

A Guide to Mentorship



SOUTH CENTRAL
SCHOLARS

Assisting Mentoring Motivating

www.southcentralscholars.org

Mission Focus Target

OUR MISSION...

South Central Scholars (SCS) is a group of volunteers who work with highly motivated, inner city high school students from South Central Los Angeles to help them be successful in college, graduate school and life.



OUR TARGET...

High schools in or around South Central LA, specifically:

California Academy of Math & Science (CAMS), Crenshaw, Dorsey, Foshay Learning Center, Fremont, Jordan, King Drew, Locke, Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies (LACES), Loyola, Manual Arts, Roosevelt, St. Bernard's, St. Mary's Academy, Thomas Jefferson, Verbum Dei, View Park Prep, Wallis Annenberg, Washington, West Adams Prep, Westchester, and Wilson.

OUR FOCUS...

The program focuses on highly motivated high school students throughout South Central Los Angeles. Our students lack the financial resources to attend college and graduate schools without assistance. Most of our students lack essential family support and the educational, cultural and social experiences necessary to ensure their success in college and in their careers. In the public high schools that our students attend, the large majority of entering freshmen do not receive a high school diploma. Our students live in the most economically-deprived, dangerous and crime-ridden area in Los Angeles. SCS attempts to provide our students with the key elements of support to help them overcome these almost insurmountable obstacles. With this assistance, 95% of our students have graduated from the finest universities in the country and many of them are moving on to graduate and/or professional schools.

Mentorship provides a wide range of support...

MENTORING PROGRAM...

The program links students with successful, educated adults who provide encouragement, guidance, advice and friendship. Students are partnered with mentors who have succeeded in careers in which the student has an interest.

The Mentorship Program provides much needed guidance and support in critical areas. Our mentors are volunteer professionals that help students build networks and relationships, and also teach life and professional skills that our students would otherwise have no access to.

This “second education” provided through our mentorship program addresses skill deficits and issues resulting from South Central students’ lack of stable family relationships, adult role-models, college preparation, and adequate support systems.

In addition our program provides workshops, seminars, and conferences that focus on issues that our scholars face due to their limited resources. These topics include financial literacy, job preparation, and personal and professional development. Most importantly, scholars that go through our program realize the value in networking and after they graduate, they participate in the program as mentors and volunteers.



What is Mentoring?

Captured from “*A Guide to Mentoring,*” *National Association for College Admission Counseling*

Though there are many definitions for mentoring, most characterize mentoring as a supportive, professional relationship between a professional or matured member of a community or organization (the “mentor”) and a more inexperienced, junior member of the community or organization (the “mentee”).

Mentoring relationships can be formal, with an established program and structured regular meetings, or they can be informal, with infrequent or irregular contacts.

The Illinois Association for College Admission Counseling (IACAC), which has conducted a mentoring program since 1995, notes:

“A mentor is someone who helps another learn the ways of the world.”



The Objectives of Mentoring



1. Assist high school students from South Central Los Angeles to achieve academic success in college and graduate/law/medical/professional school
2. Link students with mentors, volunteers, peers, and contacts who have succeeded in academic disciplines and careers in which the student has an interest
3. Teach our students financial concepts including planning, budgeting, and saving
4. Teach our students academic skills concepts such as study skills, time-management, note-taking and researching
5. Teach our students professional and personal skills concepts such as networking, making a strong introduction, interviewing and building a resume
6. Provide students with meaningful personal and professional interactions that will help to build character, confidence, and academic/professional proficiency in school and in life
7. Attempt to remove any obstacle that threatens a student's success in college.

The Qualifications for Mentoring



How mentors are chosen and matched...

South Central Scholars outreaches to professionals and partners for volunteers that are interested, committed, and capable of meeting the objectives of the mentorship program.

Upon the communication of general interest by a prospective volunteer, a questionnaire is provided that asks for the following information:

- Contact Information
- Mentorship Experience/Expertise
- Mentorship Criteria
- Mentorship Frequency
- Availability
- Additional program questions

The objective of each of these categories is to align a potential mentor's experience, criteria, and expectations with the needs of potential mentees. By providing detailed answers to these questions, staff is better able to pair mentors with scholars, based on the needs and expectations of both the mentor and the mentee.

Mentors may be called on to assist with a variety of problems...

In each of these roles, a mentor can call on the resources of SCS, its volunteers, campus liaisons, and regional coordinators.

- Providing academic help and resources
- Providing career exploration assistance
- Providing emotional support
- Providing social experiences
- Advocating for the mentee's rights
- Acting as a role model and friend

Issues that mentees may face

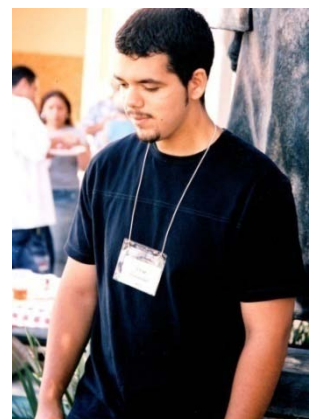
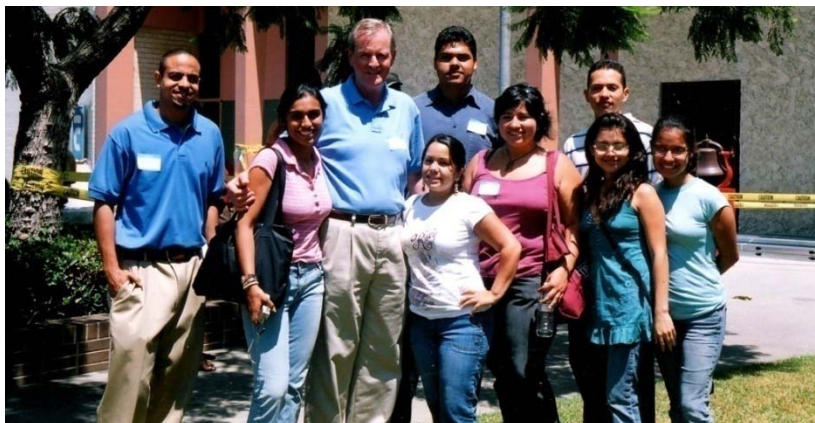
Why South Central young adults need mentors...

The young adults of South Central Los Angeles face many dangers, deprivations, and issues at the high school level. Some of these continue at the college level. Understanding the many social, psychological, and academic demands that these youth face is important for any volunteer that wishes to undertake the task of being a mentor. **Such issues include:**



- Academic issues related to inadequate preparation for college
- Negative peer pressure/lack of a college-going culture
- Physical, substance, or sexual abuse in the household
- Depression, anxiety and suicide
- Health Care and Nutrition
- Social and Time Management
- Career Exploration and Part-time Work

By communicating with your mentee to learn which of these and other issues are of particular significance in the mentee's life, you can better understand the perspective and concerns of your mentee and better coordinate an action plan with South Central Scholars staff plan.



Effective Mentoring Techniques

Captured from “*A Guide to Mentoring*,” National Association for College Admission Counseling

Effective mentoring incorporates these essential components: **connection, vision, listening, realistic expectations and support.**

Connection

The first step in making a connection is understanding why the relationship is wanted or needed. Strategies to connect include respecting differences in personality; agreeing upon the mutual rewards from the relationship; communicating sincerity; and sharing common experiences.

Vision

Mentor’s questions can help the mentee better understand his/her own goals, help determine stepping stones to reach these goals and possibly open the mentee’s eyes to alternative goals.

Listening

Being a skilled listener can be crucial to helping a mentee through a difficult period or a new experience. Good listening also shows respect and builds the relationships, increases knowledge, generates ideas, and builds loyalty.



Realistic Expectations

Mismatched expectations are typically the cause of unsatisfactory relationships. Pairs should establish and periodically revisit expectations.

Support

Offering encouragement when needed and reassurance when necessary are vital components of a good mentoring relationship.

Mentors' Advice for Communication

1. Make your communication positive.
2. Be clear and specific.
3. Recognize that each individual sees things from a different point of view.
4. Be open and honest about your feelings.
5. Accept your scholar's feelings and try to understand them.
6. Be supportive and accepting.
7. Do not preach or lecture.
8. Learn to listen.
9. Be attentive.
10. Allow time for your youth to talk without interruption; show you are interested in what he or she has to say.
11. Get feedback to be sure you are understood.
12. Listen for a feeling tone as well as for words.
13. Ask questions when you do not understand.
14. Set examples rather than giving advice.

Captured from “Training Guide for Volunteer Mentors,” Be A Mentor, Inc.

Mentor’s roles fall into FOUR categories:

- Providing academic help and tutoring
- Providing career exploration assistance
- Providing emotional support
- Providing social experiences

Any and all of the following are important activities that mentors provide in the lives of their youth:

Academic Support

Keeping youth in school; helping them graduate from school; evaluating educational choices; directing them to educational resources.

Role Modeling

Pointing out, bringing to attention, demonstrating, and explaining your own actions and values that offer the youth the best chances for success and happiness; helping youth see and strive for broader horizons and possibilities than they may see in their present environment.

Attention and Concern

Many youth do not receive enough from the adults in their lives; mentors can fill in these empty spaces with dependable, sincere, and consistent attention and concern.

Accountability

A commitment made to a youth for a meeting together, an activity, or a phone call should be a mentor’s first priority, barring emergencies. This consistent accountability has several benefits:

- Sets a good example for youth to see and emulate
- Cements trust between mentor and youth
- Creates mutual expectations that can be met
- Teaches youth to have accountability in all aspects of their own lives

So what exactly does a mentor do?

Mentors commit to spending time with their youth, but there is no restriction on this time and SCS does not govern how much time you should spend with your mentee for any given time period. What we DO expect is that you will commit to your mentorship knowing that your student's needs can vary. For instance, in any given semester, you will want to follow up with your mentee at least once or twice to see how he/she is doing in school. In a specifically difficult semester, that mentee may call you once a week or more for advice and direction. SCS expects that, based on the ever-changing needs of your mentee, you will adapt. If ever the time commitment seems beyond your ability to adapt or make yourself available, please contact the Mentorship Coordinator for your area and he/she will work with SCS to develop a plan for you and the student.

The following are some recommended activities that youth and mentors have found valuable in the past.:

Arrange one or more job shadows or on-the-job (OTJ) experiences

SCS students gain much more than a notch on their resume when they participate in internships and observational activities. They gain an appreciation for their industry, additional motivation to keep moving forward in their chosen career path, or a realistic view of their career choice that can lead to a change in their major at a more timely manner (during the sophomore year as opposed to the senior year). SCS has a network that can be tapped to create such opportunities and we encourage mentors to help develop opportunities for their scholars and future scholar participants where applicable.

The more “real world” exposure a mentor can provide a youth, the more that youth will learn. Youth will gain new perspectives on the working world and their own education and potential.

Talk and Ask Questions

Tell your youth those things that you wish you had known in college and ask him/her questions that will help them to develop an academic or career plan. “What do you want to do after college?” “What’s your plan for how to get there?” In many cases, they will need help answering those questions.

Practices of Effective/Ineffective Mentors

Practices of Effective Mentors

- Involve the scholar in deciding how the pair will spend their time together.
- Make a commitment to be consistent and dependable—to maintain a steady presence in the scholar's life.
- Respect the scholar's viewpoint.
- Allow the scholar to make mistakes.
- Separate their own goals from those of the scholar—leave their personal agenda behind.
- Do not focus on the negative aspects of the youth, neighborhood, or parents—leave it alone.
- Seek and utilize the help and advice of SCS staff.

Practices of Ineffective Mentors

- Have difficulty meeting the scholar on a regular basis.
- Attempt to transform or reform the scholar by setting goals and tasks early on.
- Adopt a parental or authoritative role in interaction with the scholar.
- Emphasize behavior changes over development of mutual trust and respect.
- Attempt to instill a set of values inconsistent with those the youth is exposed to at home.
- Ignore the advice of SCS staff or make critical decisions without the involvement of SCS staff.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The scholar may be unsure whether the feelings and information they disclose to their mentors will be passed on to parents, instructors, etc. Early in the relationship, mentors must provide reassurance:

- Nothing that the youth tells the mentor will be discussed with anyone else except SCS program staff.
- If the mentor feels it is important to involve another adult, it will be discussed first with the scholar.
- If there is threat of physical harm to the scholar or to others, the mentor must break confidentiality to seek protection for the endangered person (including the threat of suicide).

Listening with Both Ears

“Speaking and listening are two skills that are required in order for any two people to communicate with another. When you speak, your words convey a message with both cognitive and affective components. In other words, what you say has both meaning and emotion attached to it.

Most of us forget that the listening half of communication has the same two skills inherent to it. We usually understand the meaning that the speaker has attached to his words, but often fail to let the speaker know that we are aware of the emotion that he is feeling at the time.

Empathy is the art of letting the speaker know you not only understand the words used, but also are sensitive to the feeling that he is expressing. ‘You sound ‘up’ today” or “what’s got you down lately?’ would be a simple way to begin to explore some of the feelings being expressed.

When two speakers begin to listen with the same enthusiasm with which they speak and to convey to one another that they heard both what was said and how it was said, a powerful bond begins to develop. This bond is friendship and love.”

~ *James Deary, III, Ed.D., Institute for Urban Family Health, New York City*



Mentor Support

Your Mentorship Coordinator and South Central Scholars staff will support your mentoring efforts in a variety of ways throughout the tenure of your relationship with your scholar.

- Mentors will receive “check-in” emails and calls throughout the year from the Mentorship Coordinator, inquiring about the progress of the relationship, problems you may be encountering, successes, etc.
- Exchange telephone numbers with other mentors so that contact can be made for purposes of support, sharing, and organizing group activities.
- South Central Scholars will sponsor periodic trainings and case study reviews; these trainings are for the purpose of discussion, interaction, and problem solving.
- Your Mentorship Coordinator will provide four group support meetings with youth and mentors during the year.
- South Central Scholars will update the SCS Mentorship Guide at least once each year with mentor tips, successful match stories, and case studies.
- South Central Scholars issues a Newsletter four times a year. Newsletters will include upcoming events that mentors and volunteers are all welcome to attend.

Please remember, your Mentorship Coordinator and all SCS staff are just a phone call or an email away. We will all strive to assist you with any problem you may be having.

Assist Mentor Motivate



IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW WANTS TO BE A MENTOR...

volunteers are always in high demand and we are continuously looking for mentors that are willing to commit their time and energy to one or more of our scholars.

Please contact our office to apply to be a mentor!

South Central Scholars Foundation

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