

# How Does Mentoring Work?

## **What is a mentor?**

- Mentors are stable adults who volunteer to be friends with a youth aging out of foster care.
- Mentors have many roles: friend, confidant, sympathizer, advisor, self-esteem builder, helper, and advocate.
- Mentors care; they remember birthdays, celebrate successes, and talk through problems.
- Mentors have open minds and big hearts; they are non-judgmental.
- Mentors provide a community of support as youth face the challenges of living on their own.
- Mentors are *not* responsible for a youth's choices, living expenses, or personal care.
- Mentors rely on support and resources from their mentor group and the Mentor Project staff to strengthen their friendship and to help youth overcome barriers to success.

## **What are mentors expected to do?**

- Build a friendship: meet with youth friend at least twice each month for two years.
- Attend two mentor training workshops each year.
- Participate in mentor group activities.
- Complete a short monthly survey (via email or phone).
- Follow the "Mentor Guidelines and Code of Conduct."

## **Who would I mentor?**

- Youth are in foster care; participating in the Transition to Adult Living Program (TAL).
- Youth are between the ages of 16-18; preparing to "age-out" of foster care.
- Youth, who cannot safely return to their family and have not been adopted, are said to "age-out" of state custody at age 18 and are expected to live on their own.
- Youth volunteer to be friends with a mentor and participate in the Mentor Project.
- Youth have diverse backgrounds, attitudes, challenges, and abilities; they often need assistance to develop life skills, accomplish goals, and find resources to overcome barriers to success.

## **What is the TAL Program?**

- TAL is the Transition to Adult Living Program, part of the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS)
- TAL serves youth in foster care from age 16-18
- TAL caseworkers collaborate with the Mentor Project to recruit youth volunteers, match youth and mentors, and provide on-going support for mentor groups.

## **What does the Mentor Project do?**

- Utah Youth Mentor Project is a non-profit organization, 501(c)3.
- The Mentor Project recruits mentor groups, works with TAL to recruit youth, and provides support for a two year mentor friendship.
- The Mentor Project organizes and trains five to eight mentors, called a mentor group, who work together to create a community of support for youth as they learn to live on their own.
- The Mentor Project facilitates activities, trainings, and leadership opportunities.
- The Mentor Project helps youth develop life skills; accomplish goals; and find resources to secure safe housing, useful financial skills, legal representation, and emergency care.
- The Mentor Project tracks outcomes to identify problems and to show that mentoring makes a significant difference in the lives of youth.