INFLUENCES ON THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF MENTORING AT-RISK YOUTH

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To my mother,
for believing in me and for helping me believe in myself.
I love you more than words can convey.
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Abstract

Mentoring programs have become an increasingly common strategy for facilitating positive development in adolescents and for attempting to avert the escalation of problem behaviors of youth at-risk for delinquency. However, there have been few evaluations assessing the effectiveness of such programs. Utilizing a primarily qualitative research design, data was collected for 40 youth and 30 mentors and an in-depth analysis of a physical-fitness-based mentoring program was conducted. This study focused on influences of risks, gender differences, and mentoring program components that assist in promoting program success. Substantial evidence was obtained for the positive effects of mentoring, including indication of increased confidence and self-esteem, improved abilities to interact with others, improved academics, and positive physical changes. However, analysis of the mentee interview data revealed only minor gender differences in both risks and perceived positive outcomes. Additional findings from both the mentors and mentees indicated a number of elements integral to program success. These included the program environment, leadership, mentor characteristics, program principles, and the program meeting structure. Elements involved in the formation of mentor/mentee relationships were also explored.
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Preface

This dissertation presents an in-depth study of a highly effective community-based mentoring program, primarily for at-risk youth, located in two counties in Pennsylvania. When I originally defended this dissertation proposal and subsequently began the research for this study, I was unaware of the challenges that would eventually unfold. These challenges ultimately resulted in the investigation of a different Pennsylvania mentoring program from the one originally intended and consequently in the alteration of the research population.

This study was originally designed to explore research questions that concerned the following: gender differences in risks associated with peer exposure, drugs and alcohol, familial problems, and academic difficulties; the relationship between a mentoring program and the reduction of risks; relationship building and bonding between mentors and mentees. Although ultimately these questions were examined, there were several unavoidable problems that occurred in the course of the research that changed the program and participants and altered the scope of the research questions.

The school-based program that was originally intended to supply the mentoring participants for this study was located in a medium to high crime urban area. The mentee population consisted of inner-city youth who were "at-risk" of dropping out of school and vulnerable to poor life choices, drugs, and delinquency. The program was designed as a one-on-one mentoring approach, and the youth were recommended based upon their level of need. The kids targeted for this program were those at risk for, or already displaying problems of, behavior frequently found in low socioeconomic urban environments (e.g.,
academic problems, peer and drug issues, delinquent behaviors). Therefore, these adolescents were an ideal group for exploring questions relating to risks, gender differences, problem behaviors, and mentoring.

After obtaining permission to utilize this site for my study, and after defending my dissertation proposal, I begin making arrangements with the mentoring program’s director and coordinator to start the process of recruiting participants for my study from the reported 47 adolescents and 35 adult mentors in the program. At this time, the program coordinator announced that she was taking a leave for medical purposes, and she explained to me that an interim coordinator would help me recruit participants. She also informed me that the mentors and mentees were aware of my study and that there would be no problem in enlisting participants. At that time I was living 4 hours away from the program site and making weekly commutes to it, so much of the information I received came via telephone. The interim coordinator and I began the process of contacting the mentors and mentees that had been listed as program participants. It soon became clear that something was very wrong. First, the interim coordinator begin finding that most of the youth who were listed as mentees did not know they were participants in a mentoring program. A few students explained that they had met with a mentor once or twice a few years earlier but had not heard anything about it since then. At this same time, both the interim coordinator and I were attempting to contact the listed mentor participants. We became very frustrated as all of the mentors claimed that they had one of the following experiences: 1) they had been told about the program but never trained; 2) they had been trained, but never met with any kids and never heard back from the coordinator; 3) they had been trained, met a few times with a student, but did not have any program support
and soon became disconnected from their mentee. Ultimately, of the relatively few mentors we were able to contact, only about 8 had actually met with a mentee and none had met more than four times. Needless to say, this mentoring program was not a workable site for accomplishing the objectives of my study. I stayed on with the program for several months as a consultant to help them get the program back on track. Unfortunately the program was still struggling when I left and had only been successful in nurturing a few mentor/mentee matches.

I then had the fortunate opportunity to connect with Friend Fitness, the mentoring program that is central to this current study. I was introduced to Friend Fitness through the consultant who had been advising the program I originally intended to research. His involvement with both programs was primarily due to his experience with mentoring using contingent reinforcement, a strategy employed by Friend Fitness and intended for use by the original program. Although some of the framework of Friend Fitness (e.g., one-on-one mentoring and the use of contingent reinforcement) is comparable to the original program, they differ in some fundamental ways. These differences ultimately altered the design of my study in several respects, including the composition of the participants.

The Friend Fitness program is located at two separate sites in middle to upper class areas. As a result, the level of risk associated with the mentee participants was reduced. In fact, the program is structured in such a way that the “high-risk” mentees (kids who displayed obvious antisocial tendencies) represent only a small portion of the participants, although most of the mentees are at-risk on some level. Not only was the level of risk reduced with this new group, but it was also very difficult to elicit
personal/risk information from them during the interviews. Ultimately, I did examine risk and gender, although not to the extent I had originally intended. I also obtained data concerning the positive effects of mentoring and the structure and function of an effective and efficient mentoring program, including the elements that work to facilitate bonding between mentors and mentees.

The following pages will explore the research pertaining to these topics. Chapter 1 is a comprehensive literature review examining the background of the research questions. Chapter 2 describes the research methods. Chapter 3 reviews the results of the study with many examples of interview responses. Chapter 4 discusses the results and provides implications and limitations of the study.
The study of youth crime has spanned decades and taken on different forms. What is considered delinquent behavior has gone through many changes and can be defined as “participation in illegal behavior by a minor who falls under a statutory age limit” (Siegel, Senna, & Welsh, 2003, p.9). This age limit varies significantly across states and usually applies to youth under 18 years old. However, some jurisdictions designate youth as young as 16 eligible to be tried as adults in the court system (Hoge, 2001). What constitutes delinquency comprises a diverse range of behaviors and includes both the more serious criminal activities such as murder, assault, theft, burglary, vandalism, drug use; and it includes other more minor status offenses such as drinking alcohol, violating curfew, and running away from home (Hoge, 2001). There have also been a multitude of theories explaining the causes of juvenile delinquency. For the purposes of this study, theories of delinquency can be divided among the following three main categories: individual, sociological, and developmental (Siegel et al., 2003). In addition, a contextual theory of delinquency will be examined.

**Individual Theories of Delinquency**

Individual theories are based on the assumption that delinquent behavior is caused by the characteristics and attributes of individuals. Two well-known theories that occupy this framework are the classical theory and the biological trait theory. The classical theory states that all people have the potential to commit criminal acts through free will, but most do not for fear of law and punishment (Lanier & Henry, 1998). The
biological trait theory states that delinquent acts stem from the physical and mental makeup of the individuals who commit the acts, and in some cases these traits can be passed down from one generation to the next (Siegel & Senna, 2000). From the perspective of individualistic theories, to control delinquency we must focus on individuals and not necessarily on their environments.

*Sociological Theories of Delinquency*

Sociological theories are based on the assumption that “the cause of delinquency rests within the dynamics of the social world” (Siegel et al., 2003, p.9). Sociological theories can be divided into three groups: social reaction, social structure, and social process.

Social reaction theories explain crime and delinquency as the result of people's reactions to politically powerful individuals or to those they view as authority figures. These theories view delinquents as being marked as deviant for any type of antisocial behavior, thus creating a juvenile delinquent where one may not have been. Labeling theory, a well-known and well-researched social reaction theory, maintains that reactions to delinquent acts by important figures in the adolescent's life (parents, teachers, authority figures), may lead to the labeling of the youth as delinquent (Siegel et al., 2003). This label causes feelings of inadequacy and inferiority in the youth and leads him or her along a path of escalating delinquent behavior.

Lemert (1951) proposed the primary-secondary deviance model which views the order and effects of the labeling process as: 1) a deviant act (primary deviation), 2) negative social labels (penalties), 3) further deviation, 4) increased negative social labels...
(stronger penalties), 5) serious deviant acts, 6) community stigmatizing of the deviant person, 7) increased deviant acts as a reaction to the stigmatizing, and 8) personal acceptance of deviant labels and deviant social status. Even though labeling theory has been criticized for not explaining certain issues, such as what causes primary deviance and how long the label lasts once an individual is stigmatized, “labeling theory has had a considerable impact on criminal justice policy, especially with regard to juveniles” (Lanier & Henry, 1998).

Social structure and social process theories are similar in that they both assume that the social and physical environments in which people live are key components of the development of delinquency. The difference between the two theories is in how they explain the reason these environments have their effect. Social structure theorists maintain that the “unfair and destructive economic and social conditions in the nation’s low income areas are the root cause of delinquency” (Siegel & Senna, 2000, p. 130). One type of social structure theory is strain, which views delinquent behavior as having originated from the feelings of anger and frustration people in lower-class environments experience because of the lack of resources available to them and their inability to achieve legitimate success. This view suggests that middle and upper-class communities do not have the strain that results in delinquent behavior.

Another well-studied type of social structure theory is cultural transmission, which maintains that lower-class areas, having their own value systems, have delinquent traditions inherent in their cultures that are passed down from one generation to the next. This theory began with the pioneering work of Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay during the 1920s at the Chicago School of Sociology (Malmquist, 1985; Shaw, Zorbaugh,
McKay, & Cottrell, 1929). Shaw and McKay rejected some of the more popular theories of the time, and instead saw delinquency as a product of a changing urban environment, specifically created from the culture of slum areas. Their studies focused on the theory that these slum environments were teeming with criminals who would continually attract young members and pass the delinquent traditions down from one generation to the next. Though the results of their studies for the most part supported these views, they were criticized for some methodological deficiencies (e.g. over dependence on police and court records) (Lanier & Henry, 1998; Malmquist, 1985). Regardless of these criticisms, Shaw and McKay's study was pivotal in introducing to future researchers the importance of social influences on delinquent behavior.

Social process theories are a result of some of the questions social structure theories were unable to answer including why delinquency is spread over all social classes and not limited to lower-class environments (Siegel & Senna, 1981). Social process theorists maintain that delinquency is a result of physical and social processes. They also theorize that, while most adolescents have similar values and goals, there are certain conditions that exist environmentally and socially which may push youths into committing delinquent acts. Two of the most commonly known social process theories are control and differential association.

Control theory maintains that an individual's action is controlled through his or her bond with society. This theory views all youths as having the potential for delinquent behavior, and it postulates that only the social constraints of society prevent delinquency. When the bond with society breaks down, individuals are free and willing to become involved in criminal activity. Control theory has some strong points: it is not limited to
any particular culture or social class and it is adaptable to empirical measurement, but it has been criticized for its weak explanatory power (Siegel & Senna, 2000).

The theory of differential association was first formulated by Edwin Sutherland in 1939, revised in 1947, and has since gone unchanged. It postulates that criminal behavior is learned and that most of this learning occurs within intimate personal groups. It also maintains that whether or not an adolescent breaks the law is not dependent on the social constraints of society (as suggested by the control theory) but by the opinions and interactions of the people close to him or her. Although differential association theory has been criticized for its lack of validity, as well as for other methodological deficiencies, it introduced a theoretical framework for explaining delinquency that had been largely ignored in previous theories. Sutherland’s theory was successful in generating continuous research in this area, and it remains an influential explanation of crime and delinquency (Leonard, 1982; Siegel & Senna, 2000).

Another social process theory is role theory. This theory is particularly important in its recognition of the increased prevalence of female delinquency. Although role theory has taken on several different forms, the premise is that “females are less delinquent than males because their social roles provide them with fewer opportunities to commit crime,” however, “as the roles of girls and women become more similar as those of boys and men, so too will their crime patterns” (Siegel & Senna, 2000, p. 260). For the most part, serious study of role theory was a reaction to the increased incidence of female delinquency occurring in the 1960s (Cavan & Ferdinand, 1981). Previously, female delinquency had been minimally studied and the theories that had been proposed were based on little or no empirical evidence (Leonard, 1982).
Developmental Theories of Delinquency

Developmental theories of delinquency view delinquent behavior as being caused by both individual characteristics and external factors. Life-course theories contend that delinquent behavior is a dynamic process which is influenced by individual traits and social experiences, and that factors which contribute to antisocial behavior change over the life-course (Siegel et al., 2003). Two life-course theories are the social developmental model (SDM) and interactional theory. SDM maintains that there are “an array of personal, psychological, and community-level risk factors that make some children susceptible to development of antisocial behaviors” (Siegel et al., 2003, p. 147). To control against the development of antisocial behaviors, a child must sustain prosocial bonds including positive attachments with family, peers, and school. The interactional theory argues that the types of interaction youth have with people and institutions over the life-course will determine whether delinquent behavior patterns will occur. Furthermore, this theory contends that youth who are seriously delinquent will form belief systems that support their deviant lifestyles.

A Contextual Theory of Delinquency: Activity Settings

O’Donnell and Tharp (1990) developed a theory for understanding human behavior in context with implications for prevention and intervention strategies. The activity setting theory they proposed is based on evidence indicating that “behavior was strongly influenced by the setting in which it occurred; that participation in settings led to the formation of a social network; and that this network influenced the settings and activities in which people became involved” (O’Donnell, 1992, p. 221).
Activity settings provide a framework for understanding how setting, action, and experience are unified into a common phenomenon (O'Donnell, 1992). Activity settings are characterized by six components/resources which include a physical environment (a place in which the activity occurs), time (e.g., scheduled meetings, specific times of year), funds (funds supporting activities and settings), positions (the roles/patterns of behavior of persons within the setting), people (those involved in the setting), and symbols (e.g., language) which give understanding and meaning to the activity setting. At the core of activity settings is interaction. Reciprocal participation is a form of interaction which occurs when each person both assists and is assisted during the course of an activity. Reciprocal participation leads to a reciprocal relationship. O'Donnell and Tharp describe reciprocal relationships in the context of activity settings as follows:

Settings are sites for activity in which human interaction is supported by the available resources. In the course of this activity, participants acquire and develop specific behaviors and initiate and maintain social contact with other participants. Both their behavioral repertoires and their social networks are affected. The reciprocal relationship between behavioral repertoires and social networks is rooted in the common seed of activity. The repertoire contributes to successful participation in the activity, participation establishes relationships with others, and these relationship and skills provide access to new settings (p. 256).

Another result of an activity setting is what O'Donnell and Tharp (1990) refer to as “intersubjectivity.” This occurs in activity settings which function well, and it can be
described as "the way that a group of people think and experience the world in similar basic dimensions, processes and content" (p. 258). O'Donnell and Tharp (1990) further postulate that "to the degree that intersubjectivity is present, that values are alike, and that goals are alike, then more cooperation is possible, and thus more harmony" (p. 258).

When considered in terms of prevention/intervention for youth, activity settings provide a framework for understanding how programs intended for preventing antisocial behaviors and promoting prosocial responses can intervene to affect interactions and behaviors. One prime example is in the case of the mentoring delinquency prevention approach known as the Buddy System (O'Donnell, Lydgate, & Fo, 1979). The outcomes of this study can be interpreted as demonstrative of these processes (i.e., settings influencing behavior, formation of social networks, and influence of these networks). The Buddy System provided a setting which permitted contact and networking between youth without prior arrests and youth with prior arrests. These interactions allowed friendships to form between the two groups, thereby influencing the settings and activities of the youth. These interactions ultimately resulted in an increase in arrests for youth without prior arrests and a decrease in arrests for youth with prior arrests.

**Risks**

One important area to explore for gaining a more complete understanding of delinquency theories is risks. Historically, theories of delinquency have focused on specific categories of risks to explain delinquent behavior. Individualistic theories have centered on risks associated with individual level characteristics. Social structure and social process theories have primarily targeted risks relating to elements of
community/demographics (such as socioeconomic status, resources available in the community, physical characteristics of the environment) and the relevant social influences surrounding those elements. Social reaction theories have focused on social influences and authority figures (such as lawmakers, teachers, parents, and peers) having a direct effect on the manifestation of delinquent behavior. Developmental theories have focused on both individual level characteristics and social experiences. Overall, research has found that the most prevalent risks include: community/demographic (socioeconomic status, resources available in the community, physical characteristics of the environment); school (low academic achievement and school attendance); family functioning (family conflict, parental control, and parental deviance); peer and social influences (interactions with deviant peers); and individual level characteristics (low cognitive functioning, emotional difficulties, social skills, gender) (Chung & Elias, 1996; Coie, Watt, West, Hawkins, Asarnow, Markman, Ramey, Shure, & Long, 1993; Farrington, 1996; Henggeler, 1991; Kashani, Jones, Bumby, & Thomas, 1999; Lowry, Sleet, Duncan, Powell & Kolbe, 1995; Mulvey & Woolard, 1997, Reppuci, Fried, & Schmidt, 2002; Tolan, & Guerra, 1994; Wasserman, Keenan, Tremblay, Coie, Herrenkohl, Loeber, & Petechuk, 2003).

Gender

One of the most powerful risks for the prediction of delinquency is gender (Giordano & Cernkovich, 1997). Gender is important because of the substantial differences in both the formation and seriousness of delinquent behavior between boys and girls. To fully appreciate the importance of gender in the development of delinquent
behavior, it is essential to look at the role it has taken over the years. Historically, juvenile males have committed the majority of crimes, and they have also been responsible for the bulk of violent crimes such as murder, assault, robbery, and rape (Giordano & Cernkovich, 1997; Heimer, 1996; Lowry et al., 1995; Moretti & Odgers, 2002; Siegel et al., 2003). However, over the last couple of decades, female delinquents have exhibited increasing levels of aggressive behavior and violent criminal activity (Chesney-Lind, Artz, & Nicholson, 2002; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999; Siegel et al., 2003; Sondheimer, 2001).

Although there has been a substantial amount of research examining the variables that influence delinquent behavior, these studies have overwhelmingly reported on male offenders (Fejes-Mendoza, Miller, & Eppler, 1995; Giordano & Cernkovich, 1997; Lanctot & Le Blanc, 2002; Miller, Trapani, Fejes-Mendoza, Eggleston, & Dwiggins, 1995; Siegel et al., 2003; Sondheimer, 2001). The comparatively small amount of information on female delinquents raises the question of whether the results of male-based studies can be generalized to include this population. Lanctot & Le Blanc (2002), in an extensive review of the literature surrounding this issue, acknowledged that while mainstream theories have some relevance to understanding female deviance, there remains a paucity of knowledge on this subject and continues to be ample need for researchers to focus in-depth on understanding female deviance. Similarly, Giordano and Cernkovich (1997) concluded that while the classic (male-based) theories and studies of delinquency can be used as a good starting point for understanding female delinquency, the lack of data on female offenders and the gender differences associated with delinquency patterns makes more research necessary to determine the level of
generalizability.

Adolescent female offenders have been largely ignored in both research aimed at understanding the variables associated with risky female behavior and in the development of intervention and educational programs (Chesney-Lind et al., 2002; Fejes-Mendoza et al., 1995; Miller et al., 1995; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999). The reason for this lack of attention may be that for many years female adolescents were a comparatively small proportion of the known delinquent offenders. The majority of crimes committed by females were usually those ranked as status offenses such as truancy, running away, curfew violations, and minor theft such as shoplifting. However, as the seriousness of female crime has increased, so has the number of female offenders.

Examination of the Violent Crime Index (offenses included are murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault) of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports clearly indicates this increase (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2003). Between 1988 and 1997, the number of Violent Crime Index arrests for females in the United States, under 18 years of age, doubled (from 5,961 to 11,961 arrests, an increase of 100.7%). Although the number of arrests declined by 2002 (to 10,520 arrests, a decrease of 12%), it was still 76% higher than in 1988. In contrast, between 1988 and 1997 the Violent Crime Index arrest rates for males in the United States, under 18 years of age, increased 42% (45,143 arrests to 64,111). Moreover, the number of arrests for males declined more than for females between 1997 and 2002 (to 45,907, a decrease of 28%). Overall, there was approximately a 2% increase in arrests between 1988 and 2002 for males, compared to the 76% increase for females.
However, the proportion of juvenile violent crimes in 2002 was still overwhelming male (81.4%) showing that the gender-risk for delinquency is being male. Nevertheless, the increase in female violent crime needs to be better understood and followed for any future trends.

To better understand the increase in female adolescent crime, it is important to look at the risks associated with these behaviors, particularly in light of the limited research available for understanding female delinquency. Further information on risks may also provide information for predicting gender-specific developmental pathways towards antisocial behavior. For instance, although there has been an abundance of research that has determined specific risks involved in the development of antisocial behaviors, there is an indication that certain risks may be influentially more gender-specific. One such risk is the effect of family functioning. Dysfunctional familial environments have been studied extensively and have consistently proven to be a strong risk for the prediction of problematic behaviors in both genders (Hoge, Andres, & Leschied, 1994; Reppucci et al., 2002; Seydlitz & Jenkins, 1998; Stern & Smith, 1995). However, there are a significantly higher proportion of females in the juvenile justice system that report prior physical or sexual abuse than their male counterparts (Chesney-Lind et al., 2002; Sondheimer, 2001). Research exploring physical and sexual abuse has indicated that family conflict and abusive environments may act as greater risks for female antisocial behavior and serious female offenders may have more dysfunctional home environments than males (Chesney-Lind et al., 2002; Hoge et al., 1994; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999; Siegel et al., 2003).

A survey of 145 detained juvenile offenders found that 68% of the females,
compared to only 10% of the males, had suffered from a history of sexual abuse (Dembo, la Voie, Schmeidler, & Washburn, 1987). This study also found that 73% of the females reported physical abuse compared to 47% of the males. In another study (Funk, 1999), 112 female and 388 male adjudicated delinquent cases were systematically reviewed and results indicated that abuse was much more significant for the female re-offenders than for the males. Abuse was also strongly correlated with a number of other variables, including negative parent-child relationships, running away from home, and drug use.

Peers and social networks comprise other risks that have been studied extensively and have been shown to have a major effect on both female and male problem behavior (Cullingford & Morrison, 1997; Elliot & Menard, 1996; Farrington, 1996; O’Donnell, Manos, & Chesney-Lind, 1987; Siegel et al., 2003; Thornberry & Krohn, 1997; Thornberry, Lizotte, Krohn, Farnworth, & Jang 1994; Warr, 1993). Although there may be many reasons why youth become involved with antisocial peer groups (such as negative family environments, feelings of rejection, and school problems), these deviant peer relations strongly impact some individuals who commit criminal acts. There is also evidence that the reasons for involvement in negative peer relationships differ for each gender (Liu & Kaplan, 1996; Pakiz, Reinherz, & Frost, 1992; Rienzi, McMillan, Dickson, Crauthers, McNeill, Pesina, & Mann, 1996; Simons, Johnson, Beaman, Conger, & Whitbeck, 1996; Simpson & Ellis, 1995).

Females, for instance, tend to be much more affected by marital disruptions (divorce or single parent households) than males, and this has been shown to have a direct connection to their friendships with deviant peers (Pakiz et al., 1992). There is also some evidence to indicate that low educational aspirations of friends is more likely to
have a negative influence on female delinquency than on male offending (Simpson and Ellis, 1995).

   On the other hand, community disadvantage (such as low socioeconomic status) has been shown to be more significant for males’ increased involvement with deviant peers than for that of females (Simons et al., 1996). Alcohol and drug use also are more often associated with male adolescents forming relationships with delinquent peers (Liu & Kaplan, 1996; Rienzi et al., 1996).

   Evidence has also suggested that peer influences may act as a greater indicator for male involvement in delinquent activity than female. Galbavy (2003) conducted in-depth interviews with both male and female delinquents within a juvenile correctional facility. The results indicated that the male delinquents overwhelmingly attributed their delinquent activities to peers, whereas the females indicated familial dysfunction. In another study investigating gender and its relationship to delinquency, Bottcher (2001) reported that “both males and females said boys were subjected to more peer pressure to get into delinquent activities” (p. 907).

   These results raise the question of whether peers act as a greater risk for male delinquency than female, or whether males simply have greater exposure to peers, thereby increasing the peer influence. For example, Liu and Kaplan (1999) conducted a longitudinal study of 1,185 males and 1,568 female adolescents and determined that males were significantly more likely to report exposure to deviant peers than females. One reason male adolescents may have more exposure to peers could be related to absence of authority, a variable that has been found to facilitate contact with deviant peers (Oyserman, 1992; Osgood, Wilson, O’Malley, Bachman, & Johnston, 1996).
Absence of authority increases unstructured time spent with peers and thus increases the opportunities to engage in delinquent activities. Absence of authority leads to lack of supervision. One of the reasons females are less involved in delinquency may be because females are generally more closely supervised than males and therefore may have less opportunity to link with deviant peer groups (Heimer, 1996; Morash, 1996; O’Donnell, 1987).

While there is evidence that gender-specific risks exist and are important in the development of antisocial behaviors, other researchers have contended that gender differences are not significant in relation to risks. One such study (Jung & Rawana, 1999) evaluated 250 young Canadian offenders, seeking to establish the validity of a risk assessment instrument in discriminating between recidivists and non-recidivists. While it was determined that the risk assessment instrument was effective in predicting recidivism rates, the results also found that there were no significant differences associated with risks across genders. In another study, Simourd and Andrews (1994) conducted a meta-analysis of research examining risks associated with delinquent behaviors in both males and females and determined that risks were very consistent across genders, indicating that no significant differences existed.

However, the relatively small amount of data on females, as compared to males, suggests that more research is necessary to determine the full impact of risks in relationship to gender and antisocial behavior. Additional research could also contribute to the development of much needed, more effective, gender-sensitive prevention/intervention programs.
Prevention/Intervention

Over the past several decades, there have been a wide range of prevention and intervention programs created which focus on reducing juvenile delinquency. The outcomes of these programs have been extremely varied. Some delinquency prevention programs have shown no effect whatsoever in reducing delinquent behavior, while others have actually yielded increased levels of delinquency among program participants (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1992; Tolan & Guerra, 1994). Tolan and Guerra (1994) identify three major reasons that have historically contributed to the relative lack of consistent success in delinquency prevention programs. One is that there has been a considerable amount of variance in the outcome definitions across programs; i.e., one program measures success differently than another. This inconsistency in outcome definitions makes comparing and measuring the effectiveness of programs very difficult. Another reason is the diverse risks that lead to delinquent behavior. As discussed earlier, risks play a critical role in the development of delinquent behavior and must be considered in delinquency prevention program design, including the recognition of gender differences in relation to risks. The third major reason for the lack of successful delinquency prevention/intervention programs is the variation in the delinquent population and the type of offenses. Therefore it makes sense that “selected population prevention efforts, compared to universal prevention efforts, can sharpen the focus of intervention to identified risk factors, intensify efforts for those identified… and may be less expensive overall than an indiscriminately applied general program” (Tolan & Guerra, 1994, p. 252).

Because of the differences that exist between male and female delinquents, and
the apparent need for more information about female delinquency, it is important to recognize the different genders as separate populations for prevention, intervention, and research purposes. In fact, as research on female delinquent offenders progresses, it is becoming more apparent that delinquency intervention/prevention programs need to address gender differences in their frameworks (Chesney-Lind et al., 2002; Ellickson, Saner, & McGuigan, 1997; Fejes-Mendoza et al., 1995; Lifrak, McKay, Rostain, Alterman, & O'Brien, 1997; Miller et al., 1995; Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999; Sondheimer, 2001).

In a concerted effort to promote gender recognition in delinquency prevention, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (1999) produced a guide for female specific programming that recommends a number of different promising approaches. In this endeavor, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention recognized that the developmental pathways toward involvement in antisocial activities are different for females than for males, and prevention techniques need to address these differences. They also point out that gender specific programming is important for reaching females who are simply at risk for problem behavior as well as those who are already in the juvenile justice system (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1999).

In recent years, there has been a push to identify programs and strategies that can be used to guide the design of effective programming. One well-recognized effort has identified programs and criteria known as “Blueprints for Violence Prevention” (Mihalic, Irwin, Elliot, Fagan, & Hansen, 2001; Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2004). The Blueprints initiative, which has currently identified 11 “model” programs, as
well as a number of “promising strategies,” “is a comprehensive effort to provide communities with a set of programs whose effectiveness has been scientifically demonstrated” (Mihalic et al., 2001, p. 2). This important project endeavors to reduce the problems associated with ineffective program practices by supplying communities with a clear set of guidelines for creating successful programs (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2004).

To fully understand the efforts that have been focused on reducing juvenile crime, it is important to look at some of the many prevention/intervention strategies that have been utilized over the years. In the following paragraphs, many of the Blueprints programs, as well as other well-documented programs, are discussed. The program efforts are described in the categories of primary, secondary and tertiary prevention/intervention (Flannery & Williams, 1999; Hoge, 2001; Wasserman, Miller, & Cothern, 2000).

*Primary prevention.* Primary prevention efforts endeavor to effect positive change in developmental outcomes of the targeted population and are most commonly implemented in family and school environments. Family-based prevention consists of parent training or interventions of family support. Parent training usually entails teaching parents ways of facilitating behavior management support for their children and, in some cases, how to play constructively with their children at home and help them academically. Parent training has shown to be particularly effective when combined with other prevention efforts (Bloom, 1998; Kumpfer & Alvarado, 1998; Moeller, 2001; Tolan & Guerra, 1994). One such program, the Montreal Longitudinal Experimental Study.
(Tremblay, Vitaro, Bertrand, LeBlanc, Beauchesne, Boileau, & David, 1992), combined parent training with child behavioral and social skills training for kindergarten boys from low socioeconomic areas in Montreal. In a follow-up study at age 12, the experimental group had higher levels of school achievement and displayed significantly less behavior problems (e.g., burglary and theft, alcohol abuse, assault) than the matched control group.

Another family-based prevention strategy, family support, has been shown to have positive long-term effects on both parents and children when a broad array of social support services have been included. The Yale Child Welfare Research Program, which has been identified as a promising program by Blueprints, provided comprehensive family support services, including child care, counseling, and skills training, to low income mothers for 30 months following child birth. Program evaluations occurred at the termination of participation and at a 5-year and 10-year interval. Participant outcomes were compared with a matched control group and results indicated that children participating in the program showed lower levels of pre-delinquent behavior problems (Seitz, Rosenbaum, & Apfel, 1985).

School-based intervention/prevention efforts have been most successfully implemented at preschool, elementary, middle and high school levels. There have been several examples of effective preschool programs that have included both child participation (academic enrichment activities, skills training) and parental involvement (e.g. family support services, parent skills training, parent meetings, home visits) programs (Bloom, 1998; Farrington, 1996; Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2004). One of the most well known and most intensely studied primary prevention efforts is the Perry School Program, which began in Michigan in 1962.
This program, another Blueprints promising program, recruited 3 and 4-year-old students from low-income families who were then randomly assigned to experimental or control groups. The program lasted 2½ years and was designed to promote "intellectual, social, and physical development by providing a framework in which children initiate their own learning activities with teacher support" (Weikart & Schweinhart, 1992, p. 70). Home visitations and parental participation was also included and encouraged in the project design. This program collected follow-up data on the participants at different developmental intervals and up to age 27. Significantly more positive outcomes were associated with the experimental group than with the control group (e.g. socioeconomic success, scholastic success, higher levels of social responsibility, lower levels of chronic delinquency and adult criminality) (Parks, 2000; Yoshikawa, 1994).

Another preschool prevention effort, also a Blueprints promising program, was the Syracuse Family Development Research Program. Unlike the Perry School program, the Syracuse program provided support to the low-income families beginning prenatally and continuing until the children reached elementary school. The families and children in the experimental group received support in many different areas including education, nutrition, health and safety, parent training, and home visitation. In a 10-year follow-up study, the program participants showed significantly lower rates of delinquency and higher levels of cognitive abilities than a matched control group. (Hawkins, Catalano, & Brewer, 1995; Lally, Mangione, Honig, & Wittner, 1988).

Primary delinquency prevention has also been implemented at the elementary school level. The focus of such programs is mainly upon cognitive-behavioral variables
(e.g., problem solving skills, behavioral adjustment, social interactions) and on social processes interventions (Farrington, 1996; Mulvey, Arthur, & Reppucci, 1993). Two examples of programs that have focused on cognitive-behavioral variables are the Interpersonal Cognitive Problem Solving (ICPS) curriculum and the Behavioral Social Skills Training (BSST). BSST is designed to guide children and adolescents in learning adaptive behaviors which are critical for effective and constructive interpersonal functioning (Michelson, 1987). ICPS has a similar goal to alter behavior but focuses more on possible deficits in cognitive functioning (e.g. improving verbal mediation and problem solving skills) (Bloom, 1998).

One cognitive behavioral program, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), has been designated as a model Blueprints program (Mihalic et al., 2001). PATHS is incorporated into the curriculum of students in grades kindergarten through fifth. This program “includes lessons in self-control, emotional understanding, self-esteem, relationships, and interpersonal problem solving” and has seen “significant improvements in children’s self-control, emotional understanding, ability to tolerate frustration, and use of conflict resolution strategies” (Mihalic et al., 2001, p. 6-7).

Social Process Interventions focus on changing the atmosphere of the learning environment to facilitate the school bonding process. One such program, the Seattle Social Development Project, was expressly designed to prevent delinquency and other problem behaviors (e.g. drug use/abuse) and was “one of the few programs to report significant long-term reductions in violent criminal behavior” (Wasserman et al., 2000, p. 6). This program, identified as a Blueprints promising program, utilized methods of proactive classroom management, interactive teaching, cooperative learning, child skills
and parent training (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2004). Six years after program completion, the students receiving the full intervention reported fewer instances of violent delinquent acts, heavy drinking, sexual intercourse, having multiple sex partners, and pregnancy than the control group (Hawkins, Catalano, Kosterman, Abbott, & Hill, 1999). Additionally, the full intervention group reported more commitment and attachment to school, better academic achievement, and less school misbehavior (Hawkins et al., 1999).

School-based primary prevention efforts have also been implemented at the middle and high school levels with the goals of decreasing problem behaviors and improving academic performance. These strategies have focused on classroom organization, management and instruction, and they seek to reduce school-related risks (e.g. academic failure, low commitment to school, and anti-social behavior) (Hawkins et al., 1995). Other strategies have focused on variables outside of the classroom and include school behavior management, conflict resolution curriculums, peer mediation, peer counseling, and school organization. The School Transitional Environmental Program (STEPS), a Blueprints promising program, targeted junior and senior high school students. The STEPS program focused on reorganizing and restructuring general aspects of the school, as well as homeroom teaching practices, to “reduce the complexity of school environments, increase peer and teacher support, and decrease students’ vulnerability to academic and emotional difficulties” (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2004). Program outcomes indicated that the STEP participants had lower dropout rates, higher grades, and more positive feelings about themselves and the school environment (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2004).
Secondary prevention. Secondary delinquency prevention/intervention methods focus on adolescents who have shown some inclination toward, or minor involvement in, delinquent activity. These programs are aimed at changing the behavior of youth before they become engaged in more serious criminal activity. The emphasis of these methods is on modifying close interpersonal relationships (e.g. family and peer processes), and on increasing social support for non-delinquent behavior (Tolan & Guerra, 1994).

Diversion programs are designed to divert young offenders from further delinquency by taking them out of the court system and placing them under the supervision of other social controls (e.g. family, foster care placement, community-based services). The assumption behind this method of prevention is that by avoiding processing in the court system, youths will be cared for in a more parental manner (have their needs met more directly) and protected from any harmful effects of the juvenile justice procedures (e.g. being labeled as a “bad” youth) (Lundman, 2001; O’Donnell et al., 1987). Results of diversion programs are difficult to determine and have generally been found to have little effect on arrest and recidivism rates and in some cases have resulted in increased levels of delinquency (O’Donnell, 1992). For instance, in the Juvenile Awareness Project at Rahway State Prison in New Jersey, referred youths were taken inside the prison and met with the inmates for 2 hours. Evaluation of this program showed that arrest rates among the referred youths after participation in the program were actually higher than those of a matched control group (Lundman, 2001).

Other programs, although not technically labeled as diversion, have focused on preventing at-risk youth who have exhibited problem behaviors from entering or reentering the juvenile justice system. These types of programs have experienced varying
degrees of success. In one well-known program, the Cambridge-Somerville Youth Study (McCord, 1992), youths who had exhibited problem behaviors were matched and assigned to either experimental or control conditions. The experimental group was offered comprehensive services including different forms of family assistance, therapy and group sessions with family and peers, academic support, summer camps, and recreation (McCord, 1992). The follow-up studies from this program proceeded throughout a 30-year period and revealed surprisingly negative results for the experimental group, whose members demonstrated higher levels of delinquent behavior and had more negative outcomes in adulthood. A possible explanation for the negative outcomes could be attributed to the program design, which allowed numerous opportunities for interaction among the high-risk youth (group sessions, summer camps, recreational activities) (O'Donnell, 1992).

The St. Louis Experiment (Feldman, 1992) had a much more favorable outcome. In this experiment, youths were divided into groups of referred youths (those who exhibited problem behaviors) and nonreferred youths (those who did not exhibit behavioral problems). The youths were then assigned to subgroups composed of referred only, non-referred only, or both refereed and non-referred, and they participated in different types of group interventions together (e.g. group-level behavior modification). Post-test data revealed that the antisocial behavior of the referred youths significantly declined when mixed with prosocial peer groups, but there was no change in the behavior of the referred youths who were not exposed to the prosocial group, again demonstrating the impact that peers have on delinquent behavior.
Other secondary interventions have focused on changing the behavior of high-risk youth by using BSST and ICPS type models. Student Training Through Urban Strategies (STATUS), a Blueprints promising program, was instituted at the high school level and utilized methods of cognitive skills training for high risk youth in a year long alternative classroom program. The curriculum “was intended to promote student understanding of society and its system of laws by showing students how they could function effectively within the law: by clarifying students attitudes and perceptions regarding law and our legal system: and by developing students’ critical-thinking abilities and problem solving skills” (Gottfredson & Gottfredson, 1992, p. 315). Results from the program indicated that the participants obtained significantly better grades, had higher levels of school bonding, better academic success, less negative peer influence, and had significantly less involvement with drugs and other delinquent activities than did a matched control group (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2004).

Secondary family-based interventions are aimed at improving parenting style and family relations to produce a more positive and healthy environment and can include both parent training and family therapy. Parent training attempts to teach parents effective methods of communication and child behavior management (e.g. conflict resolution, positive reinforcement and family problem-solving techniques) (Kashani et al., 1999). Parent Management Training (PMT), for instance, is designed to teach parents positive, proactive parenting techniques. This program was built upon the assumption that many of the antisocial behaviors that juveniles display are a direct result of dysfunctional parenting practices (Hoge, 2001). Although PMT has demonstrated some short-term success at reducing conduct problems in problematic juveniles, there is some question
about its long-term effectiveness (Moeller, 2001).

Two well-known family therapy interventions, which are also counted as members of Blueprints model programs, are Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and Multisystemic Therapy (MST). These types of programs are usually facilitated by a trained professional working with the family members in therapy and training sessions. FFT was designed to address risks at both the individual and familial level. The general goals of FFT are to facilitate recognition by the family members of the dysfunctional familial dynamics at work, to reduce overall conflict in the family, and to provide the family members with positive, proactive techniques for interacting with one another (Hoge, 2001). FFT has been very successful in promoting healthy familial environments and has “demonstrated significant and long-term reductions in youth re-offending and in sibling entry into high-risk behaviors” (Mihalic et al., 2001, p. 9).

MST is a family therapy technique that targets both intrafamial problems and relationships and external components (i.e. peers, school, and neighborhood) (Henggeler, 1997; Mihalic et al., 2001). The purpose of MST is to help families deal with their children’s behavioral problems and to learn effective and proactive monitoring and disciplinary procedures. MST also seeks to eliminate youth involvement with deviant peers by removing them from situations where contact with antisocial youth is inevitable and by supporting contact with prosocial youth. School and vocational interventions are also included for promoting healthy and successful futures. This technique has been effective in reducing problem behaviors of youth in several studies (Henggeler, 1997).
Tertiary intervention and treatment programs. Tertiary intervention and treatment programs focus on rehabilitating chronic and serious juvenile offenders. Treatment programs are implemented in public and private institutions and community-based settings (e.g. after-care and group homes). Common treatment program components are cognitive problem solving and skills training (behavior modification), individualized therapy, and group therapy (Tolan & Guerra, 1994). Other potential components of treatment programs are peer mediation, family therapy, and drug and alcohol programs. Tertiary interventions also take the form of intermediate sanctions (e.g. intensive supervision, restitution, community service). Although there have been many tertiary intervention and treatment programs implemented, there has been little research conducted on chronic and violent juvenile offenders and little data generated on programs that have conclusively shown positive effects on recidivism rates (Mulvey et al, 1993; Tolan & Guerra, 1994; Hawkins et al., 1995). However, in a more recent meta-analysis (Lipsey, Wilson, & Cothern, 2000) measuring effects across 200 hundred studies, it was found that some treatment techniques consistently produced positive effects (i.e. lower recidivism rates). These treatment techniques included individual counseling, interpersonal problem solving skills, and behavioral programs. Currie (1998), suggests that one of the problems with tertiary programs is that they are usually focused on delivering a “quick fix” and would be much more effective if they would include “a systematic effort to address offender’s underlying problems” (p.171). He also points out that “even the best efforts at rehabilitation of offenders will be undermined unless they are linked to a broader strategy to improve conditions in the communities to which offenders return” (p. 171). In short, it may not be that most tertiary programs do not
work, but that they have yet to be designed in a manner that proves effective in rehabilitating chronic and serious juvenile offenders.

Mentoring

One strategy that has implications for all three levels of prevention/intervention is mentoring. Mentoring programs are highly compatible with activity setting theory and provide an intervention strategy that can influence interactions, thereby positively affecting the behaviors and social networks of youth. Mentoring relationships can play an important role in the lives of young people by fostering protective factors (assets) that mitigate against the development of risky behaviors (Foster, 2001). Historically, these relationships have existed as a natural part of many children’s development (Gallimore, Tharp, & John-Steiner, 1992) and have included parents, relatives, teachers, neighbors, coaches and counselors (Rhodes, 2002; Thompson & Vance, 2001). Although delinquency prevention programs utilizing youth mentoring strategies have primarily focused on secondary prevention strategies, the very definition of mentor has implications at the primary level. A mentor could be described as a trusted counselor and guide, a person “who provides young people with support, counsel, friendship, reinforcement and constructive examples” (MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, 2004). Who better to act as such but the important adults in a child’s life such as relatives, teachers, neighbors, etc.? However, the changing features of our society (e.g. marital disruption, isolation, limited resources for supporting youth and family, loss of community cohesiveness) have often made access and availability to caring and responsible adults difficult (Jekielek, Moore, & Hair, 2002; Rhodes, 2002). This loss of
natural adult mentors has made it imperative to find supportive and caring adults who are willing and able to act as counselors and guides to the vulnerable adolescent population. As a result, planned mentoring programs, instances where mentoring has been systematically implemented, have become increasingly important strategies for supporting the healthy development of at-risk youth. Mentoring programs can be viewed as formal mechanisms that allow young people to establish positive relationships with caring adults (Jekielek, Moore, Hair, & Scarupa, 2002).

Although mentoring approaches have existed for years, the last decade has witnessed a burgeoning of programs. The widespread enthusiasm for mentoring has resulted in programs focused on enhancing protective factors related to prosocial bonding and at reducing a wide range of problems affecting youth including poor academic performance, antisocial behaviors, low self-esteem, poor social skills, and association with delinquent peers (Hawkins et al, 1995; Jekielek et al., 2002). While it is clear that these programs hold enormous promise, the full value has yet to be determined because few systematic evaluations of program effectiveness have been conducted (Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Jackson, 2002; Rhodes, 2002; Thompson & Vance, 2001).

Mentoring programs utilize one-on-one mentoring (one mentor for one mentee) and group mentoring (one or two mentors for a group of mentees) strategies. The one-on-one approach has been the more widely implemented of the two, and research indicating the success of mentoring has primarily focused on this model. However, because of the dependence on a large number of volunteers (one mentor for every one youth), this method has been unable to reach all the adolescents who are in need of an adult role-model/mentor in their lives (Herrera, Vang, & Gale, 2002). In fact, in 2002, one study
estimated that there were approximately 15 million young people identified as needing mentors who were not involved with planned mentoring relationships (AOL Time Warner Foundation, 2002). Additionally, quality one-on-one mentoring programs are not necessarily low-cost, with an expense of approximately $1,000 per child per year (Herrera et al., 2002; Tierney, Grossman, & Resch, 2000). The two most common contexts for one-on-one mentoring strategies are community-based and school-based (Herrera, Sipe, McClanahan, Arbreton, & Pepper, 2000). School-based programs traditionally have a stronger focus on academics. Community-based programs usually require more contact hours between mentors and mentees, thereby allowing closer relationship bonds to form (Herrera et al., 2000). There is also some indication that mentors in community-based programs may be more effective in influencing the social behaviors of mentees (Herrera et al., 2000).

Group mentoring programs are usually based at specific locations, such as schools or group youth servicing organizations. Although the group mentoring approach is not as expensive and can reach a larger number of youth with fewer adults, it also has limitations. There has been little research conducted on the effectiveness of group mentoring (Herrera et al., 2002), which by its very nature lessens the individual contact between a given mentee and his mentor. Additionally, mentoring programs that allow group contact must carefully monitor the levels of prosocial and antisocial youth contact, which has been implicated as a component for increased levels of negative behaviors (Feldman, 1992; O'Donnell et al., 1979). The programs reviewed in the following paragraphs focus primarily on one-on-one mentoring strategies.
Potentially the most influential and well-known mentoring program to date (Rhodes, 2002), Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBS) is the largest one-on-one mentoring organization in the country and carries the distinction of being the only mentoring program recognized as a Blueprints model program. Through a network of close to 500 agencies, BBBS serves approximately 200,000 children in 5000 communities across all 50 states (Big Brothers Big Sisters, 2004). BBBS has been in operation for 100 years, pairing youth from single-parent households with unrelated adult volunteers. The mentors recruited for this program are carefully screened and BBBS agencies maintain regular contact with the children, parents, and matched volunteers for the first year. This program differs from others in that “it does not seek to ameliorate specific problems but to provide support to all aspects of young people’s lives” (Grossman & Garry, 1997, p. 2). BBBS is also unique in its carefully designed evaluation of program effectiveness, which ultimately consisted of 1138 youth randomly assigned to treatment and control groups. The results from this study were quite significant. While in the program, participants were 46% less likely to use drugs, 27% less likely to initiate alcohol use, felt better and more competent about school, had higher rates of school attendance, and reported better relationships with their families and peers than the control group (Tierney et al., 2000; Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2004).

One program closely tied to BBBS is known as the Amachi initiative. The Amachi initiative is not only based on the BBBS model, but also has its mentors screened, matched, and trained by BBBS. This program, which partners public agencies and nonprofit service providers with faith-based organizations, is distinctly different from BBBS in that it targets a very specific “high-risk” group of youth, specifically, the
children of prisoners (Jucovy, 2003). Children of prisoners are at high risk for a number of emotional and behavioral problems (e.g., poor academic performance, drug and alcohol abuse, delinquency) and “are six times more likely than other children to be incarcerated at some point in their lives” (Farley, 2004, p. 1). Initial results of this program showed that the mentors and caregivers perceived mentee improvements in self-confidence and academic performance (Farley, 2004).

Another national mentoring program, the Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP), is federally funded through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) that competitively awards JUMP grants. JUMP, similarly to BBBS, utilizes a one-on-one mentoring format and serves primarily youth from single-parent households. However, like the Amachi initiative, this program focuses on specific risks and “is designed to reduce juvenile delinquency and gang participation, improve academic performance, and reduce dropout rates” (Grossman and Gary, 1997, p. 2). JUMP grants have been provided for more than 200 JUMP projects across the United States (Novotney, Mertinko, Lange, Falb, and Kirk, 2002). Some of these projects include the provision of mentoring services to youth on probation, first-time juvenile offenders, court-involved youth and families of domestic violence, and youth in detention facilities (White, Mertinko, and Van Orden, 2002). One significant aspect of this program design is the incorporation of a detailed evaluative component that includes a national evaluation team that is responsible for collecting common information from the JUMP projects (Novotney, Mertinko, Lange, & Baker, 2000). Although the official evaluation of JUMP is still in process, preliminary data indicates perceived positive gains in multiple risk areas including academic performance, familial relationships, avoidance of antisocial
peers, and general behavior (Novotney et al., 2002).

Mentoring is also being utilized within the framework of the Communities That Care (CTC) prevention operating system, a comprehensive guide to field-tested strategies for reducing risk and enhancing protective factors in communities (Hawkins, Catalano, & Arthur, 2002). CTC identifies promising approaches for supporting youth and works as a guide to help communities fight “youth health and behavioral problems by reducing risks while creating bonds between young people and their families, their schools, their communities, and their peers” (Wong, 1996, p. 1). The Buddy System (Fo & O’Donnell, 1974), a mentoring strategy identified within this framework, addresses risks associated with early and persistent antisocial behaviors, rebelliousness, and lack of commitment to school (Wong, 1996). An important component of the Buddy System is the employment of a contingent reinforcement strategy, providing youth with social approval and material rewards for demonstrating appropriate and desirable prosocial behavior.

Mentoring with contingency reinforcement also demonstrates potential for the effectiveness of mentoring as a tertiary prevention strategy. Evaluation of the original Buddy System revealed decreased arrest rates for program participants who had been arrested for a major offense in the prior year. However, there was an increase of arrest rates for the youth who had not been arrested a year prior to program participation. The mixed results of the Buddy System program could have been a consequence of youth with minor behavior problems forming friendships during program activities with youth that exhibited higher levels of antisocial conduct (O’Donnell et al., 1979). This interpretation was strongly supported by a review of delinquency programs for non-incarcerated youth (O’Donnell, et al., 1987).
Another mentoring program that has implications at the tertiary prevention level is Project C.O.R.E. (Communities Organize to Regain their Environments). This was a highly structured program that provided a means of early release and supportive aftercare for institutionalized youth (ages 15-17) in three New Jersey correctional facilities. Project C.O.R.E. was designed to address risks associated with crime (e.g. poverty, joblessness, family breakdown, community disintegration) and incorporated a mentoring component combined with other comprehensive services. The mentoring component lasted approximately 14 months and served a total of 40 youth. Evaluation of C.O.R.E evidenced some positive outcomes for program participants including improvement in behavior, school attendance, and academic performance (Jones-Brown & Henriques, 1997).

Overall research on mentoring has indicated a number of findings that seem to hold fairly constant across programs. The most consistent of these is that not just any program will produce positive results. The program structure and design must be carefully considered, and there are certain components that appear essential for producing positive results (Dubois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002; Jekielek, Moore, & Hair, 2002; Jekielek, Moore, & Hair, & Scarupa, 2002; Jones-Brown & Henriques, 1997; Rhodes, 2002; Sipe, 2002; Sipe, 1999). One such component is the duration of the mentoring relationship. In examining the impact of mentoring relationship duration with the BB/BS youth, it was found that young people who were in relationships for a year or longer reported improvements in a number of outcome areas (academic, psychosocial, and behavioral). However, those youth who experienced short-term relationships reported feelings related to drops in both self-worth and perceived academic proficiency.
One way to facilitate longer-lasting relationships is to ensure that the mentor has some combination of training, support and supervision. These elements seem to be very important for the programs that have reported long-term relationships and positive outcomes (Jekielek et al., 2002; Rhodes, 2002; Sipe, 2002; Sipe, 1999). Other important components are the amount of contact between mentors and mentees (more is better) and the establishment of a meaningful and a trusting relationship.

However, there have not been enough studies conducted to determine what risks are most strongly addressed by mentoring programs. For example, are mentoring programs most beneficial for youth who have been exposed to family abuse or for those who have had chronic involvement with deviant peers? There is general agreement that mentoring programs potentially offer the greatest benefits for at-risk youth who have experienced significant conditions of environmental risk and disadvantage (Dubois et al., 2002).

Research pertaining to gender differences in mentoring programs is extremely limited and has essentially been explored only in relation to the constitution of mentor and mentee dyads. Although there has been one study acknowledging that classic mentoring models may not be appropriate for females (as cited in National Mentoring Center, 2000), recognition of gender as an important construct in determining the efficiency of mentoring programs has yet to be systematically explored. However, gender specific risks for at-risk youth could have profound implications for mentoring programs. For example, Grossman and Rhodes (2002), using evaluation data collected from the BB/BS mentoring program, determined that adolescents who had sustained emotional,
sexual, or physical abuse were among the most likely of the program participants to be in mentoring partnerships that terminated early, an element that could contribute to negative outcomes. This finding may be related to the fact that “maltreated youth frequently manifests highly problematic attachment relationships with their parents and other adults and may find it relatively difficult to establish close, supportive relationships with mentors” (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002, p. 214). Interestingly enough, this study also found that female adolescent matches had a higher rate of early termination than did the male matches.

In another study (Zimmerman & Bingenheimer, 2002) examining natural mentors (i.e. relationships with non-parental adults who provide support, guidance, inspiration, etc.) and resiliency, youth with natural mentors were less affected by the negative behaviors of their peers. One implication of this finding is that “natural mentors may encourage young people not to befriend peers who engage in problem behaviors” (p. 238). If gender differences exist in relationship to the influence of peers on antisocial behaviors, these findings could have important implications for mentoring programs. However, because natural mentoring relationships represent different relationship formation processes than planned mentoring relationships, it is difficult to generalize these findings without further investigation of gender and peers in relation to mentoring programs. Although gender in mentoring programs has yet to be thoroughly investigated, findings such as these make the study of gender in relation to mentoring an important area of exploration.

Finally, the relative paucity of evaluations of mentoring programs presents a need for more information on the dynamics of mentoring relationships. This could provide
valuable information about appropriate and effective methods for establishing mentoring programs, which facilitate respectful and trusting relationships, promote long-term mentoring dyads, and provide youth with the skills that lead them down healthy developmental pathways.

The following sections introduce, and subsequently examine, a youth mentoring program. This study is an effort to answer some of the questions concerning risks, gender, and mentoring program effectiveness. Activity setting theory will be utilized in this study to provide a framework for understanding the mechanisms involved in affecting positive outcomes in a youth mentoring program. A primarily qualitative research strategy will be employed for this endeavor.

Qualitative Research Methods

By gathering data on both male and female adolescents, it is possible that a better understanding can be obtained of what is involved in the development of antisocial behaviors and what prevention methods are most effective for addressing these issues. This information may enable the creation of programs that work to address specific risks and are tailored to specific gender needs.

Qualitative research methods provide effective ways to gather this data. They have proven to be supportive of the core values that encompass the field of community psychology (Banyard & Miller, 1998), and they have contributed valuable information to other branches of psychology (Brydon-Miller, 1997; Marecek, Fine, & Kidder, 1997). Qualitative research methods, such as interviewing, have also been shown to be effective for gaining insight into mentoring strategies (Bennetts, 2003; de Anda, 2001; Herrera,
2000; Hirsch, Mickus, & Boerger, 2002) and for answering important questions related to gender specific programming (Bloom, Owen, Deschenes, & Rosenbaum, 2002).

Conducting interviews to better understand problem behavior can reveal very important information that cannot be obtained using official documents and court records (Cullingford & Morrison, 1997; Galbavy, 2003; Leonard, 1982). Also, during interviews, themes that are not directly targeted in closed-ended survey questions can be obtained and examined (Cullingford & Morrison, 1997). Furthermore, some researchers indicate that interviews and other forms of self-report data collection may render stronger and more accurate information concerning antisocial behaviors and gender differences (Bortner, 1994; Fejes-Mendoza et al., 1995; Giordano & Cernkovich, 1997).

Research Questions

There are two areas that need to be addressed concerning the formation and influence of risks on male and female antisocial behavior. One area concerns whether or not there are significant gender differences in risks that negatively impact youth development. These differences are important because of the implications they have for predicting gender-specific developmental trajectories of problem behaviors. For instance, males may be more influenced by peer attitudes and thus better served by mentoring programs which provide contact with prosocial adults.

As discussed, familial difficulties have been shown to be a risk relevant for both females and males. However, there has been some indication that females are more adversely affected by dysfunctional home environments and experience higher rates of physical and sexual abuse than do males. Females with familial problems may find it
more difficult to form emotional bonds with adults. As a consequence, they may be less likely to achieve positive outcomes from mentoring programs than males unless gender-sensitive methods are used.

Male adolescents, on the other hand, may be more susceptible to forming relationships with antisocial peers. It is also possible that both males and females are affected by delinquent peers, but the variables involved in these behavior formations are more gender-specific.

The other area that needs to be addressed is the facilitation of positive outcomes in youth, including the quality of the mentoring relationship. Program elements that facilitate a trusting and respectful relationship may have a direct effect on the duration of mentoring dyads. The duration of mentoring dyads may directly influence positive outcomes.

It is expected that this study will provide support for the following premises: there are gender differences in risks that negatively impact youth development, mentoring is effective for reducing these risks, and that mentoring provides better outcomes for males than females. Furthermore, activity setting theory is expected to provide an understanding of how intervention affects outcomes.

The specific questions to be addressed by this study are as follows. Are there gender differences in risks associated with familial problems, academic difficulties, peer exposure, and drugs and alcohol? Does a mentoring program reduce these risks? How can a mentoring program increase bonding between the mentors and mentees and facilitate their relationships? What program components are necessary for facilitating positive outcomes?
The following study is designed to address these research questions. Specifically, this study 1) obtained information concerning risks (e.g., behavior, friends, school, and family) about male and female participants in a mentoring program for adolescents, 2) analyzed the relationship of these influences on mentoring, 3) analyzed components and measured effects of the mentoring program, 4) provided an analysis of the mentor/mentee relationship, and 5) provided implications that may assist in the development of effective mentoring programs.

Chapter 1 Summary

Although researchers have embraced juvenile delinquency as a major area of inquiry, there are still many questions left unanswered. One of these questions is the role of gender. Literature seeking to understand female involvement in anti-social behavior is relatively recent, as is the understanding of prevention and intervention in terms of gender. Moreover, systematic analysis of the effectiveness of intervention and prevention programs has been deficient for both males and females. When examining anti-social behaviors and prevention/intervention, it is important to recognize the role of risks. Risks for males and females are not necessarily equivalent; therefore, there must be gender specific consideration in prevention/intervention methods. One type of delinquency prevention/intervention program that has burgeoned in the last decade is youth mentoring. Youth mentoring programs have focused on reducing problem behaviors and increasing prosocial responses. However, systematic analysis of the effectiveness of these programs has been generally limited, and for the most part absent, in terms of gender differences. Furthermore, the lack of research on mentoring programs has led to very
little understanding of the dynamics at work in the mentor/mentee relationship that facilitate positive outcomes in youth. Utilizing a primarily qualitative design, the following study will address questions concerning gender, risks, and youth mentoring.
Chapter 2. Methods

Setting

This study was conducted with the participants of the Friend Fitness youth mentoring program. Their program is located at two separate sites. Although these sites are funded differently, they both utilize the same program design. The first site is located in Centre County, Pennsylvania and is supported through The Second Mile, a private donor non-profit organization which focuses on promoting success by helping at-risk youth develop positive life skills, abilities, and self-confidence. The second program site is located in Chester County, Pennsylvania and is partnered with The Second Mile. Funding is primarily through a state grant for programs that use the Communities That Care (CTC) prevention model (see page 33) to decrease at-risk behaviors (e.g. truancy, substance abuse, and juvenile crime) and improve the skills and abilities of at-risk youth. Although Centre County is more rural than Chester County, their ethnic demographics are fairly homogeneous. In 2000, Centre County was comprised of 91.4% Caucasian and Chester County 89.2% (FedStats, 2004). The average annual wage in 2000 for Chester County was $40,916 and $27,871 for Centre County (FedStats, 2004). Additionally, in 1999, 18.8% of persons in Centre County fell under the poverty line, in contrast to only 5.2% in Chester County (FedStats, 2004). The Friend Fitness program began in 1995. The founder, who is an advocate for youth and a physical fitness/health activist, began utilizing physical fitness to mentor a troubled male youth. Through this experience, he saw the potential of incorporating physical fitness with mentoring on a larger scale. The founder then formalized the
program by linking with The Second Mile to involve larger numbers of youth. Originally the program was comprised primarily of males, but soon after embraced female participants. The gender difference between when the program started and when females joined can be seen in the workout protocol, which was written in earlier years and notes that “an ideal lifting weight is if a kid can push his own body weight (see page 151).” Since women are not realistically expected to lift that much, this is simply a discrepancy from a previous time when the program was comprised primarily of males. The Friend Fitness program promotes respect within a gender-neutral environment. Moreover, at the Chester County site there are pictures of all the mentors and mentees (males and females) on the wall, which increase familiarity and encourage a positive gender friendly environment.

The Friend Fitness program consists of adult mentors from the community paired with both at-risk youth (e.g. academic problems, social problems, family dysfunction, behavioral problems) and prosocial youth (e.g. no sign of significant risk). The targeting of both at-risk and prosocial youth is a focal point of this program. It is designed to avoid both antisocial group networking and negative labeling of program participants by eliminating the concept that they are in the program because they display a particular risk. The Centre County site has been active for 8 years and the Chester County site for 3 years.

The Friend Fitness mentors are recruited from the community and are asked to commit for a minimum of 1 year. The mentors are recruited most frequently through word-of-mouth; however, other forms of recruitment have included class visitation and presentation to Pennsylvania State University classes, flyers, YMCA newsletter, and
press releases in the newspaper. Mentees are referred to the program primarily through school counselors, teachers, and youth service professionals (e.g., case workers, therapists), generally because they exhibit risks associated with academics, social issues, problem behaviors, or family conflict. There is no cost to the mentees for participation in the program.

The Friend Fitness mentoring program is unique for its utilization of physical fitness in a gym setting as the main environment for the mentoring process. The mentors and mentees are matched one-on-one and are required to meet in a gym environment twice a week (primarily Thursdays and Sundays) with all the other participants. Failure to show up at these designated times without a valid reason are monitored and repeat offenders may be dismissed from the program. During the first 2 months of participation (the probation period), the mentees are allowed three unexcused absences before they are officially warned that if the behavior continues they will be dismissed. After the first two months, the number of unexcused absences permitted before dismissal is dependant upon individual circumstances. However, if a mentor is unable to attend a mentoring session, another mentor will work with their mentee. Although the group is together at the same time and place in the gym environment, the workouts are primarily one-on-one events. The mentors assist the mentees through a very structured strength-training regimen of extremely slow manual resistance exercises (see Appendix A for sample workout instructions). There is a lot of physical interaction between the mentors and mentees during the manual resistance portion of the workout. Additionally, some mentors will use cardio-machines adjacent to their mentees during the cardio-portion of the workout, allowing additional opportunity for interaction.
The physical nature of the strength-training regimen requires that the mentors are carefully trained. Examples of motivational techniques and workout “patter” which the mentors are expected to utilize in the workouts can be found in Appendix B. Mentors are also given information on relationship-building methods useful for the physical nature of the program (see Appendix C), and a comprehensive manual about mentoring in general. Additional mentor training (e.g. how to deal with psychological/emotional/behavioral issues) is limited, but the mentors are informed that ample resources are available should a crisis occur (e.g., counselors, crises intervention professionals, law enforcement officials).

Reinforcement is an important principle used in the program, and mentors-in-training are encouraged to use reinforcement strategies which promote the use of rewards contingent on performance and achievement. The program has a built-in goal structure which starts with physical goal setting and expands to other areas of the mentees' lives (e.g. academic, social, behavioral) after a mentee/mentor relationship begins to develop. Goal setting is an important principle of the program, and it is one of the central themes for the mentor/mentee relationship-building process and subsequent mentee growth and accomplishments.

The mentors expect a lot of effort from the mentees, and the mentees are asked to give 100% effort at each workout. Ideally, the relationships between the two are constructed around this effort. The program embraces the tenet that successful people give 100% effort, and the effort the mentees put forth in the gym can be translated to success in other areas of their lives.
The interviews for this study took place in private at several locations in both Chester County and Centre County, Pennsylvania. These locations included: the Upper Main Line YMCA in Paoli (the Chester County program meeting site); Body Works Gym in State College (the Centre County program meeting site); the University of Pennsylvania, State College (the university attended by several mentors and mentees); and the homes and offices of several mentors at both sites. All the participants were interviewed individually.

Participants

The initial interviews included 30 mentors (18 males and 12 females) and 41 mentees (28 males and 13 females). One of the male mentees was excluded from the final data set because he became very uncomfortable during the interview, found it difficult to answer questions, and was released from the interview prior to data collection. Therefore, the final mentee participants numbered 40 (27 males and 13 females). Friend Fitness program had a total of 50 mentor and 79 mentee participants. The participants interviewed for this study consisted of the mentors and mentees that were available to meet within a specific time frame, mentees with parental consent forms, or mentees over 18 years of age who consented to be in the study.

Thirty-four of the mentee participants in this study (23 males and 11 females) were enrolled in the Friend Fitness program at the time of the interview. They ranged in ages from 12 to 19 with a mean age of 15 for both the males and the females. Six mentee participants in this study (4 males and 2 females) had graduated from the program in recent months/years. They ranged in ages from 19 to 23 with a mean age of 20 for both
the males and the females. Overall, the mean age for the total participant group was 16.5 (16.6 for males and 16.2 for females). The ethnicities of the mentee group were fairly homogeneous and included 36 Caucasians and 4 African-Americans. Socioeconomic status was reviewed by examining whether or not the participants were receiving subsidized lunches at school: only 4 mentees were beneficiaries of this service. The length of time that mentees were involved in the program varied from 3 months to 6 years, with a mean participation time of 2 years.

The mentors ranged in age from 20 to 66 with a mean age of 38. Their ethnicities were very homogeneous and included 39 Caucasians and 1 Haitian. Although the mentor occupations were diverse (e.g. college students, teachers, professionals, business owners, entrepreneurs, and retired persons), the majority were from middle to upper class income brackets. The length of time that the mentors contributed to the program ranged from 6 months to 8 years with a mean participation time of 2 years 8 months.

Two of the participants in this study were interviewed for inclusion in both the mentor and mentee participant group data sets. Their involvement in the program began as mentee participants. When entering the program they were both expressing low self-confidence and self-esteem, and one of them was also having problems related to family dysfunction. Upon graduating from the program, they continued on to become regular mentors in the program. The interviews with these individuals were conducted

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1 Five of the mentees interviewed for this study had graduated from the program and had continued on to become program mentors. Two of these 5 were interviewed as both mentors and mentees because they had greater mentor experience than the other 3, and they were the only participants able to be interviewed from both perspectives.
in two distinct segments and with two distinct sets of questions. Consequently, each of these participants generated two transcripts: one from a mentor perspective and one from a mentee perspective. Therefore, although there were only 68 participants in this study, there were 70 transcripts examined in the data analysis process.

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board prior to data collection. The participants in this study were recruited by the program leaders and notified that involvement in the interviewing process was strictly voluntary. The participants were given individual consent forms prior to interviewing, and informed consent was obtained from both the mentor and mentee participants and the parents of all mentees under the age of 18 (see Appendix D).

**Measures**

The interviews were structured to elicit information that answers questions (see Appendix E) which address the research themes presented above. Additional information pertaining to mentee risks was collected through documents from school counselors, psychiatric evaluations, and program leaders' verbal and written accounts. Year-end grade point averages and unexcused absences data were also obtained for 13 mentee participants.

**Procedure**

The data collection consisted of systematic open-ended questions designed to elicit information concerning the research questions. An effort was made to avoid leading questions. The interviews were conducted in a conversational style designed to make the
interviewees feel relaxed and free to express themselves. All of the mentor interviews and 38 of the mentee interviews were tape-recorded. The two mentee interviews which were not tape-recorded were conducted over the phone and detailed notes were taken. These notes were then typed into a comprehensive format which captured the content of the participant responses. The interviews lasted between 10 and 90 minutes, with an approximate average interview time of 45 minutes. The interview tapes were then transcribed with the assistance of a voice recognition program (Dragon NaturallySpeaking), which allowed the interviewer to listen to the tapes and verbally transcribe them into a microphone. There was some difficulty in hearing two of the mentor tapes and three of the mentee tapes due to exterior sound interference. For these recordings, notes were taken immediately after the interviews and the tapes were transcribed shortly thereafter. The notes were used to support any information that was difficult to hear on the tapes.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the interview data included an in-depth study of the themes that emerged in each interview. The interviews were analyzed by using Ethnograph v5.7, a computer program designed for the analysis of text-based data. Each transcribed interview was inserted into Ethnograph, and all segments of interest were noted. Segments of interest included those that directly reflected the research questions and other topics of potential importance. The interviews were reviewed before coding and a basic outline was established for the types of code words that would be used. These segments were then coded by marking the segments and assigning a code word to each of
them. The frequency of the coded segments was determined. These patterns of coded interview-segments formed the basis for the themes in each interview. The themes were then divided into categories and compared with the other individuals' responses. Then comparisons were made by examining the similarities and differences expressed in statements belonging to specific categories. These comparisons were made separately for the mentors and mentees. For the mentee group, comparisons were drawn within genders, between genders, and with the group as a whole. In addition, grade and absence information was collected for 13 mentee participants. Grades and absences were analyzed to determine the overall increases and decreases in grade point averages and absences during the mentees' participation in the program.

Chapter 2 Summary

This study was conducted with the participants of a physical-fitness-based mentoring program, which targeted at-risk youth. The study participants included 30 mentors and 40 mentees. The measures utilized were interviews, documents, verbal reports, year-end grade point averages (GPA's) and unexcused absences. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then coded to form themes, which were then compared to the other participants' responses. The documentation and verbal reports were used to obtain risk data for the mentees, and the GPA's and unexcused absence data were analyzed to determine increases and decreases in year-end GPAs and unexcused absences.
Chapter 3. Results

The qualitative data included two components. The majority of data was collected through individual in-depth interviews with all the participants and focused on research questions relating to the mentoring program. The remaining data was collected through documents and verbal reports and was used for examining risks displayed by the mentee participants. The first part of this section will focus on the interviews.

The data analysis conducted from the interview procedure revealed the emergence of a number of clear themes that were defined by consistent and reoccurring statements. The responses for the mentors reflected seven distinct themes: involvement in the program; program structure and training; the program and environment; changes in mentees and goal setting; relationship building between mentor and mentee; positive effect of program on mentor; the role of parents. The responses for the mentees reflected three distinct themes: the program, environment, and mentors; positive changes and personal goals; applied program principles. Additionally, both the mentors and mentees made comments which fell under the theme of affirmations, concerns, suggestions, and consistency.

The following selection of quotations represents each theme and portrays typical or representative responses expressed by the participants. The gender (F = females and

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2 Many of the interviews included quotations which were representative of multiple theme categories. This resulted in some responses containing information relevant for more than one category.

3 In a few of the interview excerpts, and only in cases where the content of the quotes was not affected, the words “like,” “and,” “so,” and “I mean,” were removed. This was done to limit repetition and clarify the citations.
M = males) and the subject number of the participant follow each quote. The percentages of responses that the quotations represent are displayed next to the introduction of each theme. A summary of these percentages can be found in Tables 1 and 2.

**Mentors: Interviews**

*Involvement in the program.* All the mentors (100% of transcripts) made comments about the reasons for their involvement in the program. The two predominate reasons were helping/advocating for children (83% of transcripts) and the desire to give back to the community (27% of transcripts). Three of the respondents indicated that both of these were reasons for their involvement in the program. Additionally, 6 of the mentors indicated that part of their attraction to the program was because of the physical fitness feature. The following set of comments illustrate the respondents’ desire to participate in child advocacy.

I've seen the power of the program in action, and I believe in it. I feel like if I can help one child then I'm doing something with my life. (F02)

I've always been very much of a child advocate, and so any experience I can get with working with children is at the top of my list... I wanted to be here because of the kids, and I work out all the time, so why not incorporate that into a weekly routine with a child... For me it was mostly, hands down, because I love children and seeing them succeed at something that they do. (F04)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Theme Categories</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in Program</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Helping/advocating for children</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Desire to give back to the community</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Structure and Training</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Program meeting structure</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reinforcement</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Contingent reinforcement</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Physical training positive</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Physical training consistency needed</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other training positive</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other training not necessary</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Program and Environment</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Program in general</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Program environment</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changes in Mentees and Goal Setting</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Changes in own mentee</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Changes in others mentees</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Importance of goal setting</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Building Between Mentors</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Forming of bonding and trust</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Mentees</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meeting mentees outside of program</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Effect of Program on Mentor.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Role of Parents</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Percentage of responses in both theme and theme category columns is representative of all 30 mentor participants.
Table 2. Mentees: Percentage of Responses for Theme and Theme Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Theme Categories</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Program, Environment, and Mentors</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>Program in general</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Program environment</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Physical nature of the program</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Like spending time with mentor outside program</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Changes and Personal Goals</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Improved confidence and self-esteem</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increased confidence</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Increased self-esteem</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Physical changes</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Physical changes and goals</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Improved ability to interact with others</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Improved ability to interact with people</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Improved ability to interact with family</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic improvements</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Academic improvements and goals</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Additional positive personal changes</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Life-changing experience</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applied Program Principles</td>
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*Note.* Percentage of responses in both theme and theme category columns is representative of all 40 mentee participants.
I chose to participate in this program to serve these kids, so that they can get a more consistent balanced life, and discipline, responsibility. (M14)

It [the program] seemed like a nice blend between what I like to do normally, which is to work out, and working with kids. To me, my motivation was primarily the same motivation as when someone throws a life jacket to someone who is drowning, just it is to help. (M17)

I was interested in fitness and training and really liked the concept [of the program]... The children aspect was huge. I have always been involved in athletics, and I always recognized people that were important to me and mentored me. So I always had a real sense of what that meant to me, and how important that was to me, and wanted to help with other kids if I could. (M30)

The following responses highlight the respondents’ desire to give back to the community.

I am a recovering alcoholic, and my commitment about getting sober was to give back to the community. So I have been trying to put my money where my mouth is ever since I made that commitment. (M18)

He [program leader] caught me at the perfect time because I was looking to get involved with something, as a charity organization. It [the program] just fit me to
a tee... Probably the reason why is because that's how I was raised. I would like to take the credit that I was a good person and trying to do the right thing, and I'm sure that had a lot to do with it, but it was more than that. My parents are very giving to the community, and they are involved a lot in the community, and I was raised around family members who were charitable. (M22)

*Program structure and training.* The theme characterized by mentor comments about program structure and training comprises a number of categories including program leadership, program meeting structure, goal setting, reinforcement, resources, and training.

A large portion of the mentors (83% of transcripts) stressed the importance of the program leadership. The comments included expressions of gratitude for the amount of time and energy invested by program leaders and compliments about the skills and qualities that the leaders possess which are important for maintaining this program. Furthermore, there were no negative remarks about the program leadership.

[Program leader’s name] personal strengths are probably the key to the program, because without his leadership, or somebody’s leadership, the program’s not going to be successful. You have to have a committed, involved leader, I think, for the program to work nicely. [Program leader’s name] just has a way with the kids. They just respond to him. So his personal strengths are important, and also his position is important. It is a good blend for him in the program. (M17)
You can't get much better than [program leaders' names]. Those two are just full of energy. I don't know where they get all their energy. It's good stuff and that's what you need in a program like that. (M21)

Then you look at the leadership that is now in place, it is amazing who is involved. You start with [program leader’s name] and I guess you're finding out what kind of person he is. I think that's really why it is successful. (M26)

I think a lot of the reason that this program works is because of [program leader’s name]. He makes the extra effort... It is very fortunate that we have a coordinator that works very close with the school system and he also knows the police very well. He can go and talk to the police about kids and get information, and he can go talk to the school and say ‘this is not working, do you have something else that works?’ [Program leader’s name] is very good at staying on top of all of these kids, especially the kids who have the big issues. (F01)

It is important who you put in leadership roles, and [program leaders’ names], they have leadership qualities, people respect them. [Program leader’s name] as overall leader, there is no better way to lead than lead by example. He’s the first to get there [program site], he's the last to leave. He's working out more kids than anybody. He steps up because he's truly concerned about their lives. You don't have to ask [program leader’s name] twice to help somebody out. He is a great
leader. As far as leadership qualities, leading by example, I don't think you can have a better leader. (M27)

Because of them [the program leaders] you want to do well, you want to be there. (F03)

The meeting structure (meeting 2 days a week) was often mentioned as a program strength (63% of transcripts). Remarks about the meeting structure focused on the importance of consistency and contact. In addition, there were no complaints about the frequency of program meetings.

I like the consistency of it. It meets twice a week. I really think that helps. I know we have talked about the once-a-week model, but the more consistent it is, the easier it is for people to stick to it. But also it gives us a really good opportunity to really get to know these kids. We become part of their lives. We become part of the fabric that really gets to help them. I think if we did it less, it wouldn't have the same impact. (M25)

I like that it meets twice a week… The fact that it does meet twice a week, you have constant interaction with the kids. So, you know, if they had a bad day one day, you can catch them before they make it a bad week. (M24)
I think twice a week is optimal. Any more and you wouldn't get the consistency, and any less you wouldn't get the consistency. Like people would not come three times a week, and any less would not be right for the kids. (F03)

The mentee goal setting process was mentioned by mentors as a program strength or an element that was liked about the program (47% of transcripts).

I think that it is a very positive program... I think that having structure in their lives [the mentees] and just setting goals, not only academic goals but other goals. If they can set goals and achieve them, what a great feeling that can be. Just knowing that they can organize or prioritize other things in their life this way, because this is how goal setting works. (F11)

Goal setting is huge in this program... So next time you [speaking of the mentee] set a goal, and it obviously has to be attainable, you give yourself a time frame and you go do it. And that's like something that you kind of thrive off of. So then you take the next step and you say "what can I do next?" (M13)

The use of positive reinforcement strategies was a common theme expressed by the participants (73% of transcripts). Furthermore, a number of these mentors indicated the importance of utilizing contingent reinforcement strategies (23% of transcripts).
No matter what your relationship with these kids, you have to be positive. You have to make it a good experience. Let them know that they are doing good. You can use that to drive them in a positive way. You have to push these kids, and you have to tell them that they're working hard. You have to let them know. Give them a high five. Tell them 'nice work.' That's how the reinforcement leads them to achieving goals. (M13)

We set our own goals with our mentees. But we also give them a lot of public reinforcement and a lot of, "we are really proud of you..." The reward is that she [her mentee] will then have achieved her goal, and they [the mentees] get continued support from us for making their goals. It is a feeling of pride for accomplishing their goals. The mentees are many times recognized publicly in the group for completing one of their goals. Many times we would just grab all the mentors together, or other [gym] members together, and give a big cheer for any mentee who has reach a physical goal. It is a real feel-good thing. (F01)

Positive reinforcement and reward systems are consistently used. For instance, one of the kids was just in the paper, and next week we are going to make sure that his article is up on the wall so that everybody can see that accomplishment. So that sort of reward: the acknowledgment; the positive reinforcement of the accomplishment. In terms of the workout, personally, I try to make my feedback to them immediate and on the spot. If you give that instant positive reinforcement,
you will increase the behavior. I give them their acknowledgment on the spot for extra effort. Effort that they know they have achieved. (M16)

The following comments specify the usage and importance of contingent reinforcement by mentors.

Reinforcement is constant. In the gym, one of the things we do is that all the kids and all the mentors are pulled in another room, in the middle of the workout, and there would be at times a public recognition for the mentees after they had achieved a goal. So these kids are being praised publicly. And the accolades are always very real. No false accolades. That's a good element of this program. No false accolades. If the kids aren't doing well, then you don't yell at them, but you wait to give them the reinforcement until they really deserve it. But when they're good, you let them know that they are good. This establishes trust. And that's the whole thing with the program: establishing trust. (F02)

One thing I never believed in was giving false praise. So I will say things positively when they are appropriate... When [mentee’s name] works really hard, I let her know that she worked hard, and that she was really focused, and that that's what we want to do every week. (F08)

I think it [reinforcement] just comes from positive feedback. I think that some of these kids don't get enough positive feedback at home... I don't use positive
reinforcement for everything. If at every exercise of every workout I used positive reinforcement, then it loses its power. (F12)

The availability of support/resources for dealing with any potential crises that might occur with the mentees was mentioned as an important element or adequate component of the program by a number of the mentors (60% of transcripts).

So, just by letting us know that they really had a crisis intervention team, and that it wasn’t all on you to deal with everything, I don't feel like I'm all alone and I have to solve the kids problems or else I’m a failure. I feel like there is some sort of support system. (F11)

I feel that I have the resources, there are people that I can go to deal with any problems. (M15)

If I had any problems with any of the kids... I definitely could get the answer and solution to the problem. How long it would take, I'm not sure, but I definitely think I can get it pretty quickly and there's adequate resources to deal with that. (M24)

I will say that it is [program name] policy that if you feel uncomfortable in a situation, like there is a psychological issue, we are directed to go to our supervisors... If we come into a situation, then we talk to them and they look into
it, and the situation is taken care of. I don't feel well-trained to deal with the psychological issues, but I do feel well-trained in referring. (M27)

Overall, mentors felt that the physical training part of the program was thorough or adequate (73% of transcripts). However, 10 of the respondents indicated that they would like to have more consistency or consistent refresher trainings for the physical aspect of the program (33% of transcripts). Six of the participants remarked in both categories. The following comments include both types of explanations.

It [the physical training] was really, really good. I mean these [program leaders] are real experts... (F09)

I definitely had adequate training in terms of the physical standpoint. Because they put you through a whole workout, and they'll let you go until they think that you are ready... So from the training, from a physical aspect, I definitely felt that I was well prepared for it. (M24)

That is an area that can use help, the standardization of the training and the supervision, to make sure that mentors are only doing what they are trained to do and they are only working kids out the way that they were trained to work them out. And that's an important part and that's probably one part that could use work. (M27)
I think that from a training standpoint, and I'm just talking about physical training, we could be a little better at really making sure that what we're doing to the kids is what we're supposed to be doing, or is what we have been trained to do to teach them physically. It's a large part of why you are successful... and I think that some of that could be lacking in some of the workouts. Keep the consistency...

(M26)

Other comments about training focused on the nonphysical aspects (i.e., social/psychological/emotional training specifically to be a mentor) and were much more inconsistent. Many of the remarks indicated that nonphysical mentor training is important, helpful or adequate (63% of transcripts), but opinions varied within that category. The responses included the following: training was important, helpful, or adequate (9 participants); training was important and additional training would be useful or is necessary (5 participants); training was important and additional training was, or might be, necessary for others, but not for the respondents (3 participants); and additional training would be useful, but not desired because of the added time commitment (2 participants). The following comment reflects the opinion that training was important, helpful, or adequate.

We've had several sessions where people from Penn State have come down and talked to us. That was really eye opening. One woman, she gave us some of the statistics about kids these days, and it was really quite amazing... I think it is important [training]. (M20)
The following comment supports the view that training was important and additional training would be useful or is necessary.

There's also time you meet outside of the actual program, where you go and learn how to handle problems that someone might have and look at the emotional side of things. I think it was useful for me. That might actually be a place where we could improve the program. I mean like improving that part of the training. The education of the mentor so that they know what kind of things they need to be doing. I think that would be good. (M30)

The following comment indicates that training was important and additional training was, or might be, necessary for others, but not for the respondents.

They [the program] will have guest speakers from different areas... and once in a while there is an educational activity, which I think is fine. For me, as a [name of profession], I am always dealing with the most difficult kids and maybe that [additional mentor training] is something the program needs to address more for people who did not receive training working with kids... But I feel comfortable because it is my field. (F09)

The following comment reflects the view that additional training would be useful, but not desired because of the added time commitment.
I guess more training might be something that is useful, but I think that there may simply not be enough time in the mentors’ lives. Some of the mentors are extremely busy. So it may be useful, but I don't know if it's necessary. (M14)

Three mentors indicated that they did not receive any additional training (outside of the physical aspect) and said that they did not feel that it was necessary (10% of transcripts).

I really didn't receive any other [than physical] training. I have had that in the past. For my own personal situation, I don't think that any other training is necessary because I have had other training in the past to be a mentor. (F11)

I got physical training. I got no Mentor training at all. For me, I don't think it is necessary... but that's just me. (M15)

The program and environment. All of the mentors (100% of the transcripts) had either positive comments about the program in general (70% of the transcripts) or the actual program environment (80% of transcripts). Half of the mentors expressed positive feelings in both of these categories. As the following section demonstrates, comments about the program in general ranged from simple statements regarding positive feelings about the program, to more complex statements focusing on the program mechanics and outcomes.
It's definitely a unique program. It's unique in what we try to do to build that confidence [in the mentees]. A lot of it's just really building character, the right character I should say, and the right qualities in children. Using physical fitness as a way to do that is certainly a little different strategy. I am just very happy with the program. Not only because of the program itself and what I'm doing, but also the people that I'm around. I've enjoyed five years down there, and I don't see myself stopping any time soon. (M22)

The program is an enthusiastic positive energy driven program. Just changing their [the mentees] behavior to be able to stick your hand out and look somebody in the eye and shake your hand and have a good handshake, just seeing that behavior is really positive...There's so much energy and you just feel good. (M18)

It's got an incredible feel to it [the program]. There's nothing else like it. (F05)

It's really a nice way, a non-threatening way, to make a difference in a child's life... What I feel about this community is that a lot of these kids are from dysfunctional households. They really don't have an adult, a role model in their household. So I think that that is a lot of what we do here. A lot of times we do talk about stuff that these kids would not be able to talk about with their families. That's what I like most about the program. (F09)
Comments about the program environment focused on several elements including the overall positive atmosphere within the program, the camaraderie of the participants, and the benefits of a multiple mentor and mentee environment.

I think the thing I like the best about the program is the atmosphere. I mean there are a lot of great people to meet there, and we're doing a lot of great things for the kids. (M14)

There is a certain camaraderie down there. It's really what makes the program what it is. It's me being excited as a mentor, not only to see the kids, but to see my other friends, and interact with them, and feel that I am part of that group as well. (M22)

I like the camaraderie of everybody down here, including, not just with the other mentors but with all the kids. I just enjoy talking to people and finding out how they're doing. That's my biggest like, is just hanging around with a bunch of people that are kind of interested in the same things. I like working out. I like making new friends. I like trying to help out young kids, if I can, in any way. (M26)

Another plus to the program is the interaction between the mentors. Because things are going to come up for the mentors, and there's not always going to be one person there next to a mentee. So when you have a group of committed
people who care about you, you never feel abandoned. If you just depended on
one person, it is so easy to feel abandoned. Being able to talk to the other mentors
is huge… (F01)

Changes in mentees and goal setting. All of the mentors (100% of transcripts)
indicated that they had witnessed some level of positive change in the mentees. These
changes were observed in their own mentees (90% of transcripts) and in those mentored
by other program participants (53% of transcripts). Thirteen of the mentors discussed
changes in both their own and additional mentees. The changes that mentors commented
on reflected similar categories as those of the mentees and included physical changes (21
respondents), academic improvements (20 respondents), increased confidence (12
respondents), improved ability to interact with others (9 respondents), and increased self-
esteeem (7 respondents). Most of the mentors indicated change in multiple areas. The
following comment indicates physical changes.

Her parents were desperately trying to get her to become more physically active.
She was a great student, but weight was an issue and activity was an issue. I had
her for a year and a half, and then she ended up going to a great university. She is
working out on a regular basis. She lost twenty pounds and has kept it off. She is
very healthy and is feeling very good about herself. (F02)

The following comment indicates academic improvements.
The second kid was failing all of his classes when we started working out, and by the time he left he was getting like B's and C's and a couple A's. (M26)

The following comment indicates increased confidence.

[Mentee’s name] was much more shy before the program, much more introverted. Since then she has really come out of her shell... Through the program she was able to have a lot more self confidence and feel better about herself... (F03)

The following comment indicates improved ability to interact with others.

When [mentee’s name] first came here, when he first started to work out, he wouldn't look you in the eye, wouldn't talk to you, wouldn't do anything. Now if you look at him you can't get him to shut up. This really changed his personality, and you can ask his family. He's been in front of a bunch of groups, and he speaks to groups about this program and how it has helped him. (M26)

The following comment indicates increased self-esteem.

With [mentee’s name], I can see positively she thinks more highly of herself. I really do. I think just because of the way she carries herself, I have seen a difference. (F08)
Comments directed at changes witnessed in mentees who worked with other mentors included general reflections on improvements and changes in specific behaviors.

The thing that I like the most about the program is watching these kids grow…the transformation that happens when they first come into the program until the day they leave the program. It is amazing. (M22)

I have seen a lot of changes in kids as they go through this program… You can really see changes in their demeanor and in their physique. You get a smile out of them. You get "hello" out of them. Even kids that I have just worked out a couple times, I have really seen a change in them. (F06)

As a mentor, you really see many changes in the kids. In their language, in their eye contact, their posture. You know, it's just incredible. I really see things change in these kids. (F05)

Mentors commonly referred to goal-setting in the program (physical, academic, social, or behavioral) in respect to changes in the mentees (83% of transcripts). These comments were usually focused on the importance of goal-setting or simply the acknowledgement of goal-setting.

We try to set attainable goals, academic goals, and I think that is very important… [Mentee’s name] wanted to get on honor roll and got it. She was real reticent
about making that goal, but I said "come on, come on, I think you can do it." And I don't know why it happens like that. Maybe because it is written down somewhere and it motivates them more. (F03)

They definitely have helped [setting goals]... You start out by just setting goals here [fitness goals], making them try harder. Then, as they start to try harder here [in the gym], and they start to listen to what you say to them, they become more receptive to applying that work ethic to school and that kind of thing. (M26)

The goals have changed over the years. It started out with a physical thing. To try to build his physique and strength a little bit. That in turn we thought would probably help his posture. The other goals worked their way in. Socially he was having a lot of problems with his friends. So we used to make it a goal to say "hi" to them, maybe one person during the week, to get to know that person and not take up a lot of their time and impose on them but to say "hey, my name is [mentee’s name], how are you?" Sometimes it [goal setting] was as simple as grooming. Shave before you go to work, cut your hair, tuck your shirt in. So we were really just trying to get him organized and socially able to step out into the world and get a job... He was reaching his goals. Probably not one hundred percent, but he certainly did attain them. (M22)
One of the goals is to get a better grade in one of her classes. And I did get one of her report cards, and she did do better. She was failing the class, and now she has a C in that class. (F11)

*Relationship-building between mentors and mentees.* A major theme emphasized by all mentors focused on relationship-building between mentors and mentees (100% of transcripts). This was shown in a variety of responses but can generally be broken into two categories: components involved in relationship formation and additional time spent between mentors and mentees outside of the program perimeters.

The components involved in the relationship formation category centered around the mechanisms that facilitated bonding and trust between mentors and mentees (53% of transcripts). These responses ranged from simple acknowledgments that time spent and attention given was relevant for building relationships, to more complex comments about the mechanisms which allowed trust to be formed and relationships established. The common thread among these responses was that there is a relationship-building process that must occur for establishing bonds with the mentees.

Anytime I'm talking to anybody who I'm mentoring, I'm always talking to them about their grades. “So what are you trying to do? So what happened this week? So how are you feeling today?” I check out what's going on with them and take the time to get to know them personally. Because once you know that, then you can establish a connection. It's one of the things that is important. (M30)
I think that it is great that the mentors have a certain mentee that they work with all the time, because then you build a relationship, and I think that is really important. Because if you didn't have that, and if you were just going from mentor to mentor, it would not have the same effect as being with someone and building that foundation and getting to know them. Because how do you trust someone that you don't really know? (F12)

We [the mentors] need to capture their [the mentees] attention and their trust before we can actually start to do our real work. Once we have captured their trust, that's when the good stuff starts to happen. Then we can start challenging these kids and pushing these kids to do better in school, or behave differently at home, or respond differently the next time your father throws his shirt at you because he's ticked off because you did something. (M25)

Another unique part of this program is the fact that we work out together. You have a mentor and a mentee come together, and they have one thing in common, that is the workout. And then once you are working out together, you can build trust around other issues, but you instantly have that one thing in common from the beginning, the element of working out. So having the physical, the working out together, makes it so that you have the building blocks to build a real relationship. So that's what I think is the real plus to this program. (F01)
The kid has to be truly motivated to participate in this program... Once a kid is really trying hard, with some exceptions, you know you've really captured that kid. We start out with physical goals. We don't start other types of goal setting until we have established some sort of a relationship with the kid. If you do it prematurely, you are setting the kid up and yourself up for failure... But there is real magic that occurs when you have this relationship between the mentor and the mentee, and you have accountability with goal setting. (M23)

A substantial proportion of the mentors made statements pertaining to spending time with their mentees outside of the structured gym environment (73% of transcripts). These comments ranged from simple statements indicating the desire to, or acknowledgement of, spending time outside the program (8 respondents), to stronger remarks about the importance of this practice and its relevance for the mentees or the relationship-building process (14 respondents). The following statements reflect both types of comments.

If there's anything I wish I had, I wish I had more time to spend with my students outside of the program. (F02)

I would love to hang out with her outside of mentoring, but it's just really hard... I do think it is important to see her outside, and I think that under different circumstances, maybe our mentor mentee relationship would be farther along if I had been able to see her outside of Friend Fitness. (F12)
Honestly, because we are both so busy now, we haven’t spent nearly enough time together. But I have made it a goal of mine to spend a little bit more time with him this year. It’s maybe just as simple as going to a movie or something like that… I think it’s important because the kids need to know, well, it just gives them a chance to see what you’re like outside of the gym. I mean the kids, like everyone else, all act one way at work and then you go somewhere else and they might be a little bit different. It has been good and it has given me a chance to get to know his mom and kind of see maybe why he acts the way that he does and how he might have been brought up. I have met his grandparents and everything. I feel part of the family and I think that it just gets me closer to him. I mean when he gets out of high school and we don’t see each other as much, I still want him to feel as though he can call on me. (M22)

I see them [his mentees] outside of the program at least once or twice a week… I think that’s extremely important… I think its important because I don’t have to do it, it’s not a requirement of the program to do it… The outside interaction, it just shows more caring on our part because we actually take the time. They know that I could be out with my friends, I could be out doing this but I am taking the time to be with them because I want to, not because I have to. And I think that has a huge impact on the kids. (M24)

I do feel it is an important aspect [meeting with the mentees outside of the program]. I think that it’s a really large aspect, which I’ve kind of not been
following through on lately. They get to see you in a different light. You come
down here and most of the kids don't have an idea of the background of the
mentors. And I think that it just helps you become better friends, and then once
you become friends, maybe they start listening to you a little more while you are
working out or whatever. (M26)

Positive effect of program on mentor. Half of the mentors (50% of transcripts)
indicated that they had experienced some level of positive personal change or gain as a
result of their involvement in the program, including being a better parent (5
respondents), being a better person (5 respondents), gaining personal satisfaction (5
respondents), and strengthening interactions/relationships with family or others (3
respondents). Three of the participants indicated change in two categories. The following
comment indicates the experience of being a better parent.

It's funny because when I started mentoring [mentee’s name] and [mentee’s
name], I became a better parent. Because from listening to them, and them telling
me what their issues were with their parents, I thought, well I am doing that
also... They [her mentees] taught me so much and I am a much better parent
thanks to them. (F01)

The following comment indicates the experience of being a better person.

I am really glad that I made the choice to participate in this. On a volunteer
program level, I think that it is an incredibly valuable thing for everyone. Not just the kids, but for the adults particularly. I think that it makes you better citizens. I think that it makes you better parents. I think that when you mentor... you can see things about yourself that maybe, as a parent, you can take home and learn about or know about your own kids. (M15)

The following comment indicates the experience of gaining personal satisfaction.

It's a great program. It not only benefits the program, it benefits us, it benefits each mentor. When you influence a child positively, and he goes out and he's in school, and you're getting positive feedback from this kid, and you have a part in it, a part in his success, it just makes you feel ten times better. (M21)

The following comment indicates the experience of strengthening interactions/relationships with others.

I think I've learned to understand people better. To really read a person and see how they are taking in things. (F12)

The role of parents. Parents were discussed in a number of respects by a large portion of the mentors (80% of transcripts). Comments about parents varied and included: parents should not be involved in the program because they are part of the problem or parent training would be a waste of time (6 respondents); the current role of
parents is fine (for a variety of reasons) (6 respondents); the need for organized parent training, or parent training would be a good addition to the program structure (5 respondents); parent training would be good, but there are not enough resources (3 respondents); mentors need to take the responsibility of initiating contact with the parents (3 respondents); and the parents need to be more involved in the program somehow (3 respondents). Two mentors made comments in two of the categories. The following comments exemplify the contention that parents should not be involved in the program because they are part of the problem, and parent training would be a waste of time.

I think most of the time when we have a kid with serious problems it's because of the parents. Probably nine out of ten times that's the problem to begin with. So I don't know how involved you want to get the parents... (M26)

I don't think it would work [parent training]. The parents who would go to the parent trainings are the parents who are doing the right thing anyway. The ones that wouldn't go are the ones who are really problems. I just think that it would almost be a waste of time, because we would already be training the people who are doing what they were supposed to be doing, and the people who needed the training wouldn't show up or pay attention anyway. (M24)

The following comment expresses the contention that the current role of parents is fine.

I think that parents are involved in the program now. Whether it's getting the kids
over here or just allowing them to participate. I think it’s fine. (F11)

The following comments indicate the need for organized parent training, and parent training would be a good addition to the program structure.

I feel like that [parent training] is the one thing lacking. I feel like to have any program be a true success, I think that we need to have a venue where we are providing parents with the same tools that we are providing to their children. Because, how is what I'm doing with my mentee going to be successful if he then goes home and something completely different is going on at home? There is that lack of consistency. (F04)

I think a parent training seminar is a great idea… it would be a really good idea. Some sort of training or seminar for the parents. You can hit on accountability, on being on time, on a whole host of things. You can give them a handout about the program or something like that. (F05)

The following comment indicates that mentors need to take the responsibility of initiating contact with the parents.

I think that the mentors should be expected to touch base with the parents. (M14)
The following comment expresses the contention parent training might be good, but there are not enough resources.

Parent training might be good... But there may not be the resources there [the program] to deal with the parent issue. Again going back to the issue of time and energy and where that should be spent in the program. There is not a lot of interaction with the parents. (F05)

The following comment indicates that parents need to be more involved in the program somehow.

I think that it would help in a way if the parents were more involved somehow.

But some parents just don't care. Some parents just don't want to get involved...

(M28)

*Mentees: Interviews*

*The program, environment, and mentors.* Overall, positive comments from the mentees about the general program, its working environment and the mentors was a prominent theme (97% of transcripts). Furthermore, there were no remarks that indicated dissatisfaction with any of these areas. The following sections examine statements about the overall program and feelings towards the mentors.

Thirty-five of the mentees articulated positive feelings about the program in general (53% of transcripts) or the actual program environment (75% of transcripts). Six
of these participants expressed positive feelings in both of these categories. Additionally, 16 of the mentees (40% of the transcripts) indicated that they liked the physical nature of the program. Comments about the program in general primarily took the form of simple statements, as demonstrated in the following section.

I think the program is really good. I think it’s definitely a good thing and that they [program leaders] should continue doing it. (M16)

I like it a lot; otherwise I wouldn’t continue to come down here. (M21)

The program overall is fun. I like it. I’m glad my mom got me involved in it. (F04)

I think this program is just fine the way it is. It works fine. It’s perfect, I think. (M01)

Comments about the program environment were more complex and focused on several elements including the overall positive atmosphere of the program, the camaraderie of the participants, and the benefits of a multiple mentor/mentee environment.

I just like being here and hanging out with everyone. Everyone is really nice and everyone is always there for you. Someone to talk to. I’m always impressed when
someone goes out of their way to say "hi" to me. Like when I'm walking down the hall and they’re like "hey, how are you doing?" It just makes me feel a lot better, like hey, these people remember my name... (M07)

When you come in here everybody greets you with a smile and asks how are you doing. And everybody talks to you and makes you feel right at home. This is one of the most comfortable settings I have been in. Being here, especially coming from [named a large city], it’s totally different. People just looked at you stranger, they acted different around you because of the color of your skin. Here it’s more you’re welcome, nobody puts you down, you feel at home. And that’s help build my confidence so much because I know that people are not just negative. (M20)

What makes the program better than just one-on-one mentoring is that everybody has an impact on everyone else. And so you look at one kid, this kid not only has the impact of his mentor, but he has the broad information and understanding that can be conveyed to him through fifteen mentors. (M27)

Everyone down here [the program setting], it’s on their own choice. You know that they all care about you and that’s kind of like the best thing about it, because you know that they are not here because they have to be here. You know that they’re here because they want to be here, and they’re here to help you. (M18)
Well, it has built my figure and it has made me stronger physically and I guess a little bit mentally. Because when I interact with a lot of these guys here, all of them are cool with a lot of things I say, I can be myself here... I like everybody that's here, they are all different but it doesn't matter too much. (M17)

The people in the program are just amazing people. They have jobs. They have their own lives, and they're still here wanting to know how you are doing. Wanting to know what they can do for you. They are there for you, to help you get stronger both outside and inside. They are there to help you feel better about yourself and to find out from you is there is something wrong and how they can help you. And that's just amazing. I like that aspect and what it makes you after you've been involved with those people... (M27)

The following are comments about liking the physical nature of the program.

I think part of the experience of this program is learning about your body and learning about your health, and I'm learning all of that stuff right now. It's a really great experience to know how to work out. (M07)

I like it [the program], it's interesting. I like working out. (M12)
I liked being able to work out and joke around with people. It was always a fun place for me to be and work on something that was really important, such as my physique. (F01)

I think it's [the program] really cool. It's really cool to just go out, and work out, and get in good shape, and so you don't die of a heart attack at age thirty. It's good you can go and meet people that, like you yourself, want to be physically fit and stuff. (M23)

Many of the mentees expressed positive feelings about their mentors (70% of transcripts). These feeling ranged from simple expressions of liking their mentor to deeper feelings of trust, friendship, and guidance.

My mentor is [name of mentor] and I think she is the best mentor in the whole program... She is an excellent trainer, but she is also so happy all the time, and she just makes you feel good to be there. Just being around her makes you feel happy, and she always makes you feel like she really wants to see you and that she is really happy that you are there. She is just really enthusiastic. (F01)

I go more for my mentor than for working out. I don’t like working out at all, but it’s fun to be with my mentor. (F02)
It is good [the program] because I have [name of mentor], I can talk to her…

[Name of mentor] is really great, I trust her… I like talking to her and working out. I like it here. (F08)

The best thing that I could say about the Friend Fitness program is that if you need a friend or you need somebody to talk to, and you know that you can’t count on anybody else except that one person [your mentor], that that person will always take time to talk to you or make time to meet with you. Anytime in the day or anyplace. I have to say that if you need help with anything in life, that one mentor that was assigned to you is like a big brother. He is not just there to work you out; he’s there also to be your friend. Everything that you need help with or that you have trouble with, that person is there to help you, and it’s not just your social life, it could also be your academics. That person will help you. (M25)

I like coming here and just talking to my mentor about things that I have been doing and all that stuff, and we talk about problems and stuff. (M13)

A number of mentees also expressed their satisfaction at being able to spend additional time with their mentor outside the program (33% of transcripts).

It is important [to see mentor outside program]. There is a bond you form in the gym while working out, but if you can meet with somebody outside, you get this personal get-to-know-you-as-a-friend type level of relationship… and that brings
you even closer, and it's easier to talk to somebody that you see outside of the
gym. (M20)

He [his mentor] usually comes in [place of employment] when I’m working and
we’ll go to football games together during football season. I know he’s out there,
and I see him more than just once or twice a week, and I like that. (M19)

[Name of mentor] is great. We meet sometimes outside. He will take me out to
lunch, and we will get together with his kids. I have met his kids, his family, his
wife is great. It is good to see what he is like outside of the program. (M12)

Positive changes and personal goals. The contention that involvement in
this mentoring program was responsible for producing some level of change for the
mentees was a universal theme (100% of transcripts). Under the theme of positive
changes and goals, the following categories emerged: increased confidence and self-
esteem; physical changes and goals; academic improvements and goals; improved ability
to interact with others; life changing experience; and additional positive personal
changes.4

Indication of improved mentee confidence and self-esteem (93% of transcripts)
included statements suggesting increased confidence in themselves, their abilities, and
their lives (75% of transcripts); and statements that demonstrated feelings of improved

4 It should be noted that although this is a physical fitness mentoring program and the physical changes
category had the second highest percentages of responses, 95% of the overall mentee participants indicated
other types of changes.
self-worth (38% of transcripts). Eight of the participants indicated improvements in both categories. The following section demonstrates responses concerning increased confidence.

I’m more confident that I can do stuff. I used to be like, I can’t do this, I can’t do this. But now I know I can if I just work hard enough. (M11)

It [the program] helped me, definitely, being more sure of myself, more confident that I can do stuff without hesitation, without fear. That’s why the Friend Fitness program has helped me to become more sure, more, maybe more of the man that I am today. (M25)

I feel a lot more confident about a lot of stuff. Confident about things in my life. (F10)

I believe more in myself. I can get more and better stuff done because I really didn’t believe I could do stuff until somebody told me... They [the mentors] work me out, I get more stronger, I get more confident, not just with my workout or just with my school stuff but with other things. (M12)

This program has made me look better, which has made me feel better. It has made me more confident in what I want to do. (M01)
The following section illustrates improved self-esteem among mentees.

My self-esteem is way better. People actually notice something different about you. It has helped because everybody compliments and supports you on what you are doing. (F07)

I guess like it has given me more self-confidence in me. When you come down here everyone knows you, and everybody talks to you, and they all want to get to know you... and it kind of makes you feel important somewhat, and it gives you more self-esteem, and it makes you feel like an equal. (M18)

It helped me get motivated and with my self-esteem. Like before I started here, I did not talk to anybody and I was always with my friends or by myself. Here they taught me that if you go up to someone and start talking to them, they will talk back to you. (M19)

This program really does help kids. It boosts your self-esteem... You are more confident, and having confidence is great for your self-esteem. It's all linked together. (F11)

The physical changes that were expressed by mentees ranged from losing weight or simply feeling healthier and stronger, to performing better in athletics and other physical areas (83% of transcripts).
Mostly I have benefited from my physical health… This is helping me stay in
shape because what I’m doing right now [in his life] is not exactly physical. So
this helps me get my physical activity in and keeps me in shape. (M07)

Whenever I first joined up to the program, I was plump. I had a gut that was like
out to here [participant then stuck his arms out in front of himself]. As you can
see I have lost it. I haven’t really lost weight, but it has all turned to muscle, and
that made me feel a lot more better about myself. (M16)

I certainly feel a lot better because I’m more physically fit. (F09)

I do really notice changes now, after a while down the road. Now it’s just
unbelievable like the difference that weight loss makes. What it can do for your
confidence is just unbelievable. I mean with like everything. So like your overall
mental health, your well being, your energy level improves. (M24)

My size has changed in a good way because not only can I weight lift more, but I
can also start a conversation with anybody. (M25)

I feel stronger, more energy. For playing rugby this is necessary and has really
helped. (M02)
Many of the mentees mentioned they had physical goals they were trying to attain or that they had set and reached (65% of transcripts).

A few times my goals were to lose weight, those were my physical ones. Then I would set a goal and a date. Then I worked my butt off until I reached those goals. (F11)

Playing football was a goal, and now I’m doing that. (M20)

My main goal was to make a lifestyle change. Doing physical exercise regularly, changing my diet to make it more healthy. It did work and I did make a lifestyle change. Last year I was in a cardio class and I ran five miles. (F01)

Mentees’ indications of increased and improved interactions with others (73% of transcripts) can be broken into two categories: improved interactions with people including peers (58% of transcripts), and improved interactions with family (30% of transcripts). Six respondents indicated improvements in both categories. These included increased abilities to interact with others (e.g. less shy, more outgoing, more comfortable in social situations) and personal changes that improved interactions with others (e.g. improved ability to understand and communicate with others). The following section demonstrates responses concerning interactions with people.

A lot of people used to hate me because I wouldn’t shut up. I used to just talk and
talk and talk and talk. I would talk about nothing. Now I listen to what people have to say. (F03)

I like the commitment of the mentors. I mean these guys come here no matter what. I guess it [being in the program] has given me kind of a better idea about accountability. It has helped me with personal interactions with others. Like if I have to do something or if someone tells me that they would like me to do something, before I would not have done it. Now I probably would because now I have this, I don’t know, this, I guess you would call it empathy. Empathy for other people. The fact that other people have a life. (M04)

I think I have become more outgoing, and I think I have become a better person socially, and I have a better feeling for who I am...I think that I have become more caring and almost more worrisome about people. Because the way I have been taken care of here [at the program] and the way that people help me, I want to do that for my friends. So now I really want to take care of them... I’m more of a caring person to like help my friends through anything. If my friends are having problems, and I don’t care what it is, even if its really deep and we have to go through some really hard times together, I’ll do it. (M14)

This is a really good way to clear my head. I have a problem releasing stress. I keep everything in because I don’t like putting it onto other people. So when I lift [work out], it’s helped with that. That in turn helps me get along better with my
family and my friends because I don’t have the weight pulling me down that I feel like I have to put something on them. So in that way it helps me interact with people. (M20)

I was always like thoughtful to other people… but I didn’t necessarily know how I could be somebody, like what I could be doing. Coming in and learning the program and seeing how much other people helped other people, seeing how they selflessly gave, showed me ways. Like I thought, well this is what I want to be doing, this is another way that I can help people out. (M27)

The following section illustrates responses concerning the mentee’s interaction with family.

Before I started here [at the program] I had a little bit of a temper, which I still have a little of one, but not as bad as I did before I started here, and I used to throw my sister around and beat my nephews and just pick on them. I still tickle my sister, but it kind of curbed my temper. Like before I would just like freak out, but now I will go into another room or leave or something like that. (M19)

I talk to people about how I feel here [at the program], they tell me what to do and this usually makes me feel better. Instead of getting outraged at home or sad, I kind of have this idea that exercising gets my brain flowing… So I began thinking about what I can do to make my life better. (F03)
Certainly [the program has helped] with my family, especially my mother. I was a bad kid, I guess. Well I don’t know but anyways we had problems. But these guys [program mentors] basically acted as counselors... It [the program] really served as a foundation for shifting the way that I interact with my mom... I have a great relationship with my mother now. (M26)

It’s [the program] brought my mom and I closer, because afterwards we will go to the mall and hang out and stuff. It has given us that chance to ride down and talk and then ride back and talk. And then talking with [mentor’s name] has given me a better outlook on life... It’s helped with my family. (F08)

There were a variety of academic improvements mentioned by mentees including handing in homework regularly, obtaining higher grades and grade point averages, and getting on the honor role (60% of transcripts). Academic goal setting and goal achievement was an important component of this theme and was mentioned by more than half of the overall mentees (55% of transcripts) and by all but 2 of the mentees in the academic improvement category.

I have reached most of my goals. Academic goals have been to get A’s in certain classes, to get my homework in, and for some of my really, really, hard classes, to pass them. I tape the goals up to my mirror, and I look at them because it’s right there. So I check on them to see how I’m doing. (M06)
It [the program] really helps you to balance your academic and physical goals at the same time... My academic goals have been for reading comprehension. I was okay at reading comprehension, but I was not the best at reading and then taking it all in. I have gotten a lot better at that now. (F04)

Outside of the program, I need to work on getting motivated to do my homework. It has helped knowing that I have a school goal. I actually got some of my work done, and if I hadn't been in this program I probably wouldn't have gotten almost any of my work done... I'm able to talk to somebody else [her mentor] who can give me help on ideas about how to go about getting my homework done. (F03)

I really didn't have a hard time at all getting my work done in school. I always had help from the Friend Fitness mentors. They always helped out, and they're always asking, not just myself but everybody in the program, how school is going. They had expectations, and we always set a goal and reached it. (M25)

One [goal] was that I had to make honor roll and the other one was attendance, and I did get honor role last year. (F07)

There were a number of additional positive changes expressed by mentees (35% of transcripts) including increased motivation (8 respondents), increased energy (4 respondents), increased structure in their lives (4 respondents), decreased depression (2 respondents), and decreased drug usage (2 respondents). Six of the respondents indicated
change in two categories. The following comment indicates increased motivation.

Pretty much this [the program] has helped with self-confidence, motivation, yeah, that’s really what it’s done. (M04)

The following comment indicates increased energy.

I have had more energy. If you work out and stretch in the morning, you just have more energy than if you are sitting on the couch watching TV. So, because of what I’ve learned here [at the program], in the morning I do stretches and I feel like I have more energy… and that’s made me a happier person and changed the way that I am around other people. (M07)

The following comment indicates increased structure in life.

It’s [the program] kind of changed my views a little bit, because before I didn’t really have anywhere to go. I was just kind going through day by day. Now, well they kind of made me set goals psychologically and physically, and in that way it has kind of structured me weekly, monthly, even into my future. (M06)

The following comment indicates decreased depression.
It [the program] helps me to get motivated, and it has been helping me a little bit get over my depression. (F03)

The following comment indicated decreased drug use.

The way I used to feel before I started the program this summer, I used to be a wreck. I used to smoke pot every single day, every hour of the day. I don’t do that anymore. Now I am more relaxed. I am actually working muscles and actually doing something. (M01)

Nine of the mentees made statements which indicated that participation in the program was, in some respect, a life changing experience. They include declarations of the life changing nature of the program or educational and career choices which were a result of participation in the program (23% of transcripts). 5

I would say honestly that this program absolutely saved my life. This program absolutely changed everything about my life. I can honestly say that sometimes I think about what my life would be like if I wasn’t in the program...I would just say, and I cannot stress this enough, that the program has completely changed my life. I know it’s changed other people’s lives because I’ve heard them speak about it at conventions and things and I honestly tell everyone about it... It’s really

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5 Slightly more than half of the responses in this category came from mentees who had graduated from the program.
emotional for me because it means so much... So I just think that overall it’s life-changing... (M24)

This program is amazing. I mean I am not even being sarcastic. It just kind of helps you mature, grow self-confidence. Everyone who has completed this program has either gone to college or into the military or something. They have gotten structure to their lives. I’ve gotten structure. Everyone is shooting for better. I didn’t know if I was going to college but now I know I can go to college. I can do it. I have a whole bunch of people to support me. Everything about this program is... to help people, making us better people... Now, I am going to college for this [physical fitness/health]. And before, you know, I didn’t know what I was doing. It’s very dramatic. Like I know how to work people out now, and I want do it for a living, and I enjoy it. I didn’t know that before. (F11)

I’m in [named his career], I suppose, because of [program leader’s name]. They [the program] gave me more social confidence... All of the guys [mentors] are college graduates and again, by example, they really inspired me to get into school... Through this foundation of physically developing kids, it’s translated into social, emotional and spiritual success. Myself is a prime example. You take a fifteen or sixteen year old kid and teach them to develop physically, it means a lot and brings a social confidence. And that means something, it really does. (M26)
I’m so grateful for this. It’s helped my life. It’s improved the way I think. It improved different levels of how I perform. Not just physically, but in school, and where it counts is in helping me keep my priorities straight. And I’ve made so many friends. I appreciate everything that it does, and I only hope that it can continue to do that. (M20)

I think it’s a great program. I just can’t find anything wrong with it. It’s a great program. Everyone here is very supportive and very encouraging…I know that my life has changed so much since I came into the program and it’s just been like really helpful interacting with people to set positive goals. So it’s very helpful and inspiring. (M18)

*Applied program principles.* A number of the mentees expressed the sentiment that the program principles operating in the workout could be applied to other aspects of their lives (40% of transcripts). More specifically, this theme is characterized by the concept that mentees can apply the same intense effort they put forth in the workout to different objectives they want to accomplish.

I never dreamed of taking advanced classes or things like that prior to this program. Actually, this program has helped me see that setting a goal higher than what you think you can achieve may actually help you sometimes. I can honestly say physically I have never tried as hard as I have here… That same work ethic I try to apply now to my schoolwork. I work as hard I can…I just know that it’s
the level I can reach for. I know I can get it, and I work as hard as I can for it. So my goals are raised. Here you are taught to reach as high as you can. (M20)

Working with Friend Fitness and seeing how you set goals… showed me that working my ass off in the program paid off, and then it showed me that I can work that hard when I’m doing my schoolwork. I can put that kind of effort into other things. (M27)

I’m more into my schoolwork. I’m actually doing my homework. During the workout you have to keep on going, and it builds up your confidence to know that you can make your goals, and doing your homework relies on that too. It becomes easier to finish what you have to get done. It’s more of building up your confidence to know that you can complete something, and so you actually apply yourself more to anything. (F02)

There have been times when I felt like I did not want to do this anymore [the program], and often it’s been vocalized during a workout. Then the mentors tell me to shut up and just keep going on, don’t worry about it… It’s kind of taught me this ability to kind of stick it out. Because before I would just give up, and I mean actually give up. And now I can’t. I find myself completely unable to ever quit anything, ever. Even if I think that it is the worst thing that I could be doing, I would find some reason to keep doing it... I had given up on myself before I had gotten into this. (M04)
When I started, I really didn’t care really. I just wanted to work out. But then, like once my grades started to go down, I started to work as hard as I did in there [indicating the gym]. Well, like I said to myself, if I could do as good of work in there [indicating the gym], I can do as good at school. It helped a little bit. This semester I’ve done much better. (M22)

I think what it does is that it helps you realize that nothing comes easy that’s worthwhile, and that you can pretty much do anything you want to as long as you’re disciplined and you have the desire and the will to want to do something… I think that the program teaches you all the things that you need in life, in general. Like not everything is easy. You have to work hard to get what you want out of life. Even [name of a program leader] always said to me that when you’re studying, pretend that you're lifting [weights], you gotta go hardcore and intense when you’re studying for a test. Just looking at those practical examples to compare to everyday life really helps everything that you do. (M24)

Well goal setting was a good thing because it showed us how to go and execute at a high level, being able to do the things that we do at Friend Fitness, and not just in the weight room, but outside in social life and in activities and in surrounding atmospheres. You are taught that you can do a variety of things without complications. (M26)
Well being able to weight lift requires a lot of discipline, and we use that and we
harness that so that we can use it towards our advantage. You feel more sure of
yourself. You know you can do it and you know that, if I can do this, I can do
anything else. (M25)

It teaches you how to work hard and how to discipline yourself and it teaches you
to be like, well okay, you need to lift so much weight seven times, and instead of
just whining about it, you just do it and you don’t complain about it, you just do it
and then when you’re done with that you feel better about it. And it’s the same in
life. I mean if you’re doing a job and if you apply yourself and don’t whine about
it and just do it and you work hard. So, I mean, it’s very important for
schoolwork, homework, and I mean you just kind of like learn to self-discipline
yourself. (M18)

Mentors and Mentees: Affirmations, Concerns, Suggestions, and Consistency

There were a variety of affirmations, concerns, and suggestions voiced by both
the mentors and mentees. These were frequently intermingled with affirmations about
liking certain elements and wanting to increase their frequency (50% of the mentor
transcripts and 35% of mentee transcripts). For the mentors, consistency was a common
theme within all of these categories. The main topics included consistency in the program
(liking the consistency of the program or wanting more) (13 mentor respondents), liking
group (mentor and mentee) get-togethers or wanting more (5 mentor respondents and 4
mentee respondents), wishing that the program would expand to include more people or
be located at more sites (4 mentor respondents and 3 mentee respondents), wanting more or more quality mentors (4 mentor respondents and 3 mentee respondents), liking mentor get-togethers or wanting more (6 mentor respondents), and wanting to make sure that the program participants (mentors and mentees) all knew each other (2 mentor respondents and 4 mentee respondents). The following comments illustrate affirmations, concerns, and suggestions demonstrated by the mentors. The first set of comments demonstrates liking the consistency, and the desire for more consistency.

I think it [the program] works out because of consistency. We are very consistent in what we do... and I think that is a huge part of its success. (F02)

The only thing that I would suggest is to keep the consistency during the year. I would not take the holidays off. I think that they should have it twice a week, period. Without excuse except for maybe Christmas or something... We should have the program with the leadership in place twice a week. (M17)

I think that the program should have more structure. I think there should be more training on the exercises. And not just more structure to the program but also more consistency. Like maybe we should have [mentor] meetings every other Thursday, or something like that. (F08)

The following comment indicates further feelings about consistency and the desire for more group (mentor and mentee) get-togethers.
It feels like we should meet as a group more [mentees and mentors]... I feel that there is a lot of time in between the [program meeting] days for the kids to stray from the program. I don't know if another day would be good or what, but I feel like you need to come up with a strategy for how to buffer the overlap. Maybe you should have to call your mentee two other days a week. I don't really have any concrete suggestions, but I think there should be more contact. It feels like there must be more consistency. (F04)

The following comment demonstrates the desire for committed mentors.

It is hard to get committed mentors. You have to come twice a week and then on Sunday which is family time. You have to get committed people, because these kids have already had people that have not been there for them. It is hard sometimes to get mentors who are very committed. There are times that I get very frustrated with those people who are not committed... When I see their mentors not showing up, it is very frustrating for me. The communication part is also very important. It is important for us to know what other mentors are doing (F01).

The following comment indicated the desire for expansion.

I am very interested in learning about starting this type of program in other locations. Maybe that is happening already, but it is something I would be interested in being involved with. (M18)
The affirmations, concerns, and suggestions demonstrated by the mentees were much simpler than those expressed by the mentors. The following comment indicates the desire for more group get-togethers.

I think we should get together more as a group. (F01)

The following comment demonstrates wanting to make sure that the program participants (mentors and mentees) all knew each other.

I think that they [the program] should organize a little bit better. They need to introduce new students and mentors, so whenever there's new students or new mentors it might be a good idea for them to talk to the mentors and the rest of the program so that everybody knows there are new people in the program. (M06)

The following comments indicate the desire for more mentors, and mentees.

I think we need more mentors in the program. I think there should be a mentor for every mentee. That would be better and then we would not have to wait around sometimes. (M07)

More mentors and mentees [program suggestion]. The more the better. (M17)
Mentees: Gender, Risks, and Perceived Positive Changes

The most interesting comparison that could be made between genders was the similarity and the relative consistency of mentee’s responses within theme categories. Table 3 illustrates the percentages of responses for theme categories both by gender and total participants. There were no themes or categories that were specific to, or dominated by, males or females. The greatest divergence that could be found between genders (15-22 percentage points difference) was in the categories which included positive feelings about mentors (males 63% of transcripts, females 85% of transcripts); positive physical changes (males 89% of transcripts, females 69% of transcripts); and improved ability to interact with others (males 67% of transcripts, females 83% of transcripts). Only the responses in the positive feelings about mentor category exceeded 20 percentage points between genders, and there were no negative comments about the mentors from either gender.

Risk information was collected primarily from background information supplied through forms completed by school counselors, psychiatric evaluations, and program leaders’ verbal and written accounts. Some of the information was also supported through the interview data, but the majority was not obtained using this method because of both time restraints and reluctance on the part of the mentees to reveal information regarding their personal lives. The risk data, which can be best attributed to risks which were present at the time of introduction into the mentoring program, were compiled into individual risk categories. Most of the mentees displayed multiple risks, although 3 participants were excluded from all categories because they were not at-risk by the
Table 3. Percentage of Responses for Theme Categories By Gender and Total Mentee Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme Categories</th>
<th>%Total (n=40)</th>
<th>% Males (n=27)</th>
<th>% Females (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program in general</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program environment</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved confidence and self-esteem</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased confidence</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased self-esteem</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical changes</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved ability to interact with others</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved ability to interact with people</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved ability to interact with family</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic improvements</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional positive personal changes</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life-changing experience</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

measures used in this study. These categories, which comprised risk groups of 10 or more mentee participants, included lack of self-confidence/low self esteem (18 participants); disrupted home environments (e.g., single parent families, divorced parents, or living with relatives) (16 participants); family dysfunction (e.g., poor relationships with family members and drugs or alcohol problems in the immediate family) (12 participants); academic problems (11 participants); poor social skills/problems interacting with peers (10 participants).

To explore the relationship between risks and perceived positive changes, the risk groups were individually compared with the coded interview-segments representing the major categories of the mentee positive changes theme. These positive-change categories included 1) improved confidence/self-esteem, 2) positive physical changes, 3) improved...
ability to interact with others, and 4) academic improvements. The percentage of individual risk groups indicating responses within these positive changes categories was recorded. These percentages were then compared to the entire participant group (see Table 4). This comparison was utilized to explore whether some risk groups perceived higher or lower levels of positive changes as compared to the mentee group as a whole.

Overall, there was a high level of consistency in responses indicating positive changes between the individual risk groups and the mentee group as a whole. For example, 88% of the positive changes indicated by the individual risk groups were within 10 percentage points of those expressed by the total mentee participants. Furthermore, 100% of the positive changes indicated by the individual risk groups were within 18 percentage points of the total participants category.

Overall, the risks displayed between genders were fairly similar. Table 5 shows risk groups and the percentages of each gender represented within those categories. In general, the variance between genders and their membership in a particular risk group was relatively minor and suggests that for this population, risk was not a significant variable between genders. Although there were no extreme variances between genders and no gender-specific categories, the main differences were that females had a higher percentage of risk associated with family dysfunction (females 38%, males 26%) and males had a higher percentage of risk associated with lack of confidence/low self-esteem (males 48%, females 38%).

Finally, it is important to address the risk group associated with drug problems/peer pressure. This category was not included in the previous analysis because of its low membership, (4 males and 1 female). However, this group indicated perceived
Table 4. Percentages of Responses for Positive Changes by Total Mentee Participants and Individual Risk Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Categories</th>
<th>Total Participants (n=40)</th>
<th>Males (n=27)</th>
<th>Females (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Confidence/ Low Self-Esteem</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disrupted Home Environment</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Problems</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Dysfunction</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Social Skills/ Problems With Peers</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Percentages of Risk Categories by Total Mentee Participants and Gender
positive changes that were somewhat comparable with the total participant group (see Table 6). The largest discrepancy between the two could be found within the changes category of confidence/self-esteem, where 93% of the total participant group indicated positive changes, while only 60% of the drug problems/peer pressure group mentioned them. The relative similarity between drug problems/peer pressure group and the total participants group indicates that overall, the mentoring program produces similar responses regarding perceived positive changes of individuals in all the mentee risk categories. It also gives support to the possibility that this mentoring program would be effective for helping kids at risk for the serious behavioral problems associated with anti-social peers and drug exposure. This implication is further supported when considering that 2 of the participants, who indicated additional positive changes (see page 87), remarked that this program was helpful in decreasing their drug usage.

*Mentees: Length of Program Participation and Perceived Positive Changes*

When examining the data pertaining to perceived positive changes and the length of participation in the Friend Fitness program, there were no clear patterns that emerged (see Table 7). For the most part, the length of participation groups (less than 1 year, 1–2 years, and more than 2 years) showed indications of perceived positive changes that were relatively similar to those of the total participant group. The greatest divergence occurred with the 1–2 years group whose responses were 23 to 38 percentage points lower than the other groups within the ability to interact with others category. Overall, those who had been in the program more than 2 years indicated the highest percentages of positive changes in the ability to interact with others and improved academics categories.
Table 6. Percentages of Responses for Positive Changes by Total Mentee Participants and Drug Problems/Peer Pressure Risk Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Confidence/ Self-Esteem</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Ability to Interact w/ Others</th>
<th>Academics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Participants (n=40)</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Problems/Peer Pressure</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Percentages of Responses for Positive Changes by Length of Participation Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of Participation in Program</th>
<th>Confidence/ Self-Esteem</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Ability to Interact w/ Others</th>
<th>Academics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Participants 3 Months – 6 Years (n=40)</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 Year (n=13)</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 – 2 Years (n=10)</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Than 2 Years (n=17)</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additionally, the 1–2 years group had the highest percentages of responses in the confidence/self-esteem and physical changes categories.

*Mentees: Grades and Absences*

Grades and numbers of unexcused absences were collected for 13 mentees enrolled in high school (grades 9 – 12). The grade sample for these mentees included all the consecutive year-end grade point averages (GPAs) that were accessible. These grade samples were used to determine average year-end GPA gains/losses during participation in the program (see Table 8). The mentees in this sample had participated in the program between 3 months and 3 years before the first GPA was collected. Overall average GPA gain was 9.8%. This sample included averaged gains/losses for two (n=7), three (n=3), and four (n=3) consecutive year-end GPAs. Average gain for mentees with two consecutive year-end grades was 1.4%, with three consecutive year-end grades was 15.5, and with four consecutive year-end grades was 23.8 (see Table 9). Overall, 77% of the mentees in this sample experienced an increase in their year-end GPAs while participating in this program.

The data obtained for unexcused absences were from the same year-end marking periods as the GPAs. Overall, 54% of this mentee sample showed decreases in absences, 31% showed increases in absences and 15% showed no change.

*Chapter 3 Summary*

The interview data in this study revealed a number of clear themes. For the mentors these themes included: involvement in the program; program structure and
Table 8. *Average Consecutive Year-End GPA Gains/Losses by Mentee Sample.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentee #</th>
<th>Gains/ Losses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-4.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>-4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Gain 9.8%

Table 9. *Averaged Gains/Losses for Two, Three, and Four Consecutive Year-End GPAs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentee #</th>
<th>Two GPAs</th>
<th>Three GPAs</th>
<th>Four GPAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-4.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-6.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>-4.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Gains 1.4% 15.5% 23.8%
training; the program and environment; changes in mentees and goal setting; relationship building between mentor and mentee; positive effect of the program on mentor; the role of parents. The mentees themes included: the program, environment, and mentors; positive changes and personal goals; applied program principles. In addition, both the mentors and mentees made comments about the program regarding affirmations, concerns, suggestions, and consistency. No major gender differences were found for the mentees concerning theme and theme categories. The mentees were also divided into risk groups to explore possible relationships between risks, gender, and perceived positive changes. Overall, there were no major differences between risk groups in relation to perceived positive changes and the risks displayed between genders was fairly similar. Additional findings included some support for the length of program participation (longer being better) having a positive influence on perceived positive changes. Finally, the grades and absences data indicated an overall gain in GPA’s and a decrease in absences.
Chapter 4. Discussion

Program Effectiveness

*Risk, gender, and perceived positive changes.* One of the original questions of this study was whether or not there were gender differences in risks associated with peer exposure, drugs and alcohol, familial problems, and academic difficulties. Due to the make-up of the mentee population, and the nature of the mentee risk data collected, it was difficult to obtain information which focused specifically on exposure to these risks. Consequently, the results obtained address this question in a broader fashion and ultimately define risk in somewhat different categories which include lack of confidence/low self-esteem, disrupted home environment, family dysfunction, academic difficulty, and poor social skills/problems interacting with peers. As noted in the findings, the data did not indicate major gender variance between the percentages of risks displayed by the males and females. No gender totally dominated any one category. However, there was one small contrast: a somewhat higher percentage of females reported family dysfunction (38% to 26%), while a somewhat higher percentage of males reported lack of confidence/low self-esteem (48% to 38%).

Another question examined by this study was whether or not the mentoring program was effective in reducing risks. This was answered in part by the positive changes expressed by both the mentees and mentors. It was a prominent theme in the interviews, and the mentees’ perceptions about changes in themselves provided strong evidence for the positive effects of the program. Increased confidence/self-esteem, improved ability to interact with others (people, peers, and family), and academic
improvement were three of the most frequently cited changes. These positive changes have major implications for supporting and enhancing skills and abilities of youth, consequently reducing risks. The goals of the Friend Fitness program are to promote success by helping at-risk youth develop positive life skills, abilities, and self-confidence. Given the nature of the findings in this study related to increased confidence/self-esteem, improved ability to interact with others, academic improvement, there is clear indication that these program goals are being accomplished.

The presence of positive physical changes was not unexpected due to the physical fitness nature of the program. However, this category is important to identify for a couple of reasons. First, it did not dominate the other positive changes reported. This indicates that physical changes were not necessarily the principle changes taking place. Second, although physical fitness was at the core of the program, there were several mentees who did not mention physical change, but did indicate personal changes in other areas. This demonstrates the power of the program for producing positive effects which go beyond the physical arena. The physical fitness aspect has implications for helping program youth feel better about themselves in many ways, thereby increasing confidence/self-esteem and potentially reducing risks.

One of the most interesting affirmations of this program's value expressed by the mentees was that it was a life-changing experience. Almost a quarter of the mentees indicated that the program had changed their lives for the better in some profound way. For me, this reflects most powerfully the positive effects of this program and its immense potential for reducing risk and facilitating positive outcomes for youth.
The mentees were not the only program participants to comment on perceived positive changes. The mentors also spoke about changes they had witnessed. In fact, among all participants there was unanimous agreement that positive changes had occurred. Furthermore, both the mentors and mentees mentioned essentially the same types of changes (i.e. physical changes, academic improvements, increased confidence, improved ability to interact with others, and increased self-esteem), thereby bolstering support for the validity of the perceived positive changes categories and the ability of the program to produce positive outcomes.

Overall, the percentages of perceived positive changes across risk groups were very similar to the percentages associated with the group as a whole. In other words, there were limited variances between risk groups pertaining to perceived positive changes. One interpretation of this finding is that Friend Fitness is effective in producing positive outcomes for youth exposed to, or displaying, various risks. This is further supported by the findings related to the drug problems/peer pressure risk group, whose indications of perceived positive changes were similar to the percentages represented by the group as a whole. Furthermore, this latter finding lends support to the contention that this mentoring program could be effective for assisting youth who display high levels of risk.

A final area explored in relation to perceived positive changes was gender. Although there were no gender-specific change categories, and no extreme variances between genders, there is considerable evidence that this program had a significant impact in terms of perceived positive changes for both males and females.

In addition to the positive changes that were reported, there were a number of
other topics mentioned which also provided support for program effectiveness. One of these focused on goal setting and achieving. A large proportion of both the mentors and mentees mentioned goal setting and achieving in conjunction with perceived positive changes. These comments acknowledged the setting of goals, the importance of goals, and the successes associated with reaching goals in different change areas. In addition to supporting program effectiveness, these comments also demonstrated the successful employment of program principles.

The utilization of program principles was further demonstrated through mentee comments indicating how the principles had translated to success within other areas of their lives. Because the mentees had experienced this application of program principles personally, some of them were able to describe the process of translating effort and success within the physical aspect of the program to effort and success outside of the program. The fact that almost half of the mentees interviewed were actually able to recognize and express the importance of the application of program principles to other areas of their lives is very strong evidence of the effectiveness of the Friend Fitness program.

Lastly, although the primary function of a youth mentoring program is to effect positive change within the target population, it is also important to recognize changes occurring with the other participants. In this case, half of the mentors commented on positive changes or personal gains they had experienced as a result of participation in the program. These finding are important and indicate that the positive effects of this program go beyond the target group and impact everyone involved.
Grades, absences, and length of program participation. Although the sample for
GPAs and unexcused absences was relatively small, and a baseline data set was not
available, support was still provided for the contention that Friend Fitness was effective
for facilitating positive academic outcomes. More than half of the sample showed
decreases in unexcused absences. Truancy can be a major problem for adolescents and
can lead to many problems (e.g., academic difficulties, negative peer association, school
dropout, delinquent activities) (Siegel et al., 2003). Decreases in unexcused absences
indicate strong support for this program’s effectiveness for reducing risks. Further
support can be seen through the outcomes related to grade improvements. More than
three-quarters of the sample show improvement in year-end GPA(s), at an average
increase of approximately 10%. Furthermore, the average GPA increase rose
exponentially with the more data points that were available (i.e. consecutive year-end
GPAs). This could indicate that the longer mentees participate in the program, the more
likely they will experience an increase in their GPA(s). However, as there were only a
small number of mentees with more than two year-end GPA data points, more
participants would be needed to definitely make an assessment of a relationship between
length of program participation and an increase in grades.

The GPA data was not the only indicator that length of time might be an
important variable for increased levels of positive change. When examining perceived
positive changes in relation to length of participation in the program, there was indication
that the mentees who had participated in the program for more than a year had the top
percentages of perceived positive changes.
The Ingredients For Success

The program/environment, leadership, and mentors. In determining what made this program effective, I concluded that there were three outstanding elements. These included the positive feelings about the program and its environment, excellent program leadership, and the characteristics and committed involvement of the mentors. The first of these themes is particularly notable because of the overwhelming response it generated with the majority of mentors and mentees. In fact, 93% of all study transcripts included indications of positive feelings about the program in general or the program environment. Comments ranged from simple expression of liking the program to lengthy descriptions about the camaraderie, friendship, and enjoyment received from working with this unique program in an environment which enhanced physical health and encouraged personal growth. A powerful component of this program is a structure that allows mentor/mentee dyads to function within a larger, supportive environment. This interaction allows the mentees to receive support and encouragement on a much larger scale than might otherwise be possible. I could actually see and feel a high level of positive energy and commitment from the participants each time I went to a gym site during a designated workout time. Also strengthening the importance of the environment were indications from both the mentors and mentees that they liked the physical fitness nature of the program. This suggests that the Friend Fitness utilization of exercise is a very important program component, and it could be interpreted as a motive for involvement and sustained participation in the program by both mentors and mentees.

Some of the comments made by the mentees and mentors when expressing concern or making suggestions about the program served to highlight the power and
importance of the environment. Mentees and mentors both indicated that they wanted additional or more consistent group gatherings and more communication within the program so that all participants knew each other. Although these comments do hint at a need for more consistency, I also believe they display one of the program strengths: the commitment and passion of the mentors and mentees for the program and for the people participating in it.

Another extremely important component of this program, and one repeatedly cited by the mentors as being critical, was the importance of program leadership. The nature of this program requires an incredible amount of energy from program leaders, especially because they also participate in the program as mentors. Some of the mentors even commented that they believed the program was primarily able to function because of the input and dedication of the program leaders. In addition to administering the overall program and providing support and encouragement to the mentors and mentees, the leaders must make sure that mentors are trained properly and that they stick to the strict workout guidelines mandated by the program. Leadership is important in any type of mentoring program, however I believe it takes especially dynamic personalities to maintain an intensive program like this one. Strong leadership is essential for the success of this program.

The third major component of this program’s success is the mentors. Without dedicated mentors, the program would not function. They set the foundation for supporting growth and positive change for the mentees. It was apparent from comments made by the mentors, that they were a group of adults focused on facilitating positive outcomes for youth. Most of the mentors indicated they were in the program because of
their desire to be advocates for children. Others indicated that they wanted to give back to their communities.

Mentor commitment can further be seen in statements regarding relationship-building. It was apparent from the mentor responses that relationship-building between mentors and mentees is an involved process which requires time and dedication. In fact, an underlying theme throughout mentor comments was the element of time: time to get to know the mentees; time to build trust; time to build a relationship. A few mentors even said that in the beginning of the mentoring relationship they did not connect with their mentees, but after some time there was a sudden “click” and a relationship begin to develop. This relationship-building theme has two implications. The first involves a better understanding of the type of person needed for this mentoring program; i.e., someone who is willing to expend the time and energy needed for building a relationship with his or her mentee(s). The second implication of this finding gives support to evidence which has indicated the importance of the duration of the mentoring relationship (Grossman & Rhodes, 2002). If it takes time and effort to build trust and form a relationship, it stands to reason that the longer these bonds stay in place, the stronger the impact of the mentoring relationship.

The commitment of the mentors is further revealed in statements made by a number of them regarding the desire, action, or importance of spending additional time with their mentee(s) outside of the program. Some even described including their mentees in family activities. This would not be as significant if the mentors were not already committed to meeting with their mentees twice a week for at least a year. Additionally, some of the mentors would at times provide transportation to and from the
program for mentees. Considering the program structure, this willingness to share additional time demonstrates an enormous amount of commitment and desire to build relationships and facilitate change. The fact that the mentors were only obligated to commit a year to the program, but that the mean length of participation for those I interviewed was over 2½ years, underlines their dedication.

The effect of the commitment displayed by the mentors can, in part, be demonstrated by comments made by the mentees. More than two-thirds indicated positive feelings towards their mentors, and another third indicated that they enjoyed spending time with their mentor outside of the program. None of them made negative comments about any of the mentors in the program. In fact, some mentees indicated that the best thing about the program was the mentors. Two mentees even said that, although they did not like to work out, they did like hanging out with their mentor. These findings give indication that the time commitment by the mentors was successful in creating meaningful relationships and bonds with the mentees.

*Goal setting and reinforcement.* Another important set of ingredients for the success of this program is its use of goal setting and reinforcement. Both of these tools are fundamental to the philosophy of the program. Goal setting was mentioned as a strength or as an aspect of the program that was liked by almost half of the mentors, and it was a common theme in terms of perceived positive changes. The use of positive reinforcement was mentioned by almost three-fourths of the mentors, and in some cases, the use of contingent reinforcement was specified. One of the interesting parts about the reinforcement strategies utilized in this program is the recognition of mentee
accomplishments from multiple mentors and from the group as a whole. For example, sometimes when mentees reach a significant goal or have major accomplishments (inside or outside of the program setting), they are publicly recognized by the group. This amplifies the reinforcement effect, because mentees are being rewarded by their own mentor and by the other program participants including their peers. Finally, the comments made by the program participants show some indication that goal setting and reinforcement techniques are used both independently and in tandem to assist in promoting a successful program.

*Frequency of program meetings.* One of the most demanding and, from my observations, most important components in the success of the Friend Fitness program is the frequency of meetings between the mentors and mentees. The program involves a level of time commitment which reaches beyond what is generally expected from mentoring program members. The mentors and mentees are obligated to meet twice a week at a specified time and place. This requires an enormous amount of commitment and organization from everyone involved. Nonetheless, comments about meeting frequency did not contain any complaints from either the mentors or mentees. In fact, more than half of the mentors mentioned this as a positive element of the program, one which enabled the contact necessary for optimizing positive influences. Additionally, several of the mentors said that meeting twice a week was important for maintaining program consistency. When considered in the context of program effectiveness, these comments provided support for the importance and utility of consistent contact between mentors and mentees.
Training and resources. Mentor training is an important component of any mentoring program. However, mentor training for Friend Fitness is quite unique. The primary focus in this program is on the fundamentals of a structured physical workout and accompanying methods of encouragement and support. Mentors are trained to teach a very specific physical workout. Mentees are taught the basics of the workout by, and perform it with, the mentors. Comments about the physical training were mostly positive. Almost three-fourths of the mentors indicated that the physical training portion of the program was thorough or adequate, implying that this mode of training was a successful component of the program. However, one-third of the mentors indicated that they would like additional training, which could imply that the physical training aspect of the program could be improved. My personal observations support both of these contentions. The program requires intense physical training, and the mentors and mentees must adhere to a very structured routine. This is important not only to uphold the principles of the program, but also to avoid any injuries that could occur through the use of improper workout techniques. Therefore, it makes sense that although the physical training is adequate, it should constantly be monitored and reviewed to ensure that the workouts are safe and effective, and that their quality remains intact.

In terms of mentor training for nonphysical issues (e.g. how to deal with psychological/emotional/behavioral problems), the responses were mixed. Although almost two-thirds of the mentors indicated that this type of training was important, helpful, or adequate, there was no clear consensus on what role it should take in Friend Fitness. Some people thought that more nonphysical training was necessary, and others indicated they did not receive or desire to receive any of this type of training. Still others
thought it would be good for some of the mentors, but not necessarily for themselves, or good for everybody, but not practical because of the additional time commitment. These varying responses could indicate that this is an area that the program needs to address.

This program did not really have a consistent nonphysical training structure in place beyond a general mentoring manual that was available for review but was not part of a required training exercise. Any additional training that did occur happened at inconsistent intervals. However, another interpretation of this finding, in light of the effectiveness of the program, is that consistent nonphysical trainings are not necessary for program success. One reason for the mixed feelings concerning the nonphysical training might be explained by responses regarding resources. Many of the mentors indicated that the availability of outside support/resources for dealing with potential crises situations was an important element or an adequate component of the program. The security of having these outside resources was part of the reason that additional nonphysical training was not a priority or concern for many of the mentors. Evidence of this feeling about training is shown in a comment made by one mentor who said, “I don’t feel well-trained to deal with the psychological issues, but I do feel well-trained in referring.”

Challenges

Consistency. When examining a program and determining what makes it successful, it is important to understand its deficiencies. In the case of this program, the main area of concern expressed by the mentors seemed to be in connection with consistency. However, feelings about program consistency seemed to be somewhat contradictory. Contrasting feelings about consistency can be demonstrated in the
following examples: although 22 mentors thought the physical training was efficient, 10 contended that it needed to be more consistent (6 mentors stated both); program consistency was mentioned as a strength by 8 mentors, however, 9 mentors thought that more consistency was needed (4 mentors said both); even though 5 mentors stated that they liked group events, 2 of them thought they needed to happen on a more consistent basis. These observations about consistency imply that this is an area that needs to be continually monitored and maintained to ensure that it works as a program strength and not as a program shortcoming.

Expansion. The monitoring and maintenance of consistency may not be the only challenge to the sustained success of this program. Seven of the mentors and mentees indicated the desire/need for more and better mentors. In addition, 7 mentors and mentees expressed the desire for more participants in general or the desire for the program to expand. These comments hint at some potential challenges. While this program has been shown to have an immense potential for helping people, the reliance on a gym environment and the very dedicated mentors trained in physical fitness might make it more difficult to replicate or find sites to implement the program. However, the fact that the program has already been successfully replicated at a second site demonstrates that these challenges can be overcome.

The parent dilemma. The role of parents is always a tricky subject, particularly in youth programs where the parents may be part of the problem. In Friend Fitness, the parents/guardians have the not-so-small task of making sure that the mentees are on time
every week. For the most part, there are no systematic parent procedures outside of their introduction to the program and their agreement to get their child to and from the gym site. Although parents may not be central to this program's success, there are questions concerning the role of parents that may need to be investigated. For example, 3 of the mentors felt that this was a component that the program needed to better address (e.g. organized parent training); additionally, 3 others felt that that parents needed to be more involved on some level. Conversely, 6 mentors felt that the parents should not be involved because of their potentially problematic relationships with the mentees or that it would be a waste of time. The bottom line is that the extent of parent involvement could represent a challenge for this program, especially considering the mixed feelings about the solutions to this issue and disagreement on whether or not a parent issue truly exists.

This challenge becomes even more important when considering the findings of one study which included 959 adolescents involved in the Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program. This study validated the hypothesis that "improved perceptions of parental relationships... are important mediators of change in adolescents' academic outcomes and behaviors" (p. 1667). Additionally, it was noted that:

Program personnel should remain sensitive to the potential role that parental relationship's can play in mediating mentors' effects and develop ways to capitalize on this function. If parents feel involved in, as opposed to supplanted by, the provision of additional adult support in their children's lives, they are likely to reinforce mentors' positive influences (p. 1669).
Activity Settings At Work

Friend Fitness provides an ideal opportunity for examining activity settings in relation to youth intervention. The basic units of analysis for activity settings are a physical environment, time, funds, positions, people, and symbols (O'Donnell & Tharp, 1990). The physical environment component is a large part of this program. Friend Fitness takes place in a gym, and the core interactions stem from this environment. This environment works as the setting for the intervention. Time is an important component of this program and is central to the intervention. Meetings take place at the same times twice each week for at least a year, in an effort to optimize the interactions between the program participants. The program requires funds for such elements as salaries of program leaders, resources for group events and meetings, and reinforcement strategies in order to run efficiently and effectively. Positions play a large role in determining the activities, interactions, and outcomes within the setting (e.g. roles of mentors, mentees, and program leaders). Positions are also key to how the intervention is directed (e.g. mentor responsibility to mentees and vice versa). People obviously represent an important component of the program as they are central to the intervention, and the activity would not exist without them. The symbols component is particularly important because of the fundamental purpose of the interactions that occur (e.g. successfully achieving the goals of the mentoring program). All the participants must have some understanding, within the context of their positions, of how interactions will ideally affect outcomes.

Reciprocal relationships are an important part of the Friend Fitness program. Both the mentors and the mentees are very comfortable interacting in the gym environment. Through the interactions occurring within this activity setting, the mentees are assisted in
gaining positive traits, behavioral skills, and healthy social networks. These networks are exemplified in the following comment made by a mentee:

Overall I am so excited about it [the program]. It’s like somebody opened a door to a new opportunity. Each person is like a new door. So once you know a person, the door is open to numerous things on the other side.

The mentors are assisted through gaining personal satisfaction, positive personal changes, and constructive networks. The success of these reciprocal relationships can be viewed further when considering that additional positive activity settings occur as a result of the initial program environment; that is, the mentors and mentees participate in interactions with each other outside of the program, thereby initiating new activity settings.

Intersubjectivity is a very positive outcome of this activity setting and a big part of the program’s success. The participants in this program are working towards the same goals. Everyone wants positive outcomes. They participate in the activity setting to achieve these goals. Through participant’s interactions and reciprocal relationships, a high level of cooperation and productivity is made possible, thereby providing a harmonic environment conducive to affecting positive outcomes and allowing healthy networks to be generated.

Activity setting theory can be used to better understand behavior in any setting where interactions occur and the six components are present (a physical environment, time, funds, positions, people, and symbols). Activity settings have particular implications for intervention programs, because the intervention can be directed through
one or more of the six activity setting components (O'Donnell & Tharp, 1990). The Friend Fitness program demonstrates the successful directing of an intervention through multiple activity setting components. Furthermore, it provides an understanding for how interventions can be shaped to influence interactions, thereby positively affecting youth development.

One important element that should be considered when utilizing activity setting theory for intervention programs is the sociocultural environment in which the activity setting is taking place. Gallimore, Goldenberg, and Weisner (1993) define activity settings as "the point of contact between individuals and the surrounding cultural and ecological environment" (p. 556). They further stipulate, "activity settings are embedded in cultural contexts. The meaning of a particular activity to the participants is constructed from the meanings that are an intrinsic part of culture and human activity" (P. 540). Friend Fitness is a good example of the importance of understanding cultural context before directing an intervention through activity settings components. Currently, there are many cultural contexts in which a physical-fitness-based program would not be an effective intervention strategy because the physical aspect and gym environment would not supply a relevant cultural setting for the participants. In fact, historically in this country, this type of program would not have been culturally appropriate for female involvement because of gender politics and the role of women. When utilizing activity setting theory as a framework for intervention, the sociocultural environment must be carefully examined to determine the best mode of intervention.
Research and Prevention Implications

One intention of this study was to determine whether or not mentoring programs were more effective for achieving positive outcomes for males or females. This study did not definitively substantiate a gender-specific effect in mentoring outcomes. One possible explanation of this finding is that well-designed and highly-effective mentoring programs may not need to emphasize gender-sensitive constructs. Another possibility is that the lack of a gender effect could be due to the self-selection process; i.e., only those mentees that consented to be interviewed participated in this study. The absence of a gender effect could also be due to the population this program served; e.g., a gender effect may have been found in a lower income community or with different ethnic groups.

Another intention of this study was to determine the effects of mentoring within risk groups. Although the attainment of risk data was difficult in this study, and the more behaviorally problematic risk groups were only minimally represented, the findings still have implications for risk groups. Overall, the program showed significant improvements for the mentees across all risk categories, including the drug problems/peer pressure risk group. This could indicate that this type of mentoring program may be an effective strategy for promoting positive outcomes in youth at multiple levels and categories of risk. Because the mentees in this sample were not living in under-resourced or impoverished communities, the findings are in contrast to the literature which has indicated that mentoring programs potentially offer the best benefits for youth who have experienced conditions of environmental risk and disadvantage (Dubois et al., 2002). Additionally, this study did not find significant differences between risk categories and gender, which could be interpreted as adding support to the literature indicating that
gender differences are not important to risks (Jung & Rawana, 1999; Simourd & Andrews, 1994).

An important aspect of this study was the in-depth analysis of the ingredients that make a program successful. Effective mentoring takes an enormous amount of time, energy, and commitment. Multiple mechanisms must function well to promote positive outcomes in the mentoring environment. Friend Fitness has all of the necessary ingredients for success including leadership, committed mentors, nurturing environment, optimal contact between mentors and mentees, sound program principles, longevity, and a solid training structure and mentor support system. Without all these components in place, it is difficult to imagine a program, especially one as intensive as this, functioning effectively.

One component, which is important to emphasize, is the unusual amount of contact between the mentors and mentees. The biweekly workout/meeting structure guarantees contact twice a week. This amount of contact is not the norm for mentoring programs. For instance, the Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program requires only bimonthly contact between mentors and mentees (although weekly contact is preferred). The biweekly meeting structure is not necessarily the only contact between the mentors and mentees. A number of them met for social or other informal purposes in addition to the weekly workouts. This contact frequency is important because, as cited in the words of one mentor, “the fact that it does meet twice a week, you have constant interaction with the kids. So, you know, if they had a bad day one day, you can catch them before they make it a bad week.” In other words, the constant contact minimizes any tendencies to veer away from the positive goal-oriented principles promoted by the program. It also
has implications for accelerating the relationship-building process between mentor and mentee, which is critical for facilitating positive changes. These findings enhance support for research which has indicated the importance of contact between mentors and mentees.

The contact structure in this program has additional implications for relationship-building and bonding between mentors and mentees. The program design is not as simple as sole contact between one mentor and one mentee. For instance, if a mentor is absent, another mentor will take over the mentee workout for the duration of the absence. This guarantees that mentees will have a mentor each time they work out in the program, and it also enables relationships to be formed with other mentors. Additionally, the program promotes an environment in which the mentees are constantly receiving reinforcement and positive stimulation from the other participants. This promotes bonding and relationship-building on both individual and program levels. Indications of this could be seen in the many mentee comments about their positive experiences in the program, which were full of statements containing recognition of multiple people in the program (e.g., “the mentors,” “everybody,” “everyone,” “the people in the program”) as opposed to simply one person (e.g., “my mentor”). This in no way minimizes the importance of the bonding process between individual mentors and their mentees. Instead, this bonding pattern may serve as additional support for both enhancing the mentor/mentee relationship and promoting positive changes. Moreover, the fact that 45% of the mentees in this study had been paired on a regular basis with more than one mentor during their mentoring experience could be construed as support for the positive effect of these bonding patterns.

In terms of youth intervention/prevention program planning, this study has
implications for gaining further understanding of the diverse nature of mentoring. This program implements mentoring utilizing a unique setting and method, thereby applying relationship-building and facilitation of positive changes techniques through means of distinctive and effective principles. The application of physical fitness to relationship-building and subsequent success is not a common mode of mentoring methodology. Friend Fitness demonstrates a distinctive and effective mentoring method which could perhaps be expanded to help larger numbers of youth.

Finally, activity setting theory provides numerous intervention venues for positively affecting the behaviors and social networks of youth. This study supports activity setting theory and provides an example for understanding how activity settings can influence interactions and affect positive outcomes in youth, thereby providing a clear indication that mentoring programs can be ideal activity settings for directing interventions.

Limitations

One of the most apparent limitations of this study was the disproportionate gender representation. There were approximately twice as many male participants as female. An equal number of both males and females would have made any inferences about gender variations much stronger and should be considered when planning future research.

The fact that I was unable to interview everyone in the program, and that consequently my observations were based on a sample, could indicate that my data does not adequately reflect the program participants. This problem is highlighted when considering the need for signed parental consent forms prior to interviewing mentees. It is
possible that the parents of the more prosocial youth were more likely to sign parental consents than the parents of youth at-risk for serious behavior problems. Therefore, the mentee participants resulted in a sample of youth who displayed lower levels of risk.

Due to several reasons (reliance on third party information, lack of information on the type of data available, delays in receiving data), I was only able to obtain GPA and unexcused absence data on 13 mentee participants. This limited amount of quantitative data makes assumptions based exclusively on these findings extremely difficult. The problem is further exacerbated by the lack of baseline data. Future studies looking at quantitative improvement should ensure that the quantitative sample base is sufficient in size and that a solid baseline is established.

The homogeneity of the mentee participants could also be seen as a limitation. There was very little variation in socioeconomic status or ethnicity. Therefore, the study results are not generalizable to groups other than those composed of a primarily Caucasian, middle/upper-class population. The homogeneity also limited the type of risk data that was available, and it could be partially responsible for the mentees' reluctance to discuss their personal lives. These kids did not necessarily live in environments that encouraged discussing private issues with a complete stranger. In the past, I have had much more success drawing out personal information when talking with more at-risk populations such as incarcerated juvenile delinquents. This might be because the incarcerated delinquents did not perceive they had anything to lose, whereas the Friend Fitness group may have felt just the opposite.

The length of the interviews, particularly with the mentees, could also be construed as a project limitation. I may have had more success obtaining personal data
from the mentees if I had more time to talk with them and if I had been able to arrange multiple interviews.

There is also the potential that the interview itself may have produced data that is not completely reliable. There is always a fear in collecting qualitative interview data that the stories being told by participants can be embellished, tainted or inaccurate. I did not see evidence of this with the study population, but it remains a concern in this type of data collection strategy. There is also a potential for the interviewer to affect the data both during the interviewing process and while interpreting during the analysis process.

Although precautions were taken in this study to avoid either of these complications (e.g. semi-structured interviews to elicit information, avoiding leading questions, and the use of a qualitative analysis program when analyzing the interview data), these elements remain a potential limitation.

Chapter 4 Summary

The study found a number of indications supporting the successful nature of the Friend Fitness mentoring program. Results supporting program effectiveness included the perceived positive changes indicated by the mentees and the grades and absences data. There were a number of reasons why this program was successful, including the program environment, leadership, mentors, the use of goal setting and reinforcement, the frequency of program meetings, mentor training, and program resources. There were also a few challenges presented including consistency, expansion, and the role of parents.

There were a number of research and prevention implications, which included the following: gender and risk may not be important variables for this population and type of
mentoring program; successful mentoring programs require multiple mechanisms that function well for successful outcomes to occur; the amount of contact between mentors and mentees is an important variable; a multi-level mentoring environment (i.e., mentoring dyads surrounded by a larger supportive group) can act as a powerful tool for program success; and mentoring programs can be ideal activity settings for directing interventions. There were also a number of limitations indicated, which include: the disproportionate gender representation, the study was based on a sample, the limited amount of quantitative data, the homogeneity of the mentee participants, the length of the interviews, and the nature of qualitative research.
Afterward

As I mentioned in the preface to this study, my involvement with Friend Fitness was unexpected, because it was not the original mentoring program I planned to explore. However, Friend Fitness was an excellent substitute. It is a one-on-one mentoring program which targets at-risk youth, uses contingent reinforcement, and utilizes a unique physical fitness aspect which made this study especially interesting for me. Because of the debacle with my original intended mentoring project, my primary concern when I started interviewing Friend Fitness mentors and mentees was whether or not they were actually meeting one another!

My initial reception by the program leaders was somewhat cautious, due to my outsider status. My presence was a result of association with people responsible for the grant, not the program leaders. However, the response from the program leaders began to change dramatically when the implications of this study became clearer. Prior to this study, there had never been a systematic evaluation conducted on the effectiveness of this program. As I began to gather interview data, and a picture began to form of the very positive outcomes this study might reveal, it became clear to the program leaders that the results of this study could potentially be very valuable for Friend Fitness.

Ultimately, it is expected that the information contained in this study will be very useful for the program in several ways. I have already presented some of my findings in talks to the program mentors who, for the most part, felt that it was valuable information to have. Several of them told me that they had not known if, or how much, they had been making a difference in the lives of the mentees, and that my findings helped to reinforce...
their confidence that positive outcomes were occurring.

There have also been a number of adjustments made to the program, partly as a result of my findings. These changes have focused primarily on reinforcing consistency in some of the areas addressed by my study (e.g., goal setting, group meetings, physical trainings). Additionally, I have been asked to give verbal presentations of my findings about this program to board members and potential fund donors as part of an effort to expand the program.

The support that I have been able to offer this program through my findings has been immensely gratifying for me. The people associated with it, both the leaders and mentors, are an amazingly dedicated and dynamic group. I feel that this is an extremely unique and innovative program, one that has much possibility for helping young people reach their potentials. I hope that my research assists in the expansion of this enterprise and allows more youth to grow physically, mentally and emotionally through this exceptional mentoring program. I also hope that more mentor/mentee programs will be designed which incorporate and expand upon the effective methodology developed by the Friend Fitness program.
Appendix A: Sample Workout Instructions

SuperStart Work-Out

CARDIOVASCULAR
  Students usually ride the exercise bicycles at this time until it is their turn for a SuperStart work-out. This time can be used for mentors to check the training charts and paperwork of the youth. Also this is a good time for matching students to mentors. It is extremely important that before any stretch you warm up.

Bike
  1. Sit on the stationary bike and begin peddling fast.
  2. Press the START button.
  3. This will highlight the screen and then you can enter such variables as time, program level (from easy to difficult), etc.
This exercise works the Hamstrings and Quadriceps muscles.
Usually a good length of time to ride the bikes is between 10 and 15 minutes, depending on the amount of time given,

Treadmill
  1. Stand on both edges of the treadmill (Make sure not to stand in the middle of the treadmill while selecting a program).
  2. Select START and enter which type of exercise you want.
  3. Enter weight and amount of time to run or walk on treadmill.
  4. Start by standing in the middle of the treadmill and begin exercising.

Running is an excellent cardiovascular work-out. Sometimes the mentors go for runs with the students. It is highly recommended that runners go in large groups and run in a safe area. This usually consists of a 20 to 30-minute run and is a great way to get to know one another.

STRETCHING
  Another important aspect of the Friend Fitness Program is stretching. Warm-up: Stretch for 10 minutes holding each stretch for at least 30 seconds. (Holding for a shorter time will provide little benefit). If the students follow this routine their muscles will be warm enough and ready for the appropriate exercises. This is very important in reducing the chance for injuries. Other ways to warm up are to ride a stationary bike or walk on a treadmill for 5-10 minutes. A light jog will also produce the same affect.
  If time is a factor then simply warm-up for 5-8 minutes using the bike or treadmill. This is a good time for mentors to look at report cards, work-out cards and feedback forms, This time can also be used for mentors to talk with the youth about school, family and other issues. Moreover, students might not feel comfortable talking to others about these issues. We feel that in a healthy environment and in a one-on-one relationship mentors and
students can develop strong relationships, which is one of the goals of the Friend Fitness Program.

It is extremely important that before any exercise you stretch. Two types of stretching are: kinetic flexibility and static flexibility. Kinetic flexibility is the ability to perform dynamic movements of the muscles to bring a limb through its full range of motion in the joints. Static flexibility is the ability to assume and maintain extended positions using only the tension of the agonists and synergists while the antagonists are being stretched. For example, lifting the leg and keeping it high without any external support (other than from your own leg muscles).

When muscles cause a limb to move through the joint's range of motion, they usually act in the following cooperating groups: agonists, antagonists and synergists. 

**Agonists**- These muscles cause the movement to occur. They create the normal range of movement in a joint by contracting. Agonists are also referred to as prime movers since they are the muscles that are primarily responsible for generating the movement.

**Antagonists**- These muscles act in opposition to the movement generated by the agonists and are responsible for returning a limb to its initial position.

**Synergists**- These muscles perform, or assist in performing, the same set of joint motion as the agonists. Synergists are sometimes referred to as neutralizers because they help cancel out, or neutralize, extra motion from the agonists to make sure that the force generated works within the desired plane of motion.

Here are some stretching tips:

- Avoid bouncing, jumping or quick movements which will increase muscle tightness and the chance for injury.
- In each position you should have a "tight" but comfortable stretching sensation.
- Achieve each position slowly and gently.
- If you feel sharp pain you have gone beyond your limits and need to ease off.

Below you will find a list of each stretch and how to properly perform them. Some of the stretching exercises may include but are not limited to the following:

1. **Hamstring stretch**
   A. In a standing position with feet shoulder width apart and knees slightly flexed have your toes pointing straight ahead.
   B. Bend forward at the hips and let your arms relax down as far as comfortably possible.
   C. You should feel a stretching sensation in the hamstring calf and lower back areas.

2. **Quadriceps stretch**
   A. Using one arm and one leg for balance pull the other leg up and back while grabbing the front of the ankle.
   B. Pull heel up toward buttocks until reaching a good stretching sensation.
   C. If desired stretch is not felt, continue to pull ankle higher.
3. Neck stretch-
A. To properly stretch your neck, slowly roll your neck in a circular position several times.
B. A rotational eight count is recommended.
C. Next, place both hands in front of the forehead and use them to force your head back while pushing your head forward to counter the force.
D. Then, take your right arm and place it on your left side of the head and slowly pull towards the right for a comfortable stretch.
E. Place left hand on right side of the head and slowly pull towards the left side of the body.
F. Place both hands at the back of the head and push forward until chin is an inch from chest.

4. Side stretch -
A. Place feet slightly wider than shoulder width, bend the knees, and extend one arm up and over your head while the opposite arm is outstretched down toward the ankle.
B. Slowly bend at the waist and reach further down until feeling a good stretch in the side, rear shoulder and back.

5. Shoulder stretch-
A. With arms overhead, gently pull the elbow behind your head with the opposite hand.
B. Hold when you reach a comfortable stretch in the rear shoulder and upper back.

6. Deltoid stretch-
A. Interlock hands above your head and reach for the sky with palms turned upward.
B. This will stretch the shoulder, chest, back, upper arm and forearm.

7. Trunk twist-
A. In a seated position on the floor, keep the left leg straight with right arm behind for support, cross right leg over and place foot outside of left knee.
B. With the left arm (or elbow) across the left knee slowly turn your head as to look over your right shoulder while simultaneously pulling the knee the opposite direction.
C. Then perform this exercise using the opposite leg.
D. You will feel pressure in the hip, side and upper back.

8. Calf stretch-
A. In sitting position on the floor, with legs straight, knees locked-out and ankles flexed, bend forward from the hips and reach out toward the toes until finding "your" stretch position and hold.
B. You don't have to touch your feet to reach a good stretch.
C. You can also do this in a standing position simply by bending at the hips and keeping your knees locked-out.

9. Groin stretch-
A. In sitting position on the floor, put soles of feet together and grab the ends of the shoes.
B. Greatly pull heels in toward groin area.
C. Lean upper body slowly forward until a good stretch is felt.
D. You can also place elbows inside of knees and gently force knees downward.
After you are finished stretching, the following exercises are recommended for students to perform with a 10-up and 10-down count on all manual resistance repetitions. Also it is recommended to use an 8 positive count, 4 negative count on all of the machines. Most mentors use the eight count method for these repetitions or until their muscles fatigue. Each exercise is labeled with the appropriate counts per repetition in this manual. A count is very important and needs to be stressed by the mentor. If a mentor sees a student using a jerking movement he or she needs to repeat that repetition. In addition, mentors need to remember to apply the appropriate amount of resistance to the youth being trained and keep focused on hi-intensity slow movements.

An appropriate amount of resistance will allow the student to move for an 8 count while producing a maximum effort. A positive repetition is when you are pushing the weight away from your body while a negative repetition is when you lower the weight towards resting position. For example, when using the bench press at the initial lift you are in a positive repetition. When you resist the weight coming back down you are in a negative repetition. Note: this is not true for the lateral pulldown and leg curl exercises. For these two exercises, the positive repetition is when you pull the weight toward your body, while the negative repetition is when you resist the weight away from your body.

It is extremely important to have an even movement at all times during the exercise! Keep it smooth! The exercises are numbered for your convenience in performing the work-out. If a machine is already taken, then proceed to the next machine or manual exercise then come back to that machine or manual exercise later. Please note that machines which have seat belts need to be adjusted and then properly used.

Below you will find the order of each exercise and how to properly perform them. Make sure the mentor stresses the importance of proper form when sitting/standing at a machine and proper alignment which can be crucial in these work-out sessions. Please remember that these easy to follow steps will allow for maximum work-out gains. Make sure the students breathe during the exercises. One suggestion is to inhale for positive repetitions and exhale for negative repetitions. The reasoning behind this is because your muscles need oxygen to perform efficiently and proper breathing is very important.

**Note: The goal on all exercises is 90 seconds of exercise or 6 repetitions!**

**LOWER BODY REGION EXERCISES**

1. **Leg Press**

   Repetitions: (6) A repetition is based on the amount of effort a student can perform for each exercise. Some students might have just moved up a weight and may not be able to reach 5 or 6 repetitions yet. Others are about to move up to the next weight because they can do 6 or 7 repetitions. This is why I included several repetitions for these exercises. Note: if a student can't do more than 3 repetitions they may need to go down a weight to get a good work-out.

   Count per rep: Consist of eight to ten positive counts and 4 negative counts.

   Form:
   1. In a seated position, adjust seat so that knees are at a 90 degree angle and as close to the chest as possible.
   2. Place feet flat on platform.
   3. Keep back on the mat and buttox on seat.
4. Hold on to the hand-grip supports and begin by extending the legs. Student needs to help with lift-off by pushing feet forward.
5. Make sure not to lock-out your legs because this can add unnecessary stress to the joints.
6. Slowly lower the weight to a good bent-knee position and press the weight back to the original position. Weights should not touch stack on way back, but be very close.
7. Keep feet on the platform at all times.
8. Avoid bouncing weight off rubber stoppers to avoid creating outward momentum. This exercise works the Quadriceps, hamstrings, and gluteus maximus muscles.
A good bent-knee position is held at a 90 degree angle. Try to avoid bouncing as this produces tremendous and potentially damaging stress on the knee joint as well as momentum.

2. **Leg Extension**
Repetitions: (6) very slow
Count per rep: 8-10 counts positive, 8-10 counts negative
Form:
1. In a seated position, adjust seat so that knees are at a 90 degree angle.
2. Keep back on mat, buttox on seat and head back.
3. Hold on to the hand-grip supports and start with the legs extended.
4. The mentor should put pressure on the bar while the student extends legs out to the top.
5. Make sure not to lock-out your legs because this can add unnecessary stress to the knee joint. This exercise works the Quadriceps and hamstring muscles.

3. **Leg Curl**
Repetitions: (6)
Count per rep: 10 counts positive, 10 counts negative
Form:
1. In a seated position, adjust seat so that legs fit comfortably behind the shin pads.
2. Use lever to help put legs in the machine.
3. Keep back on mat and buttox on seat.
4. Curl your feet towards your butt and then lower them back to starting position. This exercise works the hamstring muscles.

4. **Abductors**
Repetitions: (6)
Count per rep: 8 counts positive, 8 counts negative
Form:
1. Use mat instead of a bench.
2. While the student lays on his or her side, the mentor places his or her hand against the student's knee and pushes down on the top leg while the student resists the force moving upward.
3. The student needs to have his/her knees bent at a 45 degree angle during the exercise and the knees should be close to the chest.
4. The positive repetition requires the mentor to do more work with manual resistance, but the negative repetition is where the student's resistance to close his/her knees occurs.
5. The positive repetition involves the student pushing legs apart and up while the negative repetition involves more resistance by the student to keep legs from closing.
6. Switch sides and repeat #2 and #3.
This exercise works the sartorius muscles.

5. Ball Squat
Repetitions: (3 - 6)
Count per rep: Down for 10 seconds, hold for 10 seconds and up in 10 seconds.
Form:
1. Place exercise ball between your lower back and a wall.
2. Slowly lower your posture to a seated position (knees at 90 degrees), this should take 10 seconds with feet shoulder width apart. Let butt roll slightly under the ball. Make sure you are never completely standing.
3. Hold this squat position for 10 seconds, then slowly stand in a 10 second count. Repeat!
4. If done properly, this exercise should not require the student to hold any additional weights. To increase the intensity of the movement, students should extend the length of time spent in the squat position. This exercise works the Quadriceps, hamstrings, gluteus maximus and minimus muscles.

UPPER BODY REGION EXERCISES

1. Pulldown
Repetitions: (6)
Count per rep: 8 counts positive, 4 counts negative
Form:
1. In a seated position, with arms extended in a wide palms facing student or up, grab the bar with both hands and slowly lower the bar to your chest.
2. Pause.
3. Maintain a straight back with an upright posture.
4. Slowly return to the starting position and repeat. This exercise works the latissimus dorsi and biceps.

2. Pullover
Repetitions: (6)
Count per rep: 8 counts positive, 4 counts negative
Form:
1. Squeeze the seat adjust lever to sit with your shoulders in line with the machine axis of rotation (red dot).
2. Secure the seat belt and press the foot lever to position the movement pads.
3. Place your arms on the movement pads.4. Grip the crossbar lightly, release the foot lever, and stretch your arms upward as far as comfortable.
5. Have back straight on pad.
6. Pull your arms downward until the crossbar touches the midsection, leaning forward slightly. This is performed to create a tight abdominal sensation.
7. Keep head back!
8. Do not grip the crossbar with your hands; use elbows to push.
9. Pause in the position of full muscle contraction (squeezing your muscles) and return slowly to the starting position.
This exercise works the teres major, pectoralis major and minor, rectus abdominis, triceps and rear deltoid muscles.

3. Flys
Repetitions: (6)
Count per rep: 8 counts positive, 8 counts negative
Form:
1. Lay on bench and place inner forearms under pad.
2. The mentor will stand in front of the machine and put pressure on the bars while the student brings the bars together by squeezing arms together, in front of chest.
3. Slowly bring arms back to sides and repeat. Use full range of motion.
4. Keep back flat on pad.
This exercise works the pectoralis major and minor.

4. Rear Deltoids
Repetitions: (6)
Count per rep: 10 counts positive, 10 counts negative
Form:
1. Lay on a bench with stomach facing down.
2. Place elbows on pads.
3. The mentor stands in front of the machine and puts pressure on both bars while the student pushes his or her shoulders up and back. This exercise works the deltoid muscles.

5. Front Deltoids (Manual resistance)
Repetitions: (6)
Count per rep: 10 counts positive, 10 counts negative
Form:
1. Stand in front of the student.
2. Student sits on a bench with arms straight out in front of him or her.
3. The student will bend his or her arms at the elbow and bring his or her arms up to chin level.
4. The mentor will place pressure on top of the arms while the student resists the force by lowering his/her arms. This exercise works the deltoid muscles.

6. Side Deltoids (Manual resistance)
Repetitions: (6)
Count per rep: 10 counts positive, 10 counts negative
Form:
1. Stand behind the student.
2. Have the student sit on a bench with arms straight out to his or her side.
3. The mentor will place pressure on top of the arms while the student slowly raises and lowers his/her arms to the side.
4. In the positive repetition the student will try to bring both arms to a perpendicular angle with his/her body while the mentor applies resistance.
5. In a smooth transition, the mentor pushes down on the students' arms trying to take them down to the students' side.
This exercise works the deltoid muscles.

7. L-Seats
Repetitions: (6)
Count per rep: 8 counts positive, 4 counts negative
Form:
1. Place arms behind back and on a bench.
2. Have feet extended on the floor but where the buttocks does not touch the floor.
3. Perform sitting motion in which your arms lower to form an "L" shape, but do not touch the floor with your butt,
   This exercise works the triceps muscles.

8. Triceps
Repetitions: (6)
Count per rep: 8 counts positive, 8 counts negative
Form:
1. Student lies on back while mentor stands over him/her applies pressure to the wrists.
2. The student will place their elbows between the knees of the mentor and push up while the mentor forces the student's hands down. This exercise works the triceps muscles.

9. Neck
Repetitions: (6)
Count per rep: 10 counts positive, 10 counts negative
Form:
Note: Be very careful with this exercise because you do not want to stretch the neck further than it's limits. Use extreme caution when performing this exercise.
1. This exercise is mainly used with males who are involved in high school athletics, but females may perform this exercise too.
   (Males mainly use this exercise for wrestling and football to prevent neck injuries).
2. Have the student lie on his/her back on a bench while mentor places hands on forehead and
3. The student pushes upward while mentor gives resistance.
4. Then, student lies on stomach while the mentor performs manual resistance. This exercise works the sternocleidomastoid muscles.

10. Abdominals
Repetitions: As many as possible in one minute or hold at a 45 degree angle for 1-2 minutes.
Count per rep: 1 count up, 1 count down or hold at 45 degree angle.
Form:
1. (a) With feet at the top of incline mat do as many sit-ups as you can. Or (b) With feet at the top of the mat hold at a 45 degree angle.
2. A mentor may choose to add resistance by putting pressure on the student's shoulders. This exercise works the rectus abdominis muscles.

11. Lateral Chest Press
Repetitions: (6)
Count per rep: 8 counts positive, 8 counts negative
Form:
1. Adjust seat until handles are at chest level.
2. Grasp handle press moving arms forward.
3. Keep back flat and do not arch your back.
This exercise works the pectoralis major, deltoids and triceps muscles.

12. Rows
Repetitions: (6)
Count per rep: 8 counts positive, 4 counts negative
Form:
1. Mentor stands behind student.
2. Mentor pushes bar towards student.
3. Student grabs crossbars and pulls them closer to the body.
4. Then slowly lowers bars away from the body.
5. Do not straighten arms all the way.
This exercise works the latissimus dorsi, trapezius and erector muscles.

13. Seated Dip
Repetitions: (6)
Count per rep: 8 counts positive, 4 counts negative
Form:
1. In a seated position, place yourself where your arms are bent (45 degrees).
2. Adjust seat so that you grip both bars.
3. Slowly push down on the bars.
4. Make sure you do not lock-out your elbows because this can add unnecessary stress to the elbow joint. Slowly resist the weight coming back up. This exercise works the triceps muscles.

14. Biceps (Arm Curl machine)
Repetitions: (6)
Count per rep: 10 counts positive, 10 counts negative
Form:
1. In the seated position, rest the upper arms on the incline curling pad.
2. Position seat such that the arm and shoulder area is resting at the top of the preacher pad.
3. From standing position bend forward grasping arm curl bar.
4. Move into seated position.
5. Starting in the bottom position, grip the bar and pull it up to your chin.
6. Then slowly lower the bar to full-arm extension (arms should not lock-out).
7. On the last repetition make sure the student contracts the biceps muscle. This is a good way to stabilize the muscle.
The smoother you perform this exercise the better your muscle gain. Also, this exercise helps with the pulldown machine.
This exercise works the biceps brachii muscles.
OTHER EXERCISES
These are exercises that mentors can use to give the student an overall work-out. If time is a factor, these exercises may be considered optional.

1. Push-Ups
Repetitions: (6 - 10)
Count per rep: 4 counts down, 8 counts up
Form:
1. Mentor stands over student and uses manual resistance by applying pressure on the shoulder blades. This is done to prevent spinal injury.
2. Student performs a very slow push-up.
3. Student slowly lowers himself to the ground (barely touching) and repeats the push-up.
This exercise works the pectoralis major and minor muscles.

2. Flexors
Repetitions: 3
Count per rep: 10 counts positive, 10 counts negative
Form:
1. Place back on inclined abdominal mat and have student hold bar above his or her head.
2. The mentor puts pressure on the student's legs while the student attempts sit-ups.
3. The student will attempt sit-ups from this position.
4. Then turn the opposite way with feet at the top of the mat while the mentor puts pressure on the student's shoulders.
5. This is done for 60 seconds!
This exercise works the abdominal muscles.

STRETCHING
Warm-down: This is very important because of the lactic acid build up in your muscles. Lactic acid is a by-product from exercise and can make people tired. One way to reduce this fatigue is to stretch for 10 minutes holding each stretch for at least 30 seconds. Stretching will also reduce soreness. Again, this is a great time for mentors to talk with the youth about school, family and other issues. Use the stretches available on pages 2 and 3 for warm downs!

Overall Effort
Here are some guidelines a mentor might want to give a student.
* Ask "How was your day?" This can go a long way.
* Give 100% during every work-out!
* Always be positive with the students, Always!
* Smile and have fun during the work-outs!
* As far as "pushing" a kid to work harder, it's often beneficial to sometimes say, "I think you can do one more repetition" or "Can you try and give me one more repetition?" rather than saying "You have to do one more repetition", etc. The reason why we say this is because it gives the student a choice rather than having them be told what to do, which is often the case at home or school. Giving each student a choice increases self-esteem and
let's them know they can accomplish things that others might not have expected of them.

*Similarly, research shows that in high intensity exercise programs, the motivation of a person increases compared to someone who exercises at a lower intensity. (Bell, University of Alberta)

**Modifications and FAQ's (frequently asked questions) for new sites**

**Time of each session.**
Suppose you only have 20 minutes to do a work-out. What exercises are the most important? Large muscles such as the pectoralis major, quadriceps and hamstrings are important groups to key on when time is limited. These are very important for strength gains and we suggest that you use such exercises as the: leg press, dips, chest press, pullover, pulldown, flyes and ball squat. What if these machines are not available at another site? Many gyms offer different types of equipment such as Nautilus, free weights, StairMasters, Treadmills, Step Machines and dumbbells. You may be able to modify the work-out to that certain type of equipment. Also, use the charts on the side of machines to help you with the work-out.

**Size of facility**
The size of the gym or club will have a considerable affect on the amount of students and mentors brought into the program. This will also affect the time span allocated for the SuperStart work-outs. It was also suggested to choose a meeting time which wasn't as busy. Usually early mornings or early evenings are good indicators to hold work-out sessions.

**What is an ideal beginner weight? How do you choose a weight?**
We suggest that you use half the kids body weight in the beginning. If the exercise is easy, then you can add more weight. An ideal lifting weight is if a kid can push his own body weight. "This comes from learned toughness", as Bruce Heim says, founder of Friend Fitness Program in 1995. Also, it is important that a youth feels good about their performance and self after the first work-out. The first work-out is very demanding to a new student and we tend to use lighter weights during the initial work-out.

**RESOURCES**
Strength Training Manual by Mr. Carl Poff Stretching
Flexibility Index by Brad Appleton
SuperSlow web site: http://www.superslow.coni
Appendix B: Motivational Techniques and Workout Pattern

MOTIVATIONAL TECHNIQUES

At the intake interview, we stress two requirements for the child to be successful in our program:

1. Attend regularly - Make a commitment to the program
2. Give 100% effort at each workout. Allowing the child to give less than 100% is not acceptable because it confirms to the child that one can get away with not giving their best effort.

Building Trust While Encouraging Effort

In the beginning, we ask that only these two goals be set for the child. It is important to build trust with the child before we ask them to set any other goals. Focusing on these goals for the first two months is the foundation for our work with the child. The first eight weeks of the program are vital for building trust and motivating the child. The child is given room to feel us out. Does he believe in us? This takes time and we will not capture the child and get his/her true commitment until the child believes and trusts their mentor. While giving the child room to make this evaluation, the mentor must focus on the commitment and the effort.

Starting out, most children/people cannot perform 6 repetitions for 90 seconds at maximum effort. Instead of doing the 6 reps for 90 seconds at less than maximum effort, we establish that we will try fewer repetitions at maximum effort, with the eventual goal of achieving the desired number of repetitions (6).

We want to stress to the child that effort is the measure of success, not weight or anything else. Our goal is not to perform a set number of repetitions, but it is to work the muscle at maximum effort with the desired goal being muscle failure. It just so happens that 6 reps/90 sec is the typical period in which this is accomplished. Children sometimes feel as if they are not doing well because they only did 4 or 5 reps due to muscle failure. It must be stressed that this is a good thing.

Strength training is the only arena in which (muscle) FAILURE = SUCCESS.

Motivational Techniques

It is easier to point out what DOES NOT work in motivating a child to work out harder than it is to list what DOES work. The following techniques DO NOT work:

- Yelling at a child to try harder.
- Belittling a child because they did not try hard
- Comparing the child's effort to self or others
- Becoming mad or emotional with a child because of the lack of effort.

The most effective motivational technique is good leadership skills exhibited by the mentor. These skills are:

- Teaching the child how to lift properly
- Accurate record keeping to record progress
- Encourage the child while working out
- Praise the child when he/she has truly worked hard. Failure to do so leaves the child confused about his performance. Get excited with a child when he/she gives
100%. He has put everything on the line and has given you exactly what has been asked of him.

While it is important to praise the child for a good effort, do not feel compelled to give him feedback after every exercise. Great efforts deserve praise and enthusiasm. Does this mean that less than a best effort requires criticism or some other form of feedback? NO. Never criticize the effort of the child. It is ok not to give feedback after every exercise. The child may ask you your thoughts. A good response is to ask him how he thought he performed. They will typically give you an honest answer. Simply acknowledge their answer and proceed. Honesty is important. If they ask for your feedback, be honest. They will know if you are not.

The child knows that we are looking for the maximum effort on each exercise at each and every workout. As a mentor, you must be realistic. The child is incapable of this.

**Children May Pretend to Give Full Effort**

Children will not always try their hardest. When they "get away" with not trying hard, they tend to display this behavior more frequently. Therefore, paying careful attention when a child lifts is critical in the motivational process. Children learn how to "fake out" their mentors by making faces, squirming, and making pained noises. How does one know that the child is not trying hard when the above behaviors are displayed?

- Keep good records of lifts so comparisons can be made with recent performances (leg press for the lower body and pull downs for the upper body are great baselines for measuring effort). If a child is attending the workout sessions regularly, they should never go backwards. If they do, they are not trying.
- As the exercise progresses, the muscle tires, so with each repetition the lifter who is trying hard is progressively becoming weaker. If he is not, the he is not trying hard. One time-tested technique to determine if they are giving full effort is telling the child that if they not successfully resist on the last repetition for 10 seconds they must do another repetition. If suddenly they are stronger on this repetition than the last, they are not giving their best effort.
- Failure, the inability to move resistance, comes dramatically. There is not a linear decline in strength. The strength is suddenly eroded after a gradual but inexorable loss of strength. Failure does not come until at least 60 seconds of exercise. Any sooner, the child is faking. Be careful not to judge failure as a lack of trying.
- If a child is giving maximum effort you must continually remind them to breathe. When one strains, he tends to hold his breath. If you never have to remind your child to breathe, they probably are not trying as hard as they can. For children who have been lifting for several years, this will not be a good indicator, because with practice they will know to focus on breathing.
- There is discomfort associated with maximum effort. There is a primal force that pushes the child not to incur pain. It does take time to lead a child through the process. There is not progress in every lift. You should expect a younger child to take up to a year to become a "100 percenter" in effort.
When there are periods when your child is not giving full effort, talk to the child about why this may be happening. There be some emotional, social, or familial issues that many need to be resolved.

Hard work creates discomfort. The child must learn to distinguish muscle fatigue pain from injury pain. Always trust your child when he says he has injury pain. Stop the exercise and investigate the injury.

**The following are useful phrases/concepts to encourage the child during a workout:**

- You can do two of anything so don't quit now.
- Most people quit at this point because it hurts and you're not quitting. I am proud of you.
- This exercise develops the largest muscle in your body, the most important muscle used in playing (soccer). Make this stronger and you be a better (soccer) player.
- It's the last minute of the State championships. It you try hard this next minute, you win.
- If you could do only four exercises to improve your figure, this would be one of them. Try hard on this exercise and you will soon have better posture.
- After completing an exercise say: "You are standing straighter, your buns are firmer, your legs have more definition, your guns have grown".
- If you try hard on this last repetition, I will award you 5 seconds of poise time.
- I think you have progressed in your effort to the point you're ready to run with the big dogs. Let's get off the porch, stop barking and go for it! Your dog can hunt. (This makes them sound like they've arrived)
- Your effort is at the highest level. You have come a long way. I am proud of you.
- By the way, I expect nothing less than 100% from you for now on.
- Normally this last repetition we down on a count of 10, let's see how long you can fight this. Wow! What a great effort!
- On the pull downs you did 80lbs. a side last time for 7 reps. Normally, I'd increase the weight to 85lbs. But I have this deep feeling you can go 100lbs more. What do you think? (They almost always say yes, partly because they don't want to let the mentor down)
- I see you have mad progress in the pull down. This means you are becoming stronger. You are trying hard but not as hard as you can. You go to the next level in effort, you will soon be at the next level in strength.

**Establish a Beginning and End to Each Workout**

Our methodology is intimidating to most people. Particularly to those just starting out. The first thoughts people have are: How uncomfortable is it going to be; and Can I survive the entire workout.

Most people hold back with the idea that they must save some energy to get through the entire workout. This primarily happens because they don't know what to expect from the workout. Children especially have a difficult time with this because we tend to lose their attention.
Establish the workout prior to the beginning. Clearly explain to the child what exercises he or she is going to perform in what order. This allows the child to focus more clearly on the task at hand.

If you are having a hard time keeping a child's attention, or getting maximum effort from the child, it is best to modify the workout and ask the child for their best effort on fewer exercises than it is to go through the motions. The child typically responds favorably to this and now you have something to build on for the next workout. This is not falling prey to the perceived wishes of the child, rather it is giving the child a goal in which they can readily focus and achieve a greater level of success.

**Never be Afraid to Walk Before You Run**

As mentors, we have been trained to put the most experienced of people through this very intense exercise. Do not be afraid to start slower, particularly with younger students and build upon their small successes. You will readily see quicker results than by expecting too much too soon.

**Take Time to Listen to the Child**

Before the start of any workout, take a few minutes to check in with your student. By knowing their state of mind that particular day, you can plan your workout accordingly. Set the student up for success. If the student is having an off day, plan the workout to achieve greatest success. This does not necessarily mean that because they are angry about something that you ease up on them. It may in fact, be the contrary. You be the judge. Being in touch with your student will allow you to establish more successful workouts.
FRIEND FITNESS: WORKOUT PATTERN

To build relationship as well as to promote an effective workout, the statements of the facilitating mentor throughout the workout should be *multidimensional*, rather than unidimensional, and should include as many of the components listed below as possible.

*The mix will change as the relationship builds and as familiarity with the workout increases,* with the early mix weighted towards those elements at the top of the page and the later mix including more broad philosophical statements.

**Statements of empathy/understanding**
- "This is the most difficult part of the exercise."
- "I know it's really starting to hurt right about now."
- "This is a really small muscle group, so I know you're really feeling this."
- "This side already feels some fatigue from working the opposite leg."

**Statements of direction/focus**
- "Only concentrate on pushing your knee against my hand."
- "Just stay focused on pushing with your hands."
- "Squeeze this muscle right here." (while putting a finger on that point)
- "Keep your arms as straight as you can."
- "Push your shoulder blades together."
- "You're hitting the difficult part of the exercise here. Push your way through the discomfort."

**Statements of extension/growth**
- "You did three last time. How about trying four today?"
- "We have more weight on than last time, but I think you're ready for this increase."
- "This is really tough and you can stop here if you need to, but can you give me one more?"

**Statements of humor**
- "I bet I'm just about your favorite person on the planet right about now."
- "That's a great smile. You look as if you're having a wonderful time."
- "Is there anyplace else you'd rather be?"

**Statements of encouragement**
- "I know you can do this last one."
- "You're really tough. I know you can do this."
- "You know what they say. You can always do one (two) more of anything."

**Statements of acknowledgment and/or congratulations**
- "That was really high quality exercise."
- "That was a perfect rep."
- "You are doing this exercise so smoothly."
- "You are really fighting this down. Great job!"
- "That was a great workout."
"You should be really proud of yourself."
"You're getting so much stronger/ you're ___% stronger than ___ weeks ago."
"Look at the definition in ___. You couldn't see that before."
"You are really working hard/giving it your all. I couldn't ask for anything more"

Statements of competitiveness
(should be used sparingly in the community setting and with adolescents)
"Don't let me get you down before 1 count '10' or well do another one."
"Most people can only do ___ of these/ hold this for a count of ___ / give up at this point"

Broader statements of philosophy
"You set a goal, gave it your best, and look how successful you've been."
"Look at what you've accomplished with hard work, effort, commitment, energy, motivation, etc."
Appendix C: Relationship-Building Methods

BUILDING THE RELATIONSHIP

In developing the Friend Fitness Program we've watched mentors stumble and make mistakes during their attempt to build relationships with kids. We want you to avoid these mistakes. This then is an attempt to communicate what does work in building relationships with children through exercise.

1. What you say during the workout is extremely important in building the relationship. (See attached sheet.) Do not raise your voice when encouraging or talking to your kid. Our culture by design is one of quiet, sincere encouragement. In addition to what we say our demeanor is hugely important to the kids. Smile as much as your face muscles will allow.

2. Pay attention to your child all the time. If you are talking to your child throughout the workout with meaningful thought, it is hard not to pay attention. To be a good spotter you must pay attention: our best mentors are, not surprisingly, our best spotters precisely because they pay attention.

3. In building the relationship, the initial workouts are very important and are somewhat different than later workouts. In most cases, start slowly with two reps and then work your way up to 4 to 6 reps, with most of your patter as instruction. However, if a strong, fit kid starts too slowly you may lose him. Likewise if a kid has "an attitude" and is "talking tough," a good dose of discomfort can create a more productive attitude.

4. Smooth movement of the resistance with contraction of the muscle at the "contracted phase of the lift" results in the optimum incursion into the muscle strength, which creates a crescendo of discomfort that should not be forgotten. As you work out more this "pain" does not seem as acute as it does the first workouts. Don't forget this with your child. Too much pain too early can discourage and lose a child.

5. Once a strong relationship is built the mentor can be remarkably directive in a child's life. However, attempts to be directive prematurely can be counter productive. So "capture" your kid then be directive. How to you know when your child has been captured? One clue is when your child displays a 100% effort and is making great progress in strength gains. At that point, they have bought into the program and not coincidentally, they believe in you.

P.S. We have taught our children to shake hands when they meet someone. We teach them to grip the hand completely, shake hands firmly, look the person in the eye and say a greeting, i.e. "I am pleased to meet you".

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Appendix A: Informed Consent

Consent Oral Briefing (Mentees)

The purpose of the project is to assist in the development of effective youth mentoring programs, including the one in which you participate. The results of this research also will be a component of a dissertation for a doctoral degree at the University of Hawaii. You are being asked to participate, because you participate in a youth mentoring program.

Participation in this project will consist of an interview with the investigator. The interview will focus on you, your life, and your involvement in the mentoring program. You will be interviewed individually or in a small interview focus group (2 to 6 participants). The interview will be about one hour in duration. With your permission, the interview will be audio taped. All personal information from this research will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. All other personal research records will be destroyed upon completion of the project.

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time during the duration of the project with no penalty, or loss of benefit to which you would otherwise be entitled. You may participate in the youth mentoring program regardless of whether you participate in this research project. Do you have any questions?
Influences on the Effectiveness of Youth Mentoring
Mentee Consent Form

Renee Galbavy
Primary Investigator
(808) 277-7895
(610) 221-0798

This form is to request permission for you to participate in a research project on Youth Mentoring. The purpose of the project is to assist in the development of effective youth mentoring programs, including the one in which you participate. The results of this research also will be a component of a dissertation for a doctoral degree at the University of Hawaii. You are being asked to participate, because you participate in a youth mentoring program.

Participation in this project will consist of an interview with the investigator. The interview will focus on you, your life, and your involvement in the mentoring program. You will be interviewed individually or in a small interview focus group (2 to 6 participants). The interview will be about one hour in duration. With your permission, the interview will be audio taped. Approximately 50 adolescents, and 35 adult mentors will be participating. Data from the interviews will be summarized into broad categories. No personal identifying information will be included with the research results.

The investigator believes there is little or no risk to participating in this research project. However, it is possible participants may experience emotional or psychological distress in the course of the interview. If you experience psychological distress, the mentoring program staff will be available to assist you.

Participating in this research may be of no direct benefit to you. It is believed, however, the results from this project will help in improving the development of mentoring programs, including the one in which you participate.

All personal information from this research will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Agencies with research oversight, such as the UH Committee on Human Studies, have the authority to review research data. Audiotapes of the interviews will be destroyed immediately following transcription. All other personal research records will be destroyed upon completion of the project.

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time during the duration of the project with no penalty, or loss of benefit to which you would otherwise be entitled. You may participate in the youth mentoring program regardless of whether you participate in this research project.

If you have any questions regarding this research project, please contact the researcher, Renee Galbavy at (808) 277-7895. Address: 610 Glen Lane, Norristown, PA 19403.
You may also contact Katherine Genovese at The Second Mile, State College, PA, (814) 237-1719

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the UH Committee on Human Studies at (808) 956-5007. Address: 2540 Maile Way, Honolulu, HI 96822.

Participant:
I have read and understand the above information, and consent to participate in this project with the understanding that such consent does not waive any of my legal rights; nor does it release the principle investigator or the institution or any employee or agent thereof from liability for negligence.

Name (printed)

Signature                  Date
Influences on the Effectiveness of Youth Mentoring
Parental Consent Form

Renee Galbavy
Primary Investigator
(808)277-7895
(610) 221-0798

This form is to request permission for your child to participate in a research project on Youth Mentoring. The purpose of the project is to assist in the development of effective youth mentoring programs, including the one in which your child participates. The results of this research also will be a component of a dissertation for a doctoral degree at the University of Hawaii. Your child is being asked to participate, because he or she participates in a youth mentoring program.

Participation in this project will consist of an interview with the investigator. The interview will focus on the influence of friends, neighborhoods, school, employment, and family on participants in a mentoring program for adolescents. Participants will be interviewed individually or in a small interview focus group (2 to 6 participants). The interview will be about one hour in duration. With your permission, the interview will be audio taped. Approximately 50 adolescents, and 35 adult mentors will be participating. Data from the interviews will be summarized into broad categories. No personal identifying information will be included with the research results.

The investigator believes there is little or no risk to participating in this research project. However, it is possible participants may experience emotional or psychological distress in the course of the interview. If your child experiences psychological distress, the mentoring program staff will be available to assist him or her.

Participating in this research may be of no direct benefit to your child. It is believed, however, the results from this project will help in improving the development of mentoring programs, including the one in which your child participates.

All personal information from this research will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Agencies with research oversight, such as the UH Committee on Human Studies, have the authority to review research data. Audiotapes of the interviews will be destroyed immediately following transcription. All other personal research records will be destroyed upon completion of the project.

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time during the duration of the project with no penalty, or loss of benefit to which you would otherwise be entitled. Your child may participate in their youth mentoring program regardless of whether he or she participates in this research project.
If you have any questions regarding this research project, please contact the researcher, Renee Galbavy at (808) 277-7895. Address: 610 Glen Lane, Norristown, PA 19403. You may also contact Katherine Genovese at The Second Mile, State College, PA, (814) 237-1719.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the UH Committee on Human Studies at (808) 956-5007. Address: 2540 Maile Way, Honolulu, HI 96822.

Participant:
I have read and understand the above information, and consent to allow my child to participate in this project with the understanding that such consent does not waive any of my legal rights; nor does it release the principle investigator or the institution or any employee or agent thereof from liability for negligence.

_________________________  ____________________________
Name (printed)               Child’s name (printed)

_________________________  ____________________________
Signature                  Date
Influences on the Effectiveness of Youth Mentoring
Mentor Consent Form

Renee Galbavy
Primary Investigator
(808) 277-7895
(610) 221-0798

This form is to request permission for you to participate in a research project on Youth Mentoring. The purpose of the project is to assist in the development of effective youth mentoring programs, including the one in which you participate. The results of this research also will be a component of a dissertation for a doctoral degree at the University of Hawaii. You are being asked to participate, because you participate in a youth mentoring program.

Participation in this project will consist of an interview with the investigator. The interview will focus on your involvement in the mentoring program. You will be interviewed individually or in a small interview focus group (2 to 6 participants). The interview will be about one hour in duration. With your permission, the interview will be audio taped. Approximately 50 adolescents, and 35 adult mentors will be participating. Data from the interviews will be summarized into broad categories. No personal identifying information will be included with the research results.

The investigator believes there is little or no risk to participating in this research project. However, it is possible participants may experience emotional or psychological distress in the course of the interview. If you experience psychological distress, the mentoring program staff will be available to assist you.

Participating in this research may be of no direct benefit to you. It is believed, however, the results from this project will help in improving the development of mentoring programs, including the one in which you participate.

All personal information from this research will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. Agencies with research oversight, such as the UH Committee on Human Studies, have the authority to review research data. Audiotapes of the interviews will be destroyed immediately following transcription. All other personal research records will be destroyed upon completion of the project.

Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time during the duration of the project with no penalty, or loss of benefit to which you would otherwise be entitled. You may participate in the youth mentoring program regardless of whether you participate in this research project.

If you have any questions regarding this research project, please contact the researcher, Renee Galbavy at (808) 277-7895. Address: 610 Glen Lane, Norristown, PA 19403.
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If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the UH Committee on Human Studies at (808) 956-5007. Address: 2540 Maile Way, Honolulu, HI 96822.

**Participant:**
I have read and understand the above information, and consent to participate in this project with the understanding that such consent does not waive any of my legal rights; nor does it release the principal investigator or the institution or any employee or agent thereof from liability for negligence.

Name (printed) __________________________________________

Signature __________________________________________ Date __________
Appendix E: Interview Prompts

Interview Prompts for the Mentees

Personal Information

Tell me about yourself.

Prompts about the following topics were used, if and as needed, to bring the participant into a conversation and lead them into talking more about themselves and the community environment in which they grew up:

1. How they view themselves.
2. Plans for future.
3. Where they grew up.
4. How they like their neighborhoods.
5. The good and bad things about their neighborhoods.
6. Crime in their neighborhoods.
7. Use of drugs and alcohol in their neighborhoods.

Family

Tell me about your family.

Prompts about the following topics were used, if and as needed, to elicit information concerning their family history:

1. The amount of time spent with family.
2. What they do together.
3. Their siblings.
4. How family members get along.
5. Whether family members had trouble with the law.
6. Support from family members.
7. Desire to spend time with family.
8. Problems with family members.

Peers

Tell me about your friends.

Prompts about the following topics were used, if and as needed, to obtain information about their friends:

1. What their friends are like.
2. How long they have known them.
3. About their other friends.
4. What they talk about.
5. How much time they spend with them.
6. What they do with their friends.
7. Drug and alcohol use by friends.
8. Other activities, with or without friends, whether they or friends initiated the activity, and what they think of their activities.
9. Contact with peers who have been involved with delinquency, if any.
10. Number of friends.
11. Peer influence for or against involvement in delinquency.
12. Worries, if any, about delinquency.

School

Tell me about school.

Prompts about the following topics were used, if and as needed, to obtain information concerning the academic aspirations of themselves and their friends:

1. How they like school.
2. How they are doing in school.
3. How much time they spend on their school work.
4. Whether they discuss school with their friends.

Employment

Tell me about your work (for those that are employed).

Prompts about the following topics were used, if and as needed, to obtain information concerning the employment situations of themselves and their friends:

1. How they like work.
2. What they do at work.
3. Reason(s) for working.
4. How they are doing at work.
5. How much time they spend at work.
6. Whether they discuss work with their friends.
7. Whether their friends work.
8. Problems, if any, at work.

Mentoring Program

The following prompts were those primarily utilized during the interview.

1. Tell me about the mentoring program.
2. Tell me about the things you like about the program.
3. Tell me about things you don’t like or would like to change about the program.
4. Tell me about your relationship with your mentor.
5. Have you had any problems with your mentor?
6. How much time do you spend with your mentor?
7. Tell me any ways the program has been of help.
8. Has being in the program made a difference in your life?
9. Tell me about goal setting in the program.
10. If you could make any suggestions you wanted for the program, what would they be?
(These prompts are designed to obtain information concerning the following: likes and dislikes about the mentoring program; how the program has been of help in their lives; whether the program has had an effect on school, on self-perception, or on relationships with family and friends; feelings about mentor; problems with mentor; program suggestions).

Interview Prompts for the Mentors

Mentoring Program

The following prompts were those primarily utilized during the interview.

1. Tell me about your experiences with the mentoring program
2. Tell me why you decided to participate in the program.
3. Tell me about the things you like about the program.
4. Tell me about things you don’t like or would like to change about the program.
5. Tell me about the challenges of being a mentor.
6. Tell me about your mentee(s).
7. Tell me about the successes and disappointments of working with your mentee(s).
8. Do you meet with your mentee outside of the program?
9. Tell me about the training you received to be a mentor.
10. Tell me about any additional training you would like.
11. Tell me about suggestions you might have for the program.
(These prompts are designed to obtain information concerning the following: why they participate in the program; their likes and dislikes about the program; feelings about their mentees; problems with their mentees; how often they meet with their mentees, use of rewards with mentees; mentor training)
References


Big Brothers Big Sisters. (2004). *Big Brothers Big Sisters Marks 100 Years of Youth Mentoring.* Received March 7th, 2004 from http://www.bbbsa.org/site/pp.asp?c=iuJ3Jg02F&b=14600


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