

Community Coalition News

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Community Coalition
Ottauquechee Community Partnership (OCP)



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Save the Dates!

◆ **Community Dialogue
Facilitation Training**
For youth facilitators
and adult trainers -
March 20th & 27th
1-3pm

◆ **Upcoming Coalition
Meetings: 5-7 p.m.**
Mar 8th
Focus: Healthy
Environments -
Meeting held at the
Woodstock Rec

April 14th
Focus: FOOD -
Healthy and Local!
Meeting at Woodstock
Elementary

May 10th
Focus: Parenting: the
Joys and Challenges!

Mentors and Buddies Make a Difference

Mentoring provides youth with the opportunity to foster a sense of personal worth and well-being. The modeling of productive, healthy life choices leads to increased self-esteem in youth and encourages future constructive decision-making. OCP's Mentoring Program serves youth from Barnard, Bridgewater, Killington, Pomfret, Reading, Woodstock by matching them with positive adult role-models.

Mentors are paired with students at Woodstock Union Middle School. At Reading Elementary and Bridgewater Village Schools, the program is a "Buddies" program. OCP's mentoring programs are run jointly through the

Ottauquechee Community Partnership and the Windsor Central Supervisory Union, they are *local* mentoring programs.

Whether at the middle/high school or the elementary school levels, children and teens self-select to be in the program. There is a waiting list - we have more children who are seeking a positive friendship with a caring adult than we have adults to participate.

To learn about becoming a mentor or a buddy, contact **Krystal Waite, OCP Volunteer Coordinator** at kwaite@ocpvt.org or call 457-2679.

What are the benefits of Mentoring?

Mentoring... an hour a week, a lifetime of benefits!

- increases self-esteem of mentees
- increases longevity in mentors
- Leads to better school performance
- Gives mentors a sense of connection to young people
- Improves peer and family relationships
- Promotes overall healthy lifestyle choices
- Connects youth and adults to community

Community Coalition Celebrates Mentoring

The February 8th Community Coalition Meeting celebrated both the launch of OCP's NEW Bridgewater Village School Lunch Buddies Program and a celebration of mentors and mentoring in the WCSU. The meeting was well-

attended by eight school-based mentors, Rick Dustin-Eichler - the Bridgewater Village School Principal, mentors from the Bethany Mennonite Church, Bridgewater community members and the Ottauquechee Community Partnership (OCP) staff and board.



Our welcoming communities thrive through strong community partnerships and positive intergenerational relationships.

Why Mentor, Why Be a Buddy?

During February's celebration, attendees spent time in small groups discussing the following questions:

Question #1: Everyone has had someone who has been influential in their life. Who was that person for you and what did they teach you?

Question #2: Every person can be a mentor. Thinking of yourself as a mentor, what would you teach another person?

Question #3: Why do you think mentoring is important?

Below are the notes from those conversations.

Who Influenced You?

- ✓ Father - he was fair...never raised his voice, taught honesty, influenced who became friends, taught by modeling how to interact, donated time for volunteering.
- ✓ Mother - taught confidence and kindness and how to help others.
- ✓ Sister - taught how to survive.
- ✓ Uncle - taught lessons about men being gentle and sharing.
- ✓ Grandma.
- ✓ Teachers and adults who engaged in real conversation, taught right from wrong, taught to trust adults.
- ✓ Coach.

As a Mentor, What Would You Teach?

- To listen.
- To see both sides of the track (empathy).
- To be open-minded.
- A mentee is a teacher, too.
- Relationships.
- Finding your own voice.
- To feel safe enough in the world not to struggle.
- Honesty and integrity.
- To find each person's spark.
- Problem solving.
- How to listen.
- My skills, if they want to learn them (piano, sewing, cooking, games, gardening, reading for pleasure, writing, drawing).
- Figuring out who they are - voyage of discovery.
- Compassion.
- Model behavior.
- Non-judgment.
- To care.
- It's not just about you.
- Speaking from the core.

Why Is Mentoring Important?

For Youth:

- I am a friend.
- Mentors are NOT parents.
- A mentor chooses to spend time so a child feels special.
- A mentor is a safe person.
- We all need our person.
- To let youth know they are part of something bigger than them.
- Builds healthier communities by empowering youth to become positive, active participants.
- Caring with no strings attached.
- Mentoring is one-on-one.
- Addresses the misconception that adults don't care.
- Lets children know adults are there for them.
- A mentor is a confidante.
- It is important for kids to feel they are taken seriously.
- A chance to meet someone different and learn something new.
- Gives kids another role model.
- Gives kids a completely positive experience.
- Expands your world view.
- It's fun.

For Adults:

- Adults spending time with children puts back what is missing in our busy contemporary lives.
- We all need our person.
- Caring with no strings attached.
- Mentoring is one-on-one.
- Addresses the misconception that adults don't care.
- A chance to meet someone different and learn something new.
- Expands your world view.
- It's fun.



March 8th Community Coalition Meeting
Topic: Healthy Environments, including:

- A youth-led team looks at where we 'walk, bike and play'
- Developing accessible, sustainable public recreation areas
- Stores that provide affordable healthy foods
- Creating smoke-free environments

How Can I Become a Buddy or a Mentor?

In Bridgewater or Reading:
Spend an hour a week at lunchtime partnered with an elementary-aged Lunch Buddy at the Bridgewater Village School or Reading Elementary School.

Have lunch, read together, garden, make art, have fun!
When asked in a recent survey, 29 children at Reading Elementary said they'd like to have a

community buddy!

WUMS/HS: Spend an hour and a half a week partnered with a 7th or 8th grade young person - visiting community locations to learn, connect, help out, or just talk together.

To learn more, contact **Krystal Waite**, OCP Volunteer Coordinator at kwaite@ocpvt.org or call 457-2679.



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The Community Coalition is convened by OCP every 2nd Tuesday of the month.

OCP is a 501c3 non-profit organization serving the towns of Barnard, Bridgewater, Killington, Pomfret, Reading and Woodstock.

We're on the Web!
<http://www.ocpvt.org>

Training: Facilitating Community Dialogues - for Youth and Adults

Youth and adults are invited to join in to create a team of facilitators to lead Community Dialogues by attending a 4 hour training led by Robert Bryant. Facilitators learn the skills of active listening, leading meaningful dialogue and the process of bringing a community together around important community issues.

The goal is to train adults and high school youth to facilitate a Community Dialogue to be held in the Spring 2011. The facilitators will also learn to train others. In this way we'll create a community of dialogue

facilitators to lead community discussions on topics of importance to our various communities - as those topics arise. Community Dialogue facilitators learn how to bring people together to carefully listen to one another and improve community through meaningful interactions.

A facilitator training will be held on March 20th and 27th from 12-3pm for adults and 1-3 for youth. The training is free. Both days are required. For more information, contact **Jim Grossman** at **802-457-2679** and jgrossman@ocpvt.org

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