

## April Spotlight: Helping a Young Person Reach Their Goals

I recently received a question from a parent wanting to know how to help a young person be successful and reach their goals when they need more than the support offered by their family. I thought it was a great question and decided to feature it as this month's topic!

One of the best things you can do is to help the young person develop a support system outside of the family by connecting them with community resources. The extent of your involvement in this process will vary depending on your role in the young person's life but connecting youth to other caring adults, activities and support organizations is often incredibly helpful!

See below for ideas about resources/organizations you can connect a young person in need to.

1. **Mentoring programs.** There are lots of mentoring agencies around but be warned that there is often a higher demand for mentors than there are volunteers to do the mentoring. Be prepared to put the youth's name on a waitlist. You can visit the Oregon Mentor's website and search for mentoring programs in your area here:  
<http://oregonmentors.org/programs/search/>
2. **After school activities.** Whether it is sports, music, drama, game club, art club, school counselor run groups, homework club, or any other activity, enrolling a young person in after school activities is a great way to help them connect with peers and adults as well as engage in constructive and healthy activities. Some schools have after-school programs that are free to participate in (e.g. the SUN program at HB Lee and Reynolds Middle School) or require a small fee. Contact your school for information on any after school programs they might have.
3. **Community activities.**
  - The **YMCA** offers a variety of programs for youth and sometimes has scholarships available to families in need. Visit their website at:  
<http://ymcacw.org/youthsports.html>
  - The **Police Activities League (PAL)** also has low-cost after school activities for young people. Visit their website for more information:  
<http://www.portlandonline.com/police/index.cfm?c=30594> .
  - **Portland Parks and Recreation** offers a variety of programs for youth at various community centers in the Portland area and offers scholarships for families in need. Visit their website at:  
<http://www.portlandonline.com/parks/index.cfm?c=35300>
  - You can also go to **211s** website to search for resources for young people:  
<http://211info.org/>
  - **Faith Based Organizations.** Local churches often have great youth programs and sometimes have the ability to help transport youth to church events/services. Encouraging young people to become more involved with their faith community can be a great way to help them develop long-lasting support systems
4. **You can be a resource of your children's friends!** If your child has a friend that seems to be in need of additional support you can be a resource as well. Simply asking the youth how they are doing, how things are going at school or with their friends, about their interests etc. can help develop a sense of belonging and support for the young person. Providing a safe and caring environment where the young person can spend time and be around people who care about him/her can go a long way! We can all do something to make a positive difference!

As always, if you have any questions or ideas for future posts you can email me at [stacy\\_bancroft@reynolds.k12.or.us](mailto:stacy_bancroft@reynolds.k12.or.us)