

## Safe Harbor Project Mentoring Program Overview

### Background Information:

Youth mentoring programs have had a profound effect on the quality of life for disadvantaged, single-parent or otherwise 'at-risk' identified youth and children all over the country and around the world. Nationally, the well-known mentoring program, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, found that mentored children were significantly *less* likely than their peers to use illegal drugs or alcohol, skip school or be welfare dependant as adults. In addition, these children were significantly *more* likely to graduate from high school and from a college or university.

Connecticut results are similarly positive: One survey of caseload files of children in mentoring relationships found that 77% improved school grades; 63 % improved school behavior; 93% stayed free of drugs or alcohol or both and 96% stayed out of gangs! These are impressive results! Clearly, mentoring makes a difference!

The Safe Harbor Project Mentoring Program seeks to expand the quality of life benefits of mentoring to an additional group of at-risk youth – Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth. LGBT youth meet all of the requirements for inclusion in an “at risk” or “high risk” category. All too often, youth who are (or who are perceived to be) LGBT are met with harassment and violence at home, at school, and in the community at large. The social isolation and stigma attached to sexual minority status leads to significantly higher rates of substance abuse, suicide attempts and completions; truancy; school drop-outs; running away and homelessness. For a variety of reasons, existing programs – virtually without exception – overlook or ignore the needs of LGBT adolescents. Understanding the issues that these young people face can create an environment where they can benefit from the adult caring and support that is at the heart of mentoring.

### ADULT MENTOR REQUIREMENTS:

- ✍ Desire to make a profound difference in the life of a young person
- ✍ Willingness to spend 1-3 hours a week with one's mentoree, a minimum of three times a month for one year.
- ✍ The ability to pass a criminal, child welfare, and motor vehicle background check
- ✍ Successful completion of initial interview, reference check and (2) 3 hour preliminary training sessions
- ✍ Willingness to participate in monthly group mentor/mentoree activities (one evening a month) as well as quarterly on-going training sessions

#### Mentor First Steps:

1. Fill out and return mentoring application
2. Sign and return background check permission form
3. Schedule Initial Interview by calling True Colors at 860-649-7386

### YOUTH MENTOREE REQUIREMENTS:

- ✍ Desire and willingness to participate in the program
- ✍ Willingness to spend 1-3 hours a week with one's mentor, a minimum of three times a month for one year.
- ✍ Successful completion of initial interview
- ✍ Willingness to participate in monthly group mentor/mentoree activities (one evening a month)
- ✍ Parent or Guardian permission to participate

#### Mentoree First Steps:

1. Fill out and return mentoree application
2. Have permission form signed and return
3. Schedule Initial Interview by calling True Colors at 860-649-7386