

Connecting With



Kinship

What Difference does Mentoring Make?

Research tells us that mentoring relationships must last at least a full year to be helpful to a youth and the longer they last, the greater the impact they are likely to have on both the youth and the adult.

“Just Being Together”

By Gregg Bervig



What a day – what an experience! Jennifer stopped by today at 1:30 to give Brandon and me our “Kinship Graduation” certificates. I didn’t think much of it at the time because I was getting ready to get in the car with Brandon to go to the Vikings game. It was to be the last thing we did together before he went to Army basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

During the course of our car ride and at the game, I had time for some serious reflection. My journey with Brandon began in the summer of 1998. He was seven and going into 2nd grade. Looking back on it now it seems like we made the perfect odd couple. The result reads something like this – “older, slightly deaf, technically challenged man finds perfect match in video game wizard.” But that’s jumping ahead.

There are times in relationships when one has significant epiphanies and I had more than my share with Brandon. I recall having breakfast with Brandon when he was eight.

We used to go out to eat and talk. When we finished our meal I left a tip on the table for our waitress. Brandon looked at it and picked it up. I said it was for our waitress

and he replied “I should have it.” I asked him why and he said to me, “because you are rich and I’m not”. So began a discussion about money and values and as it turns out the beginning of many insightful comments that Brandon would make over our years together.

Our lives, both his and mine, have had our challenges over the past eleven years. I’d like to think that both of us survived better because of one another. We didn’t get together as much as we might of, didn’t do as much as we could have, but it didn’t seem to matter. Many times I have said we’ve remained friends because Brandon gives me “lots of slack.”

The significance of our friendship has become clearer in the past few years. When Brandon was 17, he and I were in Bemidji doing a dinner and movie night. We went in to a small, one sink washroom to wash up. I was standing behind him as he was washing his hands and he looked up in to the mirror at me and said “Gregg, can I ask you a question?” I said sure and he said “When I get too old to be in Kinship, can we still be friends?”



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*Kinship Connects
Adults With Kids
And
Puts Hope In
Their Hearts*

Buddies to Read in Nevis

Kinship is recruiting volunteers to start a Reading Buddies program for first graders at Nevis School. Adults who are matched with a “buddy” will meet them at school once every other week, likely joining them for lunch. After some social time together, the participating first graders will take the volunteers to their classroom where they will select a couple of fun and interesting books, find a comfortable place apart from others, and read together for twenty to thirty minutes. The children will then join their classmates for the remainder of recess. The volunteers will leave smiling and reinvigorated from spending time with eager, delightful children.



Welcome New Mentor Matches!

Dennis Anderson and Chandler, Sheila Hastings and Abby, Greg Johnson and Luke, Sherry Johnson and Farrah, Donna Lampl and Maryah, David Niemela and Brennen, Steve Norlin and Nathanael, Ken Thompson and Zach, Phil & Jolly Stuemke and Caiden, Steve & Barbara Zahlen and Kyler, Dan Zimmerman and Noah, Lezli Zimmerman and Jessie.

Special thanks to Steve Maanum for leading a fall activity at Itasca, “Through the Lens of a Camera”. Kinship kids enjoyed being in the woods and took some amazing photos!

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I caught my breath and said “Sure.” He replied, “Thanks, I was worried about that and needed to know.”

I’m sure that anyone who knows Brandon is very proud of him. His accomplishments would include overcoming his anger, graduation from high school and enlistment in the Army National Guard. I believe his greatest characteristic is that he is a very decent person.

So, that brings me to tonight, or rather this morning. I asked Brandon, “What’s the best thing that sticks in your mind from our relationship the past eleven years?”

Without hesitation he replied, “That’s easy, just being together.”

President’s Corner by Del Holz

My High School Football Coach was fond of saying: “There’s no “I” in Team.” It has stuck with me for years.

As President of Kinship’s Board of Directors, I want to thank the Kinship Team Members who make it possible for us to “Connect Adults With Kids, and Put Hope in Their Hearts”. Thanks to Kinship Mentors and Reading Buddies and first grade teachers. Thanks to our Contributors and Volunteers who give much needed support. Thanks to Board Members and our Executive Director who share their time and talent. Thanks to local businesses for their support and to our local newspaper and radio stations for Kinship air time. And thanks to community members who respect and appreciate the work that Kinship does!

Together we are a Team! Together, we help Kinship Put Hope in Kids’ Hearts. I just wanted to say “Thanks!” Have an awesome fall.



John & Judi Nelson hosted Kamp Kinship at their Spruce Hill Campground on a wonderful Sunday afternoon in August. Kinship kids and youth enjoyed swimming, fishing, canoeing, paddle boat rides and foil dinners baked in the campfire. Thank you, John & Judi!

I said “What does the word Kinship mean to you?” and he replied “It’s friends helping each other through life.” To say that I have received more from Brandon than I have given would be the understatement of my lifetime.

So, its 2:00 am, the last time I will see Brandon before he goes to basic training. After eleven years of guy stuff such as “see you soon” or “catch you later”, I got out of the car to wish him well and reached out to shake his hand. He reached back and gave me a hug.

If I were to describe my relationship with Brandon in one word it would be a KINSHIP. What a wonderful program.



Kinship Thanks You...

Good News for Our Kids

By Jennifer Therkilsen,
Executive Director



As you can see from the various lists of Kinship supporters, it does seem to take a village to raise a child! Fortunately for the children of this area, we have a multitude of people who are generous with their time, talents and financial gifts. As a result, Kinship of the Park Rapids Area is growing!

This is good news for our kids. In 2009, Kinship has already approved 12 new mentors, received applications for 18 children to be in the program, and matched 33 Century first graders with Reading Buddies and 12 children with Kinship Mentors. After many years of averaging 24-27 matches, we celebrate reaching new heights with 33 matches.

Life is better for these children and richer for their new adult friends.

Each match promises a child the potential for a better future.

Yet each home visit I make reveals another child with new and unique needs that weigh on my heart.

These are delightful children who are good kids at this stage in their lives. Kinship mentors will help them stay that way.

Consider ways you can be involved as a donor, a supporting friend, a Reading Buddy or a Mentor. Call Kinship 732-0058. Thank you!



2009 Donors ~ April through October

We gratefully acknowledge those who made financial gifts to support the mission of Kinship of the Park Rapids Area from April 16 to October 15, 2009. Donors are recognized for accumulative gifts made throughout each calendar year.

We try hard to include all of our contributors accurately and apologize for any errors. Please call Jennifer at 732-0058 to let her know if your name was misspelled, listed differently than you would like, or accidentally omitted. Thank you!

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Kinship of Greater Minneapolis /
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NorthStar Orthodontics
Northwoods Dental/Tina Robin
St Joseph's Area Health Services

Guide (\$500 - \$999)

Gregg & Terese Bervig
Carter & Florence Hedeon
Del & Alice Holz
Itasca Mantrap Operation RoundUp
Jay Jorgenson, DDS
Jennifer Therkilsen & Duane Gebhard

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 Dr Mary Lee Enfield
 Tony & Bertha Fufener
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 Emory & Margaret Solie
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In memory of Sylvia Guttormson
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In memory of Richard Walsh
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In honor of Margo Bartness
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In honor of Kevin & Renee Brauer
 Hubert & Marilyn Hanson
 Dorothy & Tony Platz
 Ruth Wibe

Happy Birthday Hollis Hiemark
 Kevin & Renee Brauer

Happy Birthday Alma Brauer
 Kevin & Renee Brauer

Friends of Kinship

Folks who quietly bake bars for Kinship special events, assemble newsletters, sell raffle tickets, lead group activities and help with other projects make it possible for Kinship to operate on a very modest budget. They say "Yes!" when we ask, and we say "Thanks!"

Dave & Amy Anderson	Deane & Jill Johnson
Bill Bair	Sherry Johnson
Margo Bartness	Marilyn Kaping
Brian Behrens	Neil King
Gregg & Terese Bervig	Edith Kufus
Brittany Boe	Donna Lampl
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Carter's Red Wagon Farm	St John's Lutheran
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Steve & Mia Long	Super 8 Motel
Max Bailey Photography	The Enterprise

Kinship Endowment Fund Donors

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 Jennifer Therkilsen & Duane Gebhard

Kinship Clubhouse Raffle Raises \$6,340

Many thanks to Northwoods Bank for building and donating the Kinship Clubhouse ~ raffle proceeds raised \$6,340 to help Kinship serve kids! A team of 22 individuals and a dozen businesses sold more than 1260 raffle tickets from May to August 8th when Ruthie Swenson's name was drawn as the lucky winner. Special thanks to Mark Hewitt, Roger Stewart, Tyson Doke, Helen Greiss, Mike Childs and all the Northwoods Bank employees who helped with construction, painting and ticket sales. Thanks, too, to key volunteers Steve Wilkie and Kevin Brauer for moving the clubhouse weekly, Linda Schissel for coordinating business ticket sales and to Dave Collins for selling the most tickets! And to all of you who bought raffle tickets! You were a great help for a great cause!

Thanks to the following businesses for hosting the Kinship Clubhouse and/or selling raffle tickets:

Beagle Books	Northwoods Express Bank
Briar Patch Corner	Park Ace Hardware
Coborn's	Park Rapids BP
J&B Foods	T&M Express Akeley
Northern Convenience	T&M Express Nevis
Northwoods Bank	T&M Express Park Rapids
Northwoods Bank of Nevis	

Linda Schissel
 Bill & Nora Simpson
 Carolyn Spangler
 Phil & Jolly Steumke
 Barb & Mark Thomason
 ElLoise Underwood
 Janine Weideman
 Candy Weinzierl
 Bonnie Welch
 Steve Wilkie
 Dan & Lezli Zimmerman

And Kinship Kids:
 Abby, Alycia, Ana, Billy, Damion, Eddie, Ethan, Evan, Farrah, Jade, Jessie, Kali, Karina, Kasarra, Maryah, Michael, Noah, Paige, Shania, Sky, Viv, Zoey

Welcome New Reading Buddies!

Kinship is providing Reading Buddies for 33 first grade children at Century Elementary School this year. Three of these volunteers are snowbirds, so if you would like to be a Reading Buddy from January through April, call the Kinship office soon. We are fortunate to have 25 volunteers from last year's team return again this year as buddies or substitutes. In addition, we welcome sixteen new buddies to the team!

Barb Zahlen	Jolly Stuemke
Betty Norlin	Judy Lentz
Brittany Roach	Kathy Medellin
Cassy Smith	Ken Shepard
Coral Schmitz	Linda Warmbold
Elaine Hanson	Liz Smith
Gail Manlove	Lynn Bair
Iris Shepard	TJ Tjaden

Dedicated Volunteers Serve Kinship Board

Jan Coumbe was a member of the Kinship Board of Directors since its inception, serving in many capacities, but most recently on the Program Committee.

Linda Hansen served on the Board Activities Committee for eleven years, helping to plan and coordinate the many Kinship group activities each year.

Jan and Linda, along with Dave Collins, who served on the Board for one term and on the Financial Planning Committee, resigned at different times this year.

Jan continues to work with the committee in screening/interviewing new mentor applicants. Linda stays involved as an official Kinship Friend. Dave sold more than \$500 in Kinship Clubhouse raffle tickets after resigning!

Each of them contributed to Kinship's stability, resilience and effectiveness during their years on the board. They remain strong advocates for the program. and all of them deserve a standing ovation from Kinship volunteers, kids, their families, and the entire community. Thank you Jan, Linda and Dave!



Thanks to Dave and Amy Andersen for hosting the Kinship Summer Swim Party at their home on Fish Hook Lake!



Summer Activities ~ fun in the sun!

Look who's waiting...

"Isaiah" is a 10-year old boy from the Nevis area who loves playing outdoors, fishing, hunting, and tracking animals. He would love to chum around with a male mentor/friend who would give him some undivided attention.

"Kelsey" enjoys swimming, fishing, biking, movies and sledding. She lives near Pine Point and would like a mentor who would be a reliable friend and take her to Kinship Group Activities.

"Sam" at 13 is difficult to understand when you first meet him, but thrives on one-to-one relationships, loves baseball, basketball and being out of doors. He also enjoys pow wows, dancing, singing, going to the park and library and would love to have a Kinship mentor be his friend and take him to Kinship group activities.



Sheila & John Hastings co-chaired the Kinship Fish Fry with Amy Andersen for the spring fundraiser. Many Kinship kids and mentors helped prepare and serve the dinner. Thanks to all who donated silent auction items, bought tickets and contributed in any way to the event!

New Activities for Older Kinship Youth

Derek and his mentor, Dennis Mackedanz joined other Kinship youth on tour at NorthStar Orthodontics in June. In July they watched surgery as part of a tour at Ark Animal Hospital led by owner and Kinship mentor, Dr Mia Long.

These, and other activities, such as touring the North Country Museum of Arts and Hubbard County Historical Society, are part of a new service that Kinship is offering ~ to provide tours and activities of interest for Kinship youth in grades 7-12. The events combine learning with fun, exploration and recreation. Some activities may encourage the youth to start planning for their future by reinforcing the importance of doing well in school and considering a variety of work options, while others will be recreational and social in nature. The youth are suggesting ideas and will become involved in the planning process for future events.

Many thanks to the local businesses and organizations for their hospitality to Kinship Youth!



During MEA, six girls and their mentors toured the Park Avenue School of Cosmetology where they enjoyed a bonus manicure.



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