

***“One mentor, one person can change a life forever.”***

-- President George W. Bush, State of the Union Address, 2003

**Today, the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI) celebrates National Mentoring Month with a *Compassion in Action* Roundtable, “Faith-Based And Community Mentoring That Changes Lives.” The event will highlight successful mentoring models and organizations from across the country.** OFBCI Director Jay Hein will join representatives from mentoring programs to discuss the achievements and best practices of Federal, faith-based and non-profit organizations building mentorship opportunities across all ages, experiences and walks of life.

The mission of the President’s Faith-Based and Community Initiative is to reshape government’s approach to addressing human need by partnering Federal resources with the personal touch of community and faith-based organizations. President Bush captured the essence of this purpose when he described the Initiative as a “determined attack on need.”

### **Mentoring Children of Prisoners**

**Launched in 2003 at the Department of Health and Human Services, Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) has partnered with hundreds of faith and community-based organizations to bring compassionate adults into the lives of more than 70,425 at-risk children in order to promote healthy behaviors.** (NOTE: The Administration first requested funding for this program in 2002, but did not receive Congressional support that year. 2003 was the first year in which Congress provided funding for the program.)

- Children of incarcerated individuals are seven times more likely to enter the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems than their peers.
- To date, MCP has awarded over 440 three-year grants totaling more than \$255 million to more than 320 faith-based and community organizations, as well as state, local and tribal governments in 49 States and Puerto Rico.
- This year, MCP will launch a voucher-based program with a national mentoring organization MENTOR to expand access to mentoring services for children who live in communities not served by MCP grantees. This \$30 million-dollar project is projected to reach an additional 24,000 youth over the next three years.

In 2006 and 2007, the Administration for Children and Families at HHS collected data on participating children’s perceptions of the quality of their relationships with their mentors. In 2006, 85% of surveyed youth described their mentoring relationships as good or very good; this rose to 90% of respondents in 2007. Participating children’s ages average 10.5 years.

## **Ready4Work**

**Ready4Work was launched in 2003 at the U.S. Department of Labor.** A \$25 million, three-year pilot program, Ready4Work incorporated mentoring in programs to help ex-prisoners escape cycles of recidivism. Over 60 percent of ex-inmates enrolled in Ready4Work were partnered with a mentor through the initiative. A recent study shows:

- Just one month of active engagement with a mentor increased a participant's odds of securing employment the next month by 73 percent compared to participants who did not receive mentoring. An additional month of meetings increased a participant's odds of landing a job by another seven percent.
- Upon obtaining employment, program participants who met with a mentor were 56 percent more likely to remain employed for three months than those who did not meet with a mentor. An additional month of meetings with a mentor increased the participant's odds of remaining employed for at least three months by 24 percent.

## **The President's Prisoner Re-entry Initiative (PRI)**

**President Bush launched the Prisoner Re-entry Initiative (PRI) in 2004 to build upon the promise of the Ready4Work pilot program.** As of November 9, 2007, 11,321 PRI participants have been enrolled in the program and 6,690 participants have been placed into jobs. PRI participants' one-year post-release recidivism rate is currently *less than half the national average*.

- PRI programs match adult ex-offenders with appropriate mentors who offer support and guidance in navigating the challenges of reentering society.
- In 2008, Congress accepted the President's proposal to merge PRI with the Responsible Reintegration of Youthful Offenders program, creating a single program (Reintegration of Ex-Offenders) to bring together the strengths of both programs and assist youth and adult ex-offenders.

## **Other Federal Mentoring Efforts**

- **The Helping America's Youth initiative (HAY), announced by the President in 2005 and led by First Lady Laura Bush,** is a nationwide effort to raise awareness of the challenges facing our youth, particularly at-risk boys, and to motivate caring adults to connect with these children in three key areas: family, school and community. By becoming actively involved in the lives of young people in their community, grandparents, teachers, mentors, clergy members, neighbors, coaches, and other community members can help youth contribute to their communities and make better choices that lead to healthier, more successful lives.

Helping America's Youth also spotlights highly effective mentoring programs across the country, and encourages community mentoring efforts. In addition, the HAY website [www.helpingAmericasyouth.gov](http://www.helpingAmericasyouth.gov) helps connect potential mentors with community providers.

- **The Corporation for National and Community Service leads an interagency Federal Mentoring Council that works to improve coordination and better leverage resources among Federal mentoring programs.** Each of the Corporation's main programs— AmeriCorps, Senior Corps and Learn and Serve America—have made opportunities for volunteers to mentor and engage youth from disadvantaged circumstances a priority. In 2006, 400,000 children were mentored through Corporation programs.