

# Why Mentor?: A Qualitative Study of Men's and Women's Reasons for Becoming Mentors

by Gina E. Gehrke, Quincy D.H. Jenkins, Stephanie A. Miskovetz and Pauline F. Wray

## Abstract

*The number of at-risk youth in America is steadily increasing, yet there is a gap in services for this population. This gap is most noticeable for at-risk male youth. Mentoring programs are an excellent option to reach youth and improve their chances for life success. However, more male volunteers need to be recruited for mentoring programs. This Chicago-based qualitative study examined 9 subjects (3 females and 2 males who are mentors, and 1 female and 2 males who inquired about mentoring but did not become mentors). The authors explored the topic of mentoring in an effort to elucidate the reasons men and women choose to become mentors, and what might lead more individuals (particularly men) to the field of mentoring. The findings of this study indicate that both males and females become mentors as a way to contribute to society and to support their beliefs about the importance of families. The study also found differences across gender lines in the level of personal gratification gained through the mentoring experience. These differences should be considered for recruitment strategies of future mentors and program structures for mentoring programs.*

## Introduction

In America, the number of at-risk youth is steadily growing. At-risk youth are defined as adolescents who have a potential for becoming excessively disobedient, or who are already exhibiting signs of disobedience by running away from home or not attending school (Gur & Miller, 2004). These youth face problems such as low self-esteem, low school performance, and difficulties interacting with law enforcement or other authority figures (Sipe, 1996). Furthermore, Sipe has determined that at-risk youth often live with parents who are unavailable to provide guidance due to personal and financial problems (1996). However, one way to help troubled youth is through mentoring.

In this study mentoring is defined as a one-on-one relationship between an adult (age 18 or older) and a youth (under 18 years of age). Using the same definition, a recent survey of research shows that “mentors believe that their mentoring is invaluable in helping youth increase self-esteem, solve life

problems, and improve relationships and school performance” (Sipe, 1996). Moreover, mentoring offers a rich developmental opportunity for children to have an empathic adult role model (Gur & Miller, 2004).

Prior research demonstrates the positive effects of mentoring youth. In a randomized study by Holland (1996), students who participated in a mentoring relationship had significantly higher GPAs and test scores than students who did not have a mentor. Further details of the Holland study revealed that 85% of adolescent male subjects who were assigned a mentor were at or above grade level in almost every subject area, compared to only 15% of the boys not assigned a mentor (Holland, 1996). Hence, research indicates a strong connection between the presence of a mentor and school performance.

Mentoring not only benefits young people but also their mentors. Ninety-seven percent of mentors report having a positive experience mentoring (Sipe, 1996). Eighty-four percent of individuals who mentor report they are likely to mentor again in the future and 91% report they are likely to recommend mentoring to a friend (Sipe, 1996).

Despite the positive findings regarding mentoring, fewer mentoring services than needed are available. At one Chicago-area mentoring program investigated for this review, approximately 100 youth were on a waiting list for a mentor. The Program Coordinator reported the number of waiting children continues to grow (Program Coordinator, Personal Communication, March 30, 2005). In addition, approximately 70% of youth awaiting a mentor are boys (Program Coordinator, Personal Communication, March 30, 2005). Complicating the difficulty of matching a waiting mentee with a mentor, 18% of mentor-mentee matches terminate prematurely and 70% of people who inquire about the program do not complete the screening and training process to become a mentor (Program Coordinator, Personal Communication, March 30, 2005). The present study is designed to begin addressing this gap, by determining the reasons why people choose or decline to mentor, and how these reasons may differ by gender.

## Literature Review

Current research shows that there is a lack of participation in formal mentoring organizations. Eighty-three percent of mentoring relationships are formed through informal connections such as older family members spending time with younger family members, or coaches, religious leaders, or neighborhood elders choosing to spend time with hand-selected youth that do not belong to formal mentoring organizations (Sipe, 1996). Only 17% of mentors participate in formal mentoring organizations (such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America), despite research studies that demonstrate a positive correlation between formalized mentoring and its positive impact on youth (Sipe, 1996). Previous research indicates the most crucial aspect to creating a successful mentoring relationship is "providing mentors with support in their efforts to build trust and develop positive relationships with youth" (Sipe, 1996, p. 9). Moreover, Sipe indicated the significance of formal mentoring programs in stating that "most volunteers and youth cannot be simply matched and then left to their own devices; programs need to provide some infrastructure that fosters and supports the development of effective relationships" (p. 9). In order for a mentoring relationship to have a significant chance of success, formal supervision and monitoring of the relationship need to be available to the match. Another motivating factor to increase usage of formal mentoring programs is evidenced by the large number of boys on waiting lists and the lack of male volunteers in the formal programs.

Youth service-related organizations account for the second largest group of volunteers, at 27.2% of the volunteering population during the 2001-2002 year (Boraas, 2003). Despite the high level of volunteerism in this area, there is a discrepancy between the number of males and females who participate in mentoring programs. Women volunteer at a rate that is almost 8% higher than that of men (Boraas, 2003). Further, this relationship holds true across all age groups, education levels, and major demographic characteristics (Boraas, 2003). The biggest gender gaps are among Whites, and highly educated individuals.

Being a mentor requires a substantial amount of time. Despite this fact, there has been an increase in the level of volunteerism in general, as well as an increase in the number of hours devoted to mentoring (Boraas, 2003). Nonetheless, it is not only volunteers who must make a commitment in order for the mentoring relationship to be helpful. Youth involved

in these mentoring relationships must maintain a high level of commitment, as well. Ruark (2003) found that children and adolescents in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program whose mentor pairing lasted less than 6 months did not receive the full benefits of the mentoring relationship. Youth in this study had already faced adverse situations and hence were at risk for increased suffering due to the loss of a significant adult figure. Time is needed to develop a relationship between mentor and mentee so that appreciation, disclosure and connection may emerge from the relationship (Ruark, 2003). Sipe cited an additional study, which emphasized the importance of a commitment of at least 2 years for the mentoring relationship to be mutually beneficial (1996). "Mentors in relationships that last at least 2 years are more likely than those whose relationships last less than 2 years to feel they have a positive influence on the life of the youth" (Sipe, 1996, p. 73). The most common reason for not mentoring, reported by 61% of the people polled in a study on volunteerism, is "that they did not feel they had enough free time" to give to the programs (Holland, 1996).

Given the apparent need for mentoring relationships for youth, the authors of this study sought to explore the reasons men and women choose to become, or not to become, mentors. We asked these questions in an effort to elucidate what draws certain types of people to mentoring programs, to gain knowledge about gender patterns in mentoring, and to learn more about what may attract people to mentoring programs, with special attention to males.

## Method

This study used a qualitative research design, which included a case study of mentors utilizing a semi-structured interview carried out by three interviewers. Based on a review of existing literature, the authors sought to explore reasons males seem not to be as inclined to mentor as women, gender differences in the reasons men and women mentor as well as their reasons for declining to become mentors, and universal reasons why people mentor. The authors chose to interview males and females who had participated in an informational meeting at a local area mentoring program. Study participants included men and women who decided to mentor after attending the meeting as well as those individuals who opted not to become mentors. The authors did not try to prove causality with a series of pre-stated reasons as to why we feel men and women choose or decline to mentor; rather subjects were asked for subjective data about their experiences.

### *Sampling and Study Subjects*

The researchers approached the Program Coordinator of a Chicago-area mentoring program and enlisted her help in obtaining a sample of mentors and non-mentors for the study. Due to time constraints, only one agency was used to obtain a sample for this study, thereby limiting the generalizability of the study findings. However, the authors believe that the program used to obtain subjects is representative of many other mentoring programs. The program matches mentors and mentees in similar ways to other programs, and it also recruits new mentors in ways similar to other mentoring programs (such as through the media, newspaper, Internet, word of mouth, etc.). Additionally, this program shares similarities in structure with other mentoring programs, such as being community-based (activities generally take place in the surrounding community and not at the program office), hosting organized events for mentoring matches, same sex matching, an extensive screening process for potential mentors, training and support structures, a commitment to one-on-one relationship building that is unique to mentoring programs, and a more long term volunteer commitment.

As part of the sampling process, the coordinator of the mentoring program provided the researchers with two lists. The first was composed of individuals who attended an informational meeting at the agency more than six months ago and did not complete the process of becoming a mentor. The second included mentors who had been active in a mentoring program for less than 1 year. Individuals on the lists were contacted by phone or e-mail and then voluntarily enrolled into the study by contacting the researchers. Interviews were conducted with the first 9 subjects who met the sampling criteria, which were to have study participants of both genders and mentoring statuses. Three of the subjects were women who were active in a mentoring program, and 3 were men active in a mentoring program. One male and 2 female subjects had inquired about a mentoring program and attended an information session but chose not to become mentors. Due to time constraints, it was necessary for the authors to discontinue the interview process after 9 subjects had been located instead of the 12 that had originally been intended. Having 12 subjects would have split the sample evenly by gender, but even without achieving this each possible combination of gender and mentoring status was represented in the study.

The sample is also somewhat representative of the age and ethnicity of program participants. Study

participants ranged in age from 23 to 55 years. Seven of the participants were Caucasian, one was African American, and one was of Middle Eastern descent. Comparatively, the age distribution of mentors at the Chicago based program ranged from 21 to 76 years. Seventy-eight percent of the program participants at the time of this study were Caucasian, 15% were African American, and 7% identified themselves as Hispanic or Asian (Program Coordinator, Personal Communication, November 28, 2005).

### *Variables*

The current research included variables such as gender, age, ethnicity, volunteer history, family relationships, level of education, mentoring status, and reasons for mentoring. The latter variable was subdivided into a) experiences in peer and social situations, b) personal gratification, c) family constitution and experiences with family members, d) experience with the information given by the mentoring program, and e) impressions of the program structure. The variables were primarily pre-defined by the interview questions but also emerged in the coding of the interview data post-transcription.

### *Data Collection and Procedures*

Data were collected via audio-taped face-to-face interviews. The interviews were conducted by three researchers, all of whom were graduate students at the Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work. Each interview was conducted by one researcher, with the subjects divided among the researchers based on geographical location and scheduling needs. In two cases, a second researcher was present to observe the interview but did not participate in the interview process. The fourth researcher was responsible for transcribing interview tapes. All four researchers were students in an advanced research methods course.

### *Measures*

The study used two sets of semi-structured interview questions: one for those who decided not to become mentors after attending an informational meeting and another for those who were actively mentoring (See Appendix A for a list of questions). The questions were created specifically for this study by the authors, in consultation with the coordinator of the mentoring program and a research professor from the School of Social Work. Due to the qualitative nature of the data, the authors were unable to directly test for reliability. Instead, an assumption was made that the individuals who participated in this study spoke truthfully and openly about the

questions being asked of them. Additionally, the authors attempted to ensure that the questions were presented in a way that was free of bias, were stated in a manner that was not leading, and were not derogatory or hurtful towards any group. The authors also received training on interviewing from more experienced researchers and by reading materials on culturally sensitive interviewing techniques. In order to ensure consistency, each interviewer was trained in the sequence of questions to be used. The authors discussed and reached a consensus on when and how probes were to be used to elaborate on information given in the interview. An interview guide developed from the author's thematic categories is included in the table below.

One limitation of the data collection was that audio taping may have led subjects to be uncomfortable or guarded in their responses. Additionally, using a face-to-face interview process was time consuming because of the time it took to contact potential subjects, wait for responses, and coordinate schedules. The authors' choice of methodology ultimately limited the number of subjects who participated in the study. Finally, using an interview process did not allow the subjects to remain anonymous to the interviewers, which could have made some potential subjects less willing to participate in the study and contributed to the inability to interview more people.

**Analysis**

The data from the face-to-face interviews was audio recorded and subsequently transcribed by a single researcher. Transcribed interview responses

were then coded by all the researchers using thematic categories identified by the authors during the data collection process. To arrive at a consensus for the coding categories, at least two researchers initially coded the interviews, and then the researchers discussed their findings until a consensus was reached regarding the appropriate category for each item of data. Data that could be coded in more than one category was coded as both and overlap was noted. However, overlap was only noted by the researchers in three instances (primarily in the area of program structure). Table 1 indicates the thematic categories used in coding the data.

Once the transcribed interviews were coded, the authors explored the differences and similarities between the four different types of participant groups (females who were mentors, males who were current mentors, females who were not mentors, and males who were not mentors). The authors expected that examining the frequency, distribution, and content of comments made by participants in each of the question categories would reflect differences in participants' reasons for choosing or declining to become a mentor. Analysis focused exclusively on counting the number of times a participant mentioned a particular category (such as experiences with family members, social contribution or personal gratification) as a reason for choosing or declining to become a mentor. The authors combined this frequency with the content of participants' comments in a particular category as a way to illuminate a participant's feelings about the mentoring process.

**Table 1**

Category	Definition
Level of Education	the highest level of education a participant completed
Volunteer Background	any previous experience volunteering, as well as any participation in current volunteer projects
Experience with the Agency	any interactions, positive or negative, that the participant may have had with the agency used to recruit participants to become mentors
Program Structure	any comments, positive or negative, that the participant made regarding the requirements of the mentoring program as determined by the agency
Family Experience	any mention of family and marital relationships or general familial interactions
Social Contribution	a participant's feelings about how members of society as a whole are expected to behave, as well as feelings of needing to give back to society and feelings of obligation to serve the community that they may have gathered from societal interactions
Personal Gratification	feelings of personal fulfillment and reward, as well as a participants' mention of personal characteristics they possess that they feel make them a qualified or good mentor
Peer and Social Experiences	a participant's commenting on how their peers, historically and currently, influence their decisions to mentor, as well as any mention of the participant having an influential other or mentor in their own life

## Findings

Tables 2 and 3 indicate the gender, age, ethnicity, education, and volunteer experience of study participants.

**Table 2. Participant Age/Gender/Mentor Status**

Participants	Female Current Mentor (3)	Female Non-Mentor (2)	Male Current Mentor (3)	Male Non-Mentor (1)
Age	Range from 23-51 years	Range from 24-36 years	Range from 26-55 years	32 years

**Table 3. Participant Ethnicity/Education/Volunteer Experience**

Descriptors	Ethnicity	Education (Highest Level Completed)	Prior Volunteer Experience
Distribution of Participants	Caucasian (7)	High School (4)	Minimal Experience (6)
	African American (1)	Bachelors (2)	Currently Volunteers in another capacity (3)
	Arabic (1)	Graduate Work (1)	Prior Mentoring Experience (3)
		Graduate Degree (2)	

There were several similarities in the thematic category responses of the participants, including ideas regarding societal contributions, family experiences, experience with the agency and program structure, and previous volunteer background. In the following paragraphs, each of these similarities will be discussed as they relate to the thematic categories. Education level was captured as a demographic feature, but is not used in the analysis.

### *Experience with the Agency*

None of the 9 participants noted negative interactions or experiences with the mentoring agency. One participant stated, “with [agency name] it’s better because they are way more aware of just everything that’s involved and all the importance of the background checks, fingerprinting, and they’re just more professional about matching people.”

### *Program Structure*

Some negative comments surfaced regarding the mentoring application process and the time commitment required to become a mentor. All 9 participants characterized the structure of the program as “intense.” Three participants noted the process of becoming a mentor was too lengthy. Five participants complained the mentoring program’s requirement of a time commitment of one year was too great. A study participant stated that his reason for not becoming a mentor was directly due to the level of commitment required: “I wasn’t going to have the

time they wanted.” Another participant stated it was “a conflict with and a commitment to the time frame” that prevented her from pursuing the program. Consistent with prior research, the time commitment required to mentor had positive and negative repercussions for potential and current mentors.

### *Family Experience*

All of the participants in this study spontaneously discussed their family interactions and experiences with influential others in their lives in response to questions about what factors most influenced their decision to mentor or not mentor and whether or not they had an influential other in their life. Two participants explained they considered a member of their family (such as a parent, sibling, an aunt or an uncle) to have been influential “others” or mentors to them. One participant noted, “my parents and my family members were the best mentors I had” and “the most influential.” Four participants concluded peers or adults had been influential others or mentors to them. Only 1 participant felt as though she did not have an influential “other” in her lifetime. Three participants noted both family members and peers had been influential in their lives.

Several participants identified family experiences as reasons they chose to become mentors. Some participants saw the mentoring program as a vehicle to build upon positive family experiences from their past. Mentoring was especially salient when participants considered their parents to be influential in

their lives. One participant noted, "My parents and my family members were the best mentors I had." Another explained, "I always hung around a lot of older people growing up...older brothers, their friends, neighborhood folks, my dad was a wonderful role model." Participants were also attracted to the mentoring program to fill a family void. For example, one participant reported, "I was new to the city...I came from a big family and I like being around kids and I didn't have any family connections here so, that would be the primary one."

### *Personal Gratification*

In the authors' analysis of participant responses, gender differences in factors that influenced individuals' reasons for mentoring became clear. One of the primary differences between male participants and female participants was the importance women placed on personal gratification as a reason for mentoring. For example, *all* women who were active mentors mentioned personal gratification as a factor in their decisions to become mentors at least 16 times during the interview. Conversely, female participants who declined to become mentors voiced at least seven concerns that the experience of mentoring would *not* provide them the personal gratification that they desired.

In contrast, male participants (both those who were mentors and those who were not) had far fewer responses during the interview in the personal gratification category than the peer and social experiences category.

Furthermore, women cited the ability to feel helpful, the desire to "do something meaningful" with their time, and fear of not meeting "expectations of myself" as most influential in their decision to mentor or not mentor. Male participants described their desire for personal gratification as "an evolution" during their time as a mentor or as something that they "might consider" in the future as a reason to mentor.

Women who were active mentors were the most likely participants to mention feelings of personal gratification as one of the reasons they choose to mentor. For example, one participant noted that she mentored not because she has to, but "because I want to." The same female participant explained she was motivated to remain in the mentoring program because "I like to feel valued as far as having life have meaning." When asked about her motivations for participating in a mentoring program, another female explained, "I would never think not to do something. I always feel like you should unless

you're overwhelmed. I always want to do something. I always want to do more."

The female participants who were not mentoring also had feelings about personal gratification to convey. These women were more likely than women who were mentors to feel as though their personal gratification needs were fulfilled in other areas of their lives. Non-mentoring women expressed concern they would not be able to perform the duties of a mentor in a manner that was satisfying. The potential for an unsatisfying experience as a mentor may have been a reason why they chose not to volunteer in the mentoring program. One female who did not pursue the mentoring program noted she received personal gratification in other areas of her life: "My new job is the most recent example of an experience in which I feel rewarded. I feel like the staff is really accommodating and always gives me compliments." Another non-mentoring female noted she was concerned she would not be able to complete the requirements of the program in a way that would be rewarding to her, saying, "I didn't pursue the program because I was just scared of expectations of myself."

### *Peer and Social Experiences*

Although the female participants clearly focused on personal gratification needs to indicate why they chose or declined to mentor, male participants focused on their peer and social experiences to indicate their reasons for mentoring or not mentoring. All the men who were mentors had more than two verbal responses each during the interview in the category of peer and social experiences for feelings related to their current experiences of mentoring. The male non-mentor study participant expressed concerns eight times during the interview that the experience of mentoring would not give him the peer and social feedback that he desired. Although female participants' response frequency in this category was higher on average than that of men, men were more likely to cite this category as their primary reason for making a decision about mentoring. For example, male participants more often cited the social pressure of adhering to a one-year commitment as instrumental in their decision to mentor or not mentor. One male participant believed the one-year time commitment was instrumental in his decision. This subject described social and peer pressures to commit to becoming a mentor for the full term due to a need to "follow through with it no matter what." Female participants exhibited less of a tendency to consider social pressures when deciding

whether or not to mentor. None of the female participants mentioned the social pressure to adhere to the time commitment as a factor in making their decision.

Male participants also were more likely than female participants to cite positive or negative experiences with childhood social groups as primary influences in their decision to become mentors. Male participants cited the fact that they had “a lot” of positive peer experiences that influenced their decision to become mentors. Relationships with older brothers, male friends, and “neighborhood folk” drove their desire to become mentors. Overall, data show males who mentored were most likely to offer reasons related to their peer and social experiences (both past and present) as to why they chose to be a part of the mentoring program.

Female participants were more likely to cite peer and social experiences as peripheral to their decision to mentor. A number of female participants said they “didn’t really have a mentor figure” for themselves, or that they had “some” positive experiences with social groups but that these experiences did not largely influence their decision to mentor. Men who were part of the mentoring program most frequently cited a commitment to the agency and the mentee as reasons for fulfilling their obligations. One male mentor reported he remained in the program because of his commitment to the agency. “I signed on; I told them that this is my commitment and I’m going to stick with it no matter what.” Another male participant stated he was recruited to become a mentor by a colleague at his place of employment. Perhaps part of his dedication to being a mentor was tied not only to the commitment he gave to the agency, but also to peer relationships within his profession.

Mentoring males also acknowledged a desire to fulfill a deficit in socialization and peer connections through their relationships with mentees. One current mentor explained, “I really prefer [a mentee] a little older that I can have a conversation with.” Even the male participant who chose not to mentor described reasons related to peer and social experiences as to why he declined to become a mentor. This participant worried he would not have enough time for other significant peers in his life (such as his wife and friends) if he committed to the program.

### *Social Contribution*

Despite the differences in the reasons for mentoring reported by men and women, all 9 participants noted feeling a desire to contribute to society as a principal reason to become a mentor. Furthermore,

all of the participants in this study mentioned they felt mentoring was a useful and expected contribution to society. For some participants, societal contributions were linked to their religious beliefs. Two female participants noted that their spiritual beliefs include helping other individuals as an essential part of participation in life. Mentors also believed in the reciprocal benefit to society and one’s self inherent in the mentoring experience. “We often don’t know how much we are benefiting that person. Maybe it’s years later...maybe it’s never. Obviously you were a person in their life for a reason. All you do is your best, I think that is all we can ask for and hope for us.” Other participants dedicated themselves to a belief in the importance of helping children as a way to improve society’s future. “People really need to know whatever their cause is...it’s [society’s] future.”

Clearly each participant had a meaningful experience – be it spiritual, familial, or social – that led to his or her desire to mentor.

### *Other Factors*

A number of other factors contributing to the decision to mentor were mentioned by participants. Some felt the mentoring program offered a personal opportunity to rectify the challenges they faced while raising their own children. One participant identified the significance of a non-family member in her own life, saying, “I personally had problems with my son...and I remember [outside help] was extremely beneficial because parents can only do so much.” Two participants discussed a desire to mentor after raising their own children. The desire to remain involved in the lives of other children remained strong. “I wanted to do something good... my own children were at the point where they were somewhat older [and they] didn’t want to spend as much time as before and I still wanted to spend time with kids.” Thus, like spiritual, familial, and social experiences, the experience of raising one’s own children was also an influential factor across groups.

### **Discussion**

There are several limitations to this research study. Most importantly, the ability to generalize the findings to a larger population of current and potential mentors is limited by the small sample size and the fact that the sample was drawn only from one mentoring program. Additionally, the researchers’ difficulty recruiting participants because of time constraints may be reflective of an unknown variable that also influences participants’ choice of whether to mentor. Finally, the findings

may contain bias if active mentors were motivated to convey a positive picture of the mentoring program to the researchers.

There were several factors the researchers attempted to control that may have nonetheless impacted the research. Researcher biases is possible, as many of the participants were interviewed by different researchers who may have had different styles of asking the questions in spite of the researchers' attempts to make the interviews as uniform as possible. Furthermore, several of the interviews were conducted in loud and public environments, which may have contributed to misunderstandings in the dialogue when the interviews were transcribed.

Regardless of these limitations, tentative conclusions can be drawn from this research about the differences between women and men's reasons for mentoring, which has important implications for recruitment and retention of mentors. In particular, it appears that peer factors most strongly influence men's decisions to mentor while personal gratification is key for women. Social workers may be able to use this information when trying to recruit mentors or support ongoing mentoring relationships. Further research is needed on the length of time men and women participate in mentoring programs and factors that motivate mentors to remain involved with mentees.

## Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the data gathered in this study, the most prominent differences between male and female mentors have to do with the reasons they choose to mentor. According to the findings of this study, female participants (both mentors and non-mentors) appeared to be more influenced than male participants by feelings of personal gratification when deciding whether to become mentors, while male participants appeared to be more influenced by their peer and social experiences in their decisions about whether to become mentors. Hence, gender played a role in the decision to mentor.

At the same time, clear similarities emerged from participants. All spoke of a desire to contribute to society. Most discussed the significance of prior family experiences as a factor influencing their decisions to mentor. There were few differences between mentors and non-mentors in response to questions related to participants' level of education, volunteer background, ethnicity, age or experience with the mentoring agency program structure.

Thus, men and women became mentors for reasons that are both similar and different. While

societal contributions and family experiences were important to participants regardless of gender, personal gratification and peer/social experiences were more divided along gender lines. This data supports a tentative conclusion that individuals choose to mentor for a variety of reasons, which should be taken into account when developing recruitment strategies and program structures for mentoring programs.

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## Appendix A

### List of Interview Questions

#### Set A: Active mentors

- 1) Please provide the following demographic information: gender, age, race, ethnicity, level of education, job title, number of siblings (by birth, adopted, step, or half), rank order among the siblings, marital status, how you learned about the program, and duration in the program.
- 2) What factors most influenced your decision to become a mentor in this program?
- 3) Do you volunteer in any other capacity, including formal and informal organizations?
- 4) Did you have an influential other in your life as a young person? Please consider both formal and informal relationships, as well as peer and adult relationships.
- 5) Please describe your experience, in as much detail as possible, of the recruitment/application process for this program. Please consider both positive and negative aspects of the experience.
- 6) Please describe your experience interacting with the volunteer coordinator of this program.

- 7) Please describe your experience of the volunteer information session you attended.
- 8) Please describe your experiences with your mentee, both when you were first matched and currently.
- 9) If you had to do it over again, would you choose to become a mentor again?
- 10) What motivates you to remain in the program?

#### Set B: Non-mentors

- 1) Please provide the following demographic information: gender, age, race, ethnicity, level of education, job title, number of siblings (by birth, adopted, step, or half), rank order among the siblings, marital status, how you learned about the program, and duration in the program.
- 2) What factors influenced your decision not to pursue mentoring for this program?
- 3) Do you volunteer in any other capacity, including formal and informal organizations?
- 4) Did you have an influential other in your life as a young person? Please consider both formal and informal relationships, as well as peer and adult relationships.
- 5) Please describe your experience interacting with the volunteer coordinator of this program.
- 6) Please describe your experience of the volunteer information session you attended.
- 7) Please describe your expectations of the program before attending the information session, and any influence attending an information session had on those expectations.
- 8) Would you recommend this program to another individual? Why or why not?
- 9) Tell me about a situation in your life in which you felt rewarded.
- 10) If you were the coordinator for a program such as this one, what would you do to recruit mentors?

*Gina Gehrke, an alumna of Knox College, graduated in 2004 with a bachelor's degree in elementary education. Gina further pursued her education by attending the School of Social Work, graduating in the Spring 2006 with an MSW and a concentration in school social work.*

*Quincy D.H. Jenkins received her MSW from the School of Social Work in May 2006, as well. She earned her B.S. in psychology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2003. While at Loyola, her internships were with John H. Stroger Jr. Hospital of Cook County in the pediatrics department and Arlington Heights School District 25 in the elementary and early childhood settings. Quincy will be working as a school social worker this fall at Home School in Lyons School District 103.*

*Pauline F. Wray also received her MSW from the School of Social Work in May 2006. She earned her B.A. in theater from Knox College in 2001. While at Loyola, Pauline focused her energies on social work in health care and social work with adolescents. Pauline currently works as an MSR for the Friends First program at Mercy Home for Boys and Girls. She is interested in working in the medical social work field or working with adolescents and families.*