

Letter: Importance of mentoring

To the community,

January is National Mentoring Month. Here in South Lake Tahoe, Tahoe Youth & Family Services supports a mentoring program and is in need of more adult mentors for children in this community.

I have been a part of this program for over seven years mentoring the same girl and occasionally her older sister. It has been a positive and fulfilling experience for me and, I hope, for them. Mentoring allows children to be exposed to new and different experiences beyond what they might receive at home, broadening their awareness of the world and giving them additional support from other adults.

I have enjoyed sharing my passions – this includes nature walks, museums, theater, dance, library visits, standup paddle boarding, camping, and skiing. They, in turn, have shared their interests with me including love of animals (especially dogs), music, fashion, family and friends. They have shared their challenges and frustrations and I have listened and discussed potential solutions. They have shared accomplishments and we have celebrated.

They have taught me so much about acceptance, flexibility and adapting to life's losses and disappointments. And because they are children, they remind me of the importance of play and the simple joys and pleasures of life. I have become part of their family and they have become a part of mine. I have observed their increased confidence and improved communication skills. Both girls plan to attend college and are working to succeed in school.

I hope you will consider volunteering as a mentor. Tahoe Youth

& Family Services requests a commitment of four hours per month. The choices of how you spend your time are up to you and your mentee. What is important is the time you spend dedicated to a child. Many children do not receive much one-on-one attention when parents work long hours and there are other children in the home. Research has found children are more likely to stay in school and avoid drugs and alcohol when they have mentors or other adults in their life in addition to their parents.

For more information about becoming a mentor, or how to have a mentor for your child, contact Tahoe Youth & Family Services at 530.541,2445.

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