

# Connecting With Kinship



## What Difference does Mentoring Make?

**Research tells us that mentoring helps kids stay in school, out of trouble and off drugs. We wanted to know what kind of impact our local Kinship program has on children, so we asked. This is what we learned.**

**A**s a child, I always felt that time took forever to pass, wishing that it would go by quickly. As an adult, I find myself wishing I had just a couple more hours in each day. It seems that in adulthood, I have received that “gypsy curse” I wished for as a child.

As a single parent, my wish always is to know that each of my children are granted time - time to be a kid, time to share something special, time to know that they are important. Sadly, that one thing I want for them isn't always possible.

A Kinship mentor made that difference in my son's life. He offered something that I, as a parent, couldn't always offer. He offered his time and a “one on one” friendship with my son that was just for him.

What difference did that bit of time make? The rewards were immediate in smiles and laughter. There was a bigger difference too - better grades in school, self-confidence and trust.

It came to be that I would look forward to the days that my son spent with his Kinship partner, just so I could hear him talk with excited expectancy about what they were going to do. And upon return, find him smiling and relaxed with stories to share that were all his own.

We are blessed to have had a Kinship mentor in our lives. The difference it made, changed a young boy's life in a wonderfully positive way.

Anne

**K**inship has been wonderful for several students I have taught in Century School's second grade.

Usually, the child has had only one parent in their life on a regular basis. In one case a boy had never met his father and there was no other male role model in his life. This young boy had the potential to do well academically but was not able to stick to his tasks and was easily distracted.

He often got into trouble on the playground. Sadly, sometimes the playground fights were over teasing about his nonexistent father. Sometimes he wrote in his journal about his “dad”. This was heartbreaking, knowing he had no contact with him.

When a Kinship partner entered his life, there was an immediate change in attitude, performance, and behavior at school. This child finally had a steady, stable, adult male in his life that he could now talk about with his peers.

Each week the smile got bigger as he talked and wrote about the fun experiences he had with his Kinship friend from making bird houses, to finding deer sheds, to fishing. The empty place in his heart was filling up and it made a major difference in how this young child felt about himself.

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



## President's Corner by Del Holz

I want to personally thank our generous supporters, our mentors, and our reading buddies who give of their resources and of their time and talent. You keep the dream alive!

Several months ago Jennifer shared a remarkable fact with me. It seems that one of the key yardsticks social programmers use in determining society's future needs for prisons are third grade reading test scores! Mind blowing isn't it? A child's ability to read in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is more critical than we ever imagined!

Here is my take on how Reading Buddies make magic happen. With their commitment, Reading Buddies reinforce the importance of reading and its enjoyment, AND, most importantly, the value and worth of the child. A good friend of mine put it this way: "Love" is spelled "T-I-M-E". This spelling of "love" is as true for our Reading Buddies as it is true for our Mentors. Reading Buddies are non-teacher adults who believe that reading is so important and this child is so important, that they are willing to spend an hour of their day, every other week, having lunch with them and then listening to them read. What a powerful boost to the child's self-esteem as well as to the importance and value of reading. It is magic!

Thanks for meaning so much to our kids, Reading Buddies and Mentors. You truly do understand that "Love" is spelled T-I-M-E.



Reading Buddies Jan Belshan with Devin (above) and Linda Schissel with Alexis (right)



Thanks to a special gift from the Hubbard United Methodist Church Women, Kinship kids and mentors enjoyed a sleigh ride on a beautiful February Sunday afternoon.

**WINTER FUN!!**



Kinship Kids love to swim! Kevin and Renee Brauer's Kinship swim party was warmly welcomed in January by kids and mentors alike.



Thanks to Itascatur Ski & Bike Club for hosting the 2nd Annual Kinship Cross Country Ski event March 1st at Soaring Eagle and to Nevis Schools for loaning skis, boots and poles. Kinship kids had a great time skiing and playing board games.

## Being a Community that Cares for its Kids



By Jennifer Therkilsen  
Executive Director

Applications for children to be in the Kinship program are coming in greater numbers each month.

The more I learn about the challenges so many of our children face, the more I wish we could double, triple and even quadruple the number of Kinship mentors.

There are so many children who will greatly benefit by having an adult friend who can give them some undivided attention each week and offer support as they negotiate through their younger days.

Kinship mentors are not social workers or counselors ~ they are friends who listen, pay attention and offer opportunities for companionship and fun.

In these challenging financial times ~

We can dwell on our losses

Or count our blessings;

We can pull back

Or reach out;

We can complain about the kids these days

Or we can get involved with a child and be a positive influence in their life.

When you are ready to be blessed, to reach out and be a positive influence for a child, call Kinship 732-0058.

**At Kinship, we give thanks for the many people who support our work through their gifts of time, talent and financial resources. Your gifts bring many blessings into the lives of children. We could not do it without you!**

### 2009 Donors ~ January through April

We gratefully acknowledge those who made financial gifts to support the mission of Kinship of the Park Rapids Area from January 1 to April 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!*

#### **Mentor** (\$1,000 or more)

Dean Hayes  
Northwoods Dental/Christina Robin  
Pine Manor

#### **Guide** (\$500 - \$999)

Gregg & Terese Bervig  
Kevin & Renee Brauer  
Carter & Florence Hedeem  
North Star Charitable Foundation  
Straight River Township  
Jennifer Therkilsen & Duane Gebhard

#### **Role Model** (\$250 - \$499)

Wal-Mart Foundation

#### **Supporter** (\$100 - \$249)

Brittany Boe  
Dennis Dodge  
Hendrickson Township  
Hubbard Township  
Itasca Park Ministry  
Kathryn E Medellin  
Park Rapids New Car Dealers -  
Thielen Motors, PR Chrysler  
Ken & Iris Shepard  
TruStar Federal Credit Union  
Mike & Janine Weideman

#### **Friend** (up to \$99)

Alma Brauer  
Clay Township  
Linda K Hansen  
St John's Evening Guild  
Thomason Law Office  
Rod & Charlene Westrum  
Ruth Wibe

#### **Memorials & Tributes**

In honor of Alma Brauer  
Kevin & Renee Brauer  
In honor of Kinship Mentors  
Carolyn & Maurice Spangler  
In memory of Connor Nolan McGuire  
Kevin & Renee Brauer  
In memory of Al Potter  
Kevin & Renee Brauer  
In honor of Ruth Wibe  
Kevin & Renee Brauer

#### What Difference Does Mentoring Make? Continued from page 1

Recently a girl, not even in my class, came rushing up to me with a paper in her hand. She was beaming from ear to ear with excitement. Someone had just told her about the Kinship program and informed her she was about to become acquainted with a Kinship friend. She hugged me and said it was the best day in her life. Considering she had not even met the person yet, I can only imagine her joy when they do meet and begin to share time!

Kathy Peterson, Century teacher, grade 2

# Kinship Clubhouse Giveaway

Northwoods Bank is building a charming clubhouse to donate to Kinship for use in raising awareness and funds this summer. Many local businesses have already agreed to host the clubhouse for a week and sell the \$5 raffle tickets in support of the effort.

Volunteers are being sought to move the house (on a trailer) from site to site and pull it in local parades. Call 732-0058 if you can help.

The clubhouse can double as a storage shed (8'X8' with two doors) and thus should appeal to folks with young children, grandchildren, lawnmowers, lake or lawn toys, deck furniture, garden supplies, etc. This should include just about everyone! Watch for the Kinship Clubhouse to appear in Nevis, Park Rapids & Dorset.

Raffle tickets can be purchased for \$5 at Northwoods Bank locations, Beagle Books, Ace Hardware, J&B Foods, Park Rapids BP, T&M Express in PR and Nevis, Northern Convenience, Professor Nils in Dorset, the Kinship office and from Kinship Board members and Mentors. The drawing will be held on August 8th at the Legends & Logging Event in Park Rapids.



*Catch your limit early!  
Celebrate Mother's Day!  
Enjoy dinner with friends  
and help a great cause ~*

*You can do it all at the  
Kinship Fish Fry*

**Friday, May 8**

**5-7 PM**

**American Legion**

Tickets: Adults \$9  
Children \$3  
Family: \$22

Fried Fish, Baked Potato,  
Coleslaw, Beverages and  
Homemade Desserts

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# Kinship

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