

Helping Youth Make a Successful Transition to Adulthood Goals and Activities

MENTORING

Goal: Every young person in Takoma Park has a relationship with a caring adult.

This will require a base of adult volunteers working with our youth. The adults will help the youth develop plans for their lives and be accountable for making efforts to carry out those plans. The adults will also be a supportive presence in the lives of the young people as they confront the challenges of adolescence. Mentors can be based in schools, workplaces, religious institutions, or in apartment buildings where youth live.

Activities:

- Training for adults in what it means to be a mentor and how to become one.
- Mentoring programs that involve adults who work but do not live in the community.

EMPLOYMENT

Goal: Every young person is prepared for employment.

Job skill training and work preparation are provided for young people not headed to college, as well as for those who are. These skills are based on an analysis of the job market, engaging employers to find out what jobs are available and the skills needed to fill those jobs. Every young person also has opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, or entrepreneurship training. These opportunities provide job readiness as well as specific skills, in corporations and the Federal government. Pathways to employment are provided to youth who are out of school.

Activities:

- Training in how to write a resume and how to interview for a job.
- Opportunities to improve communications skills: e.g. public speaking, managing conflict, on-line social etiquette.
- “Shadowing” programs that allow youth to spend a day with someone in their prospective career field.
- Employment opportunities in their own communities, such as helping neighbors by mowing lawns or providing household services.
- Programs for older youth who are out of school but disconnected from the workforce.

EDUCATION

Goal: Every student receives an appropriate education.

Every school has sufficient resources to provide support to every student, including enough staff to establish a one-on-one relationship with each student, making sure the student is on track to graduate. Resources are available to elementary and middle school students, as well as to high school students, and include basic life skills such as financial literacy. Students headed to college are prepared for college before they leave high school, including guidance on keys to

success and financial resources. Mentoring is available to help students make a successful transition from high school to college. Schools provide vocational education to all students not headed to college.

Activities:

- Financial literacy training.
- Programs to teach good study habits.
- Community service programs.
- Opportunities to visit colleges.
- Programs in the arts and forms of creative expression.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Goal: Community-wide collaboration will assist Takoma Park youth in making a successful transition to adulthood.

Existing community groups that work with youth will collaborate to provide assistance to the largest number of young people. Smaller groups may collaborate to provide joint programming or for funding purposes. Programming will be based on current best practices in working with youth. Programming may include outdoor activities, sports, arts, music, or other activities that serve the needs and interests of young people. The community will provide space for groups working with young people and help them exchange information.

Activities:

- A forum that provides community organizations serving youth the opportunity to learn what similar organizations are doing.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Goal: Young people are part of the process of reaching these goals.

Youth in Takoma Park have an ongoing way of participating in the setting of goals and the development of programs to help them make a successful transition to adulthood. Young people will be encouraged to create “posses” to support each other in high school and after high school.

Activities:

- Organizations serving youth have own planning meetings for young people; results will feed into youth summit.