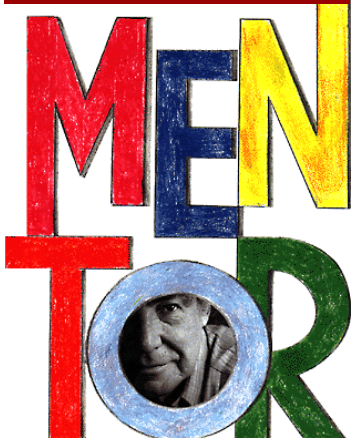


march 2009



the mentor

OPINION

sustainability

As Loddon Mallee youth mentoring co-ordinator I've learned many things; foremost is that funding is the key to a successful and sustainable mentoring program.

Evidence from around the world—and in Loddon Mallee—says that an appropriately trained *paid* co-ordinator is the most important factor in a program's success.

And that's why funding is the key.

Co-ordination

The best programs have one co-ordinator who recruits, trains and screens mentors, and matches mentors and mentees. The co-ordinator ensures good communication between everyone in the program: mentors, mentees, and the program's partners, supporters and trustees.

Co-ordination is sometimes devolved between program partners or agency workers, but fragmentation is likely unless communication is kept at a high level and the key program personnel work together closely and cohesively.

Community and business partnerships

Youth mentoring programs usually start with a program partnership between community agencies, schools, volunteer groups, and sometimes business.

The partners apply for and get a grant for one, two, or (lucky ducks!) three years. The grant can be philanthropic, governmental or one-off, like drought relief—but even the best program should not expect or depend on a second helping.

Community agencies are not-for-profit and therefore unlikely to run a financially viable program once the grant ends. What to do?

Sell your program to local business

Youth mentoring programs offer local businesses the opportunity for genuine community involvement—social responsibility, if you will—that keeps young people connected to local communities.

Youth mentoring programs offer business employees opportunities to improve their

(Continued on page 3)



Royal Hotel, Sea Lake

evaluating what we did in 2008

The Loddon Mallee Youth Mentoring Co-ordination Project had its first birthday on 29 January.

The project provides information, resources, support, training and quality improvement to new and existing youth mentoring programs.

Evaluating the project is damnably difficult: how do you isolate the benefits of regional co-ordination from everything else that affects the ongoing successes and failures of youth mentoring programs?

Formal evaluation

Victoria University formally evaluated this and the other five regional co-ordination projects via online survey late in 2008. The results will be released later this month.

As well as that evaluation, the co-ordinator came to his own informal conclusions about the project's first year.

- ◆ The project established its credibility.
- ◆ The project offers quality professional development opportunities for program co-ordinators.
- ◆ It's a tough gig covering ten shires in three days a week.
- ◆ Selling mentoring is not hard: the big challenges are funding, and establishing mentoring in towns with populations less than 1000.

You can contact Leigh Candy, the LM project co-ordinator, on Tuesday, Thursday or Friday on 5440 1127 or 0428 511 886.

national youth mentoring week 2009: october 25 to 31

BIRTH of a PROGRAM
buloke and loddon
shires see action

North Central LLEN, based in Charlton but working in schools across the Shires of Buloke and Loddon, are developing a mentoring program in 2009.

On 27 January a dozen or so people gathered in Charlton to collect ideas about what the program might look like and how it might operate.

Barb Bear has been appointed as the program co-ordinator. Barb has a long and broad experience in secondary education, community programs, and employment programs.



Program co-ordinator Barb Bear

The program is directed at 15 to 19 year-olds and aims to broaden their thinking about career options.

It has some hurdles to jump, the highest being geography. The long-term aim is to work in several small towns in a large and sparsely populated area.

I'm delighted to have a new program in the region, and particularly pleased that it's in the shires I reckon have the greatest need and present the greatest challenge.

And it's great to be able to support a program from day one.

the seven Cs of mentoring

DuBois, Holloway, Valentine and their colleague Al checked out all the research on mentor/mentee relationships to come up with seven Cs.

Consistency. Regular meetings between the young person and mentor are necessary for mutual trust and growing ease of contact.

Continuity. The greatest benefits come from relationships lasting at least a year.

Compatibility of young person and mentor. Similarities in interests are important, but closeness in age or ethnicity are not. Some young people are better able than others to benefit from mentoring relationships.

Capability of the mentor. Experience in helping roles or professions is helpful, as is sensitivity to the young person's cultural and socio-economic background.

Closeness. Therapeutic qualities such as empathy, authenticity, trust, and collaboration are important in the mentoring relationship. So is having fun. Negative or disappointing exchanges can easily overshadow the positives.

Centredness on the young person's developmental needs. Mentors need to balance a young person's need for ownership and autonomy with their need for structure and guidance.

Connectedness. The benefits of mentoring accumulate and accelerate as a young person's relationships with others, such as peers and parents, improve.

D L DuBois, B E Holloway, J C Valentine et al, *Effectiveness of mentoring programmes for youth: a meta-analytic review*, American Jnl of Community Psychology, 2002.

The seven Cs make good sense, despite the jargon (centredness, indeed!) and a reference to young people's need for scaffolding. We cut that out.

DEATH of a PROGRAM
swan hill loses out

As one program begins another ends. Great Expectations in Swan Hill had its expectations ended after recent funding application failures. The program ends in March.

The program ran for three years, co-ordinated by Lisa McCoy of Local Logic Place, guided by Murray Mallee LLEN.

For some older mentees the program's end is a natural conclusion: they are ready to move on. But for others and for their mentors it's a disappointment.

Lisa says that many young people benefited from the program by making stronger links with their community.

The good news

Meanwhile, the Commonwealth government announced funding for 25 careers-oriented mentoring programs in schools, eight in Victoria.

The LLEN will conduct one of the programs. Specific skills shortages are targeted and retired tradespeople are being recruited as mentors.

Unfortunately no mentors from the Great Expectations program meet the criteria for the new program.

Secondary schools in Manangatang, Kerang, Swan Hill and Sea Lake will benefit from the program. Loddon Mallee youth facilitator Alan Davies is the program manager.



Can mentoring connect young people in better ways that this Murray River bridge graffito at Swan Hill suggests?



The Loddon Mallee region is pretty flat, short of water, and none too green.

But it has its own beauty, as the regional mentoring co-ordinator has found while driving to meetings in places various.

Above: Dawn on the Calder at Dumosa

Below: Ouyen's Roxy Cinema, Sea Lake's water tower, and Swan Hill's Murray bridge



sustainability

(Continued from page 1)

personal and professional skills by being mentors. They become better employees. So, local businesses are great sources of mentors, in-kind support, and financial backing. Mentoring programs with a track record, a strong local profile and good promotion *can* attract local business sponsorship and support.

Sustainability is the key

The greater the number and variety of program partners and business backers, the stronger the program and the greater its chances of the program continuing when the initial funding ends.

That's what we all want, because good programs strengthen local communities and offer better futures for local young people.

PD around business partnerships

So whether your program is new or existing, I can't urge you strongly enough to consider partnering with local businesses.

It's not easy in regional and rural areas, and even harder when times are tough, as they often are in the bush.

In 2009 this project is hosting professional development opportunities for youth mentoring programs around creating business partnerships. Don't miss the chance to attend them. See details page 4.

volunteer small support grants

Grants of up to \$5,000 are available to not-for-profit organisations who use volunteers. Mentors are volunteers. Preference is given to organisations with relatively small operating budgets. The grants are aimed at organisations wanting to increase the diversity of their volunteer base and to involve or encourage new volunteers.

Applications can be submitted at any time throughout the year. To apply for a Victorian Volunteer Small Volunteer Grant visit www.grants.dpcd.vic.gov.au or call the Grants Information Line on 1300 366 356.

youth mentoring— why, what and how

*friday 15 may,
10:30 am—2:30 pm
st luke's, bendigo*

An introductory presentation for groups, schools, organisations, and community agencies in the Loddon Mallee region about everything to do with mentoring.

Why mentor? What is mentoring and what is not. How to set up a program. Different mentoring program models. How to fund a program. And more.

It's at St Luke's, cnr Hargreaves and Mundy Streets, Bendigo. It's free, but please book. Call or e-mail Leigh soon.

making and maintaining business partnerships for youth mentoring in rural and regional areas

*friday 25 september,
bendigo*

Yes, it's a long way off, and a big title, but put this day in your diary now.

The Youth Mentoring Network, the national peak body, sponsors regional forums in each state each year. This year Loddon Mallee hosts the Victorian regional forum.

The emphasis is on sustainability in rural and regional areas.

Watch *The Mentor* and you email Inbox for details about the time, the venue, speakers, and format of this not-to-be-missed forum.

ON THE ROAD 2009



regional professional development opportunities

keeping it local

Distances make it impossible to get program co-ordinators from Mildura to Maryborough together in one place for professional development. So I travel.

Here's my itinerary for 2009. Most meetings will start at 10:30 or 11 and run for less than two hours.

Northwest (Mildura, Robinvale, Swan Hill)

- ◆ Thursday 5 March, Mildura
- ◆ Tuesday 11 August, Robinvale

Murray (Echuca, Cohuna, Kerang)

- ◆ Friday 27 March, Echuca
- ◆ Friday 11 September, Kerang

Bendigo (Central Goldfields, Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander)

- ◆ Friday 24 April, Bendigo
- ◆ Friday 9 October, Castlemaine

Loddon and Buloke

- ◆ Friday 12 June, Charlton
- ◆ Friday 27 November, Boort

These days are opportunities for program co-ordinators and other program personnel to meet each other and to tap the resources of your regional co-ordinator.

other mentoring events in 2009

Advanced mentor co-ordinator training

- ◆ Thursday 28 May, Melbourne

This PD is for program co-ordinators who have already completed NRGize or who have been running youth mentoring programs for some time.

Youth Mentoring Network forum

- ◆ Thursday 18 June, Melbourne

More details when available.

Mentor summit

- ◆ Saturday 15 August

The summit celebrates the role of mentors and explores their collective wisdom on mentoring.

The 2009 summit will be bigger and better than last year's. More details when they come to hand.

Loddon Mallee regional forum

- ◆ Friday 13 November, venue TBA

More details when available.



The Murray at Boundary Bend