

Who are the mentors?

BEARS mentors come from every corner of the Maple Valley community. We actively recruit volunteers from local businesses, religious institutions, colleges, retirement centers, and civic organizations. BEARS volunteers also assist with recruiting mentors, coordinating community outings, organizing group events, tutoring and staffing the program office. All volunteers must go through criminal background checks, reference checks, and an in-person interview.

"It's wonderful to get to know someone younger, to learn about her life, and to watch her grow."—BBBS Mentor



Make A Difference
in the life of a child!
Call now—206-850-6625

History

Planning for the BEARS Mentoring Program began in the 2006-2007 school year with a grant from the Discuren Foundation and a matching grant from the Tahoma School District. Implementation of the program during the 2007-2008 school year is funded by a grant from United Way of King County.

The BEARS Mentoring Program is a close collaboration between the Maple Valley Communities That Care Coalition, Tahoma School District and the Greater Maple Valley Community Center. After reviewing data available from Washington State's Healthy Youth Survey, planning partners identified three main factors of concern in the Maple Valley Community including: Student Commitment to School & Learning, Academic Success, and Opportunities for Pro-Social Involvement. Mentoring is an effective research-based strategy to address these areas.

Many youth in our community can benefit by being matched with a caring mentor to work with them in navigating the difficult transition from childhood to adulthood. The BEARS Mentoring Program is a program designed to do just that.

BEARS Mentoring Program

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BEARS Mentoring Program



*"Enhancing the lives
of our community's
youth through
mentoring."*

MAPLE VALLEY

COMMUNITIES THAT CARE

Our Mission

The mission of the BEARS Mentoring Program is to empower youth in our community to make positive life choices that enable them to maximize their potential.

We envision a community in which every youth experiences nurturing one-to-one relationships and community support. This in turn allows each youth to develop into their full potential, capable of making informed, responsible decisions as involved members of our community.



Services

Tahoma District students currently attending Cedar River Middle School and Tahoma Middle School are matched one-to-one with safe, responsible adult volunteers from the community. The location of mentoring, averaging 90 minutes per meeting, alternates between the school sites, where mentors assist with academic and educational support, and "The Den," where matches explore recreational and youth developmental activities.



All BEARS matches have the opportunity to go on additional group outings organized by program staff periodically throughout the year.

Why Mentoring?

Mentoring has proven to be a successful strategy for addressing a number of youth problems. A landmark study of Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies found that mentored youth:

- were 46% less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs
- were 27% less likely to initiate in alcohol use
- were 38% less likely to engage in violence
- skipped school 52% less
- decreased lying to their parents by 37%

"Teens who have friendships with adults outside their families feel supported, are more social and less depressed, and get along better with their parents."

—*Child Trends*

Goals

The BEARS Mentoring Program takes a broad developmental approach to mentoring that focuses on helping youth build their own capacity to succeed in education and in life. By empowering youth to make good decisions and set positive goals, BEARS strives to impact:

- Academic achievement and attitudes towards school and education
- Family and peer relationships
- Youth self-esteem and confidence
- Alcohol and substance use or abuse

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