

NEWS

VOLUNTEER CENTER OF BERGEN COUNTY, INC.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Volunteers Needed to Mentor Overwhelmed Mothers and their Families

North Jersey--Make a difference in a family's life! Mentoring Moms, a program of the Volunteer Center of Bergen County, trains volunteers to serve as mentors to overwhelmed mothers in need of guidance in parenting and life skills, particularly those who have been in child service programs or who are moving from welfare to work. When a parent is supported by a mentor, the entire family is helped, because mentors become important role models for the children, as well.

“It is so great to have a friend, someone I can really talk to!” “I have learned so much about raising my son.” “I feel better as a parent and a person since meeting my mentor.” So say mothers working with volunteers from Mentoring Moms. The volunteer mentors spend time with mothers who have experienced difficulty in coping with parenting, managing households, and providing for their children. The mentors listen, share ideas and offer encouragement, so that the mothers can improve their lives and those of their children.

“Mentors provide the needed support and resources that help strengthen a family”, says Cindy Andrade, program director of Mentoring Moms. “Children do better when families do well.”

There is an especially great need for bi-lingual Spanish speaking women to become mentors.

Volunteers are provided with a free six-session, 15-hour training program and ongoing support from program staff. During this time, the volunteers take workshops on

developing listening skills, communication and problem solving. Guest speakers such as current mentors, mothers who have participated in the program, and social services case workers share their experiences so that new mentors have the background and knowledge to help support moms who may be single parents, or struggling with a child's illness, or who are simply overwhelmed. Mentors usually spend 2-3 hours per week with a mother simply being a friend, listening, sharing ideas, and offering encouragement. While each situation is different, one mother aptly described her mentor as "Someone I can talk to besides family, who understands and cares. She makes me think about my life and encourages me."

Winter training begins Monday, January 26, 2009 from 7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. at the Volunteer Center of Bergen County, 64 Passaic Street, Hackensack, NJ. Call Susan Hogge at (201) 489-9454, ext. 124 to learn how to become a Mentoring Moms volunteer.

The Volunteer Center of Bergen County strengthens the community by connecting people with opportunities to serve, operating model volunteer programs, building capacity for effective volunteering, and participating in strategic partnerships that meet community needs.

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