- not use controlled substances
- not be currently in treatment for substance abuse. If a substance abuse problem has occurred in the past the applicant must have completed a non-addictive period of at least five years
- not have falsified information during the course of the screening process



## WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?



Mentoring is not easy. It requires empathy, patience and commitment. It is also voluntary – CHANCE does not pay any salaries or benefits to any of its directors, leadership team, mentors or other volunteers. However, the rewards are great. To make a positive difference in the life of a child or young adult is an enduring gift and an amazing legacy. The word “Mentor” is derived from the Greek word “enduring”.

## HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

You can e-mail [realchance@mail.com](mailto:realchance@mail.com) or call 327 7771/2.

A meeting will be organized for you to discuss how you can help and to get a better understanding of the process. Assuming that both parties agree to go forward you would be asked to complete an application form and provide references and other supporting information. If successful, this will be followed by an orientation meeting where you will be introduced to other mentors, volunteers and members of the Board of Directors in an informal environment.

