

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- Invitation to Special Skating Event
- Read About our Topic of the Month: Stages of a Mentoring Relationship
- Activity Ideas for You and Your Mentee
- Meet the Real Connections Team

Welcome!

Thank you for taking the time to read our newest publication for Real Connections!

The purpose of this newsletter is to better connect with our mentors. We want to offer you the support and guidance needed to have a successful relationship with your mentee. We truly value your commitment to being a reliable support for these adolescents in foster care.

Each month, we will advertise special events, hosted by RIFPA or taking place in

the community. There will be a "topic of the month," where information and research will be presented to aid in your effective mentoring practices. We will also offer a list of ideas each month of fun activities that you can do with your mentee.

We want you to be truly supported and involved in the Real Connections program! Please contact us for feedback or suggestions about the newsletter. We always appreciate your responses regarding the



quality of services we provide. Thank you so much for your involvement!

Skating Event— March 19th

- ◆ 6:00-8:00 PM
- ◆ Free and open skating with skate rentals included
- ◆ Blackstone Valley Sports Center: 25 Ferland Way, Pawtucket, RI
(401) 728- 7420
- ◆ Dinner included: pizza, snacks, hot chocolate, and beverages
- ◆ Featuring scenes from "Beauty and the Beast" performed by Ocean State Ice Theatre
- ◆ Dress for winter as it will be cold inside the rink!
- ◆ Please RSVP by March 15th by calling Linda Fournier 401-438-3900 ext.100
- ◆ We look forward to seeing you at the rink!

Mentors

"We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give."
-Winston Churchill

* Did you remember
to complete your
monthly check-in? *



Do you know someone
interested in becoming a
mentor?
Refer a friend!

Topic of the Month: Stages of Mentoring

Stage 1: Beginning of the Match

This first phase is simply getting to know each other. Characteristics include first impressions, bonding, and beginning to develop trust. In order to achieve this stage, make visits consistent and predictable. Establish confidentiality to help build trust. Set at least one achievable goal to pursue together throughout your relationship.

Stage 2: Challenging and Testing

Your mentee may challenge you to determine whether you can be trusted. During this testing

phase, complex emotions may be disclosed. It is important to persevere and maintain consistency. Demonstrating respect and empathy for your mentee is crucial during this time period. Help your mentee improve problem-solving techniques.

Stage 3: "Real" Mentoring

Once trust is established, you may feel a genuine closeness to your mentee. Apply your knowledge of your mentee's strengths to advance insightful discussions. Share positive feedback and continue honest conversations.

Be prepared for both smooth and rocky periods throughout the relationship. Rely on staff support.

Stage 4: Ending

This final stage focuses on preparation for closure. Verbalize your own emotions and encourage the mentee to express him/herself as well. Be prepared to deal with potential grief, denial, or resentment. Provide positive feedback describing the growth observed in the mentee. Say goodbye in a healthy, respectful, and affirming way.

(Adapted from Mass. Mentoring Partnership)

Activity Ideas

Events:

- ◆ Saint Patrick's Day Parade in downtown Newport. March 12. 11:00 AM.
- ◆ Art Gallery by Beacon Charter High School for the Arts. February-March 26. Museum of Work and Culture. 42 South Main St. Woonsocket.
- ◆ Pounding the Pavement for Peace 5K run. March 27. Fundraiser for Domestic Violence Resource Center of South County. 3481 Kingstown Rd, West Kingstown. www.registration.strands.com
- ◆ Seal Watch and Prudence Island Tour. Tiverton to Prudence Island. Through April 3. 401-941-5454 x3041

Need an **free idea** for you and your mentee? Try..

- ◇ Making a calendar inclusive of photos and artwork.
- ◇ Asking your public library for free passes.
- ◇ Reading the local newspaper for community events

Meet the Team

We wanted to introduce the members of the team in case we have not had a chance to meet you already. Please feel free to stop in the office and say hello!

Neal O'Brien: Congratulations to the new program manager! Neal has 16+ years experience working with children and families. He also loves the Yankees :)

Kate Bronner: Originally from Vermont, Kate graduated with her Social Work degree from Castleton State College. She has been working at Real Connections since 2008.

Stacy Smith: Joined the Real Connections team in September. She graduated from Rhode Island College, earning her degree in Psychology.

Betty Casazza: An intern from Rhode Island College, working towards her Master's degree in Social Work. She has had years of professional experience as well as personal experience as a mother of three children :)

Danielle Macedo: A student intern from Salve Regina University, preparing to earn undergraduate Social Work degree in May when she will become a full time RIFPA employee.