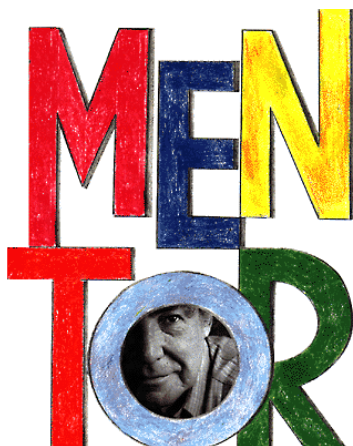


september  
2008



the mentor

## network active

The Loddon Mallee youth mentoring co-ordination project has done heaps since starting on 29 January.

Seven months has seen:

- ◆ a website created
- ◆ the first edition of this newsletter
- ◆ a co-ordinators on-line community @MC<sup>2</sup>
- ◆ the first regional youth mentoring forum
- ◆ the steady growth of understanding of what the project is about.

I have travelled all over the region to identify existing youth mentoring programs, to meet co-ordinators and some of the mentors, and to support and resource programs.

We have ten active programs in the region. You can check them out on page 2. They offer a range of mentoring experiences for diverse groups of young people.

### commonalities and diversities

The common thread is that programs and mentors work to connect young people to their communities: school communities, communities of faith, networks of opportunity, and their local communities. Building relationships is always the key.

The greatest diversity I have seen between programs is in the training of mentors. Across Victoria mentor training ranges from two to ninety hours; the average is 11 hours. Most training is provided by program co-ordinators; one program offers an on-line component; some programs use TAFE training programs.

### huge interest

I get excited by the great interest there is in youth mentoring. Eighteen people from 12 organisations came to the first regional forum to find out about youth mentoring.

Most are actively considering either starting a program or thinking about incorporating mentoring into an existing program. Participants were still in active discussion long after the forum ended.

This second newsletter is later than promised, but it's a mark of how busy this project has become.

*Leigh Candy, project worker*

## PROGRAM PROFILE

### whitelion

*Bronwynjane co-ordinates Whitelion's program in Bendigo.*



"Currently we support twelve young people moving from state out-of-home care to independent living who are matched with mentors," says program co-ordinator Bronwynjane.

"There's a waiting list until new mentors are found. We need males, hence our bring-a-bloke evening on 11 September.

"I do the matches after the mentors attend training and a pretty extensive interview. We run community days every two months when all the mentors and mentees do something like an art project or going bowling together, so they have the chance to pair up naturally.

"If that doesn't happen, I do the best I can based on the information I have and my observations to make good matches. There's a two-month 'cooling-off' where either mentee or mentor can suggest they might be better matched with someone else.

"Young people and mentors meet socially for three hours a fortnight in various community settings. Mentors do a great job of connecting young people to the community. Relationships are supportive and non-judgmental: the mentors are a positive, motivating influence in mentees' lives.

"Success for us is that after a year the match has become a friendship and Whitelion steps out of the picture.

"I love being a mentor co-ordinator."

program co-ordinators practice co-operative: friday 19 september

## local forum

### friday 15 august

Eighteen people came to Bendigo for this intro to running a mentoring program for LM groups, organisations, and community agencies.

People came from as far as Mildura, Wycheproof, Kerang and Inglewood, representing agencies from community health to local government and an army cadet unit.

### coming workshops

#### MAKING and MAINTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

Friday 24 October

#### TARGETED MENTOR RECRUITING and SCREENING

Friday 5 December

Further workshops will be in February and April 2009.

## local programs

Loddon Mallee is not blessed with a huge number of programs, but we certainly have variety.

**Whitelion** in Bendigo offers social mentoring to young people leaving out-of-home care.

**Bendigo Baptists** have started a mentoring program for young people who attend their Friday night youth group. Adult members of the congregation have trained as mentors.

**Red Cross Teen Mentoring** operates at a Bendigo secondary college. It also runs a program in two Echuca secondary schools with support from Campaspe Cohuna LLEN.

**Great Expectations** is a school-based program co-ordinated by Local Logic Place in Swan Hill with support from Murray Mallee LLEN.

The **Kokoda Youth Leadership Program** run by Mildura Accommodation Support Program works toward mentors and mentees walking the Kokoda Track in Papua Niugini. Physical training is a large part of the program.

## EVENT REPORTS

### mentor summit

treacey centre, parkville,  
saturday 5 july

**Youth Mentoring Week culminated with a mentor summit. Mentors from all over Victoria met in Melbourne to:**

- ◆ celebrate their contribution
- ◆ share the highlights and challenges
- ◆ explore and develop guidelines for better mentor support.

It was the first state wide event for mentors and two Loddon Mallee mentors and two program co-ordinators attended.

During the morning session the six regional co-ordinators acted as scribes for tables of mentors who looked at what they get out of being a mentor, what's gone wrong, how they could be better supported and how they can spread the good word about mentoring. The result is *What mentors want*, a four-page guide to supporting mentors.

The Loddon Mallee Youth Mentoring Co-ordination Project provides information, support, training and resources to new and existing youth mentoring programs.

## important sites

## co-ordinators practice co-op

Loddon Mallee youth mentoring program co-ordinators will meet for the first time in Bendigo on Friday 19 September.

The agenda is information sharing around what programs do and how they do it, and seeing if we can work together to everyone's benefit.

The meeting is from 10:30 till 2:30 with lunch provided.

Would-be program co-ordinators are invited. Email [l.candy@stlukes.org.au](mailto:l.candy@stlukes.org.au) or call Leigh on 5440 1127 or 0428 511 866.

Stride's **Mentoring through Music** sees musicians mentoring Koori students at five secondary schools in and around Mildura.

**Chances for Children** offers financial support and mentoring so young people from Mallee communities achieve their potential in educational, social or cultural pursuits.

St Luke's **Chutzpah Factory** provides mentoring to young people as part of its entrepreneurial training program.

Two Bendigo programs sit at the border of youth mentoring, the Victorian definition of *youth* being 12 to 25 years.

St Luke's **Skills'r'us** program provides skills-based mentors for boys aged 8 to 12. The chaplaincy at two Bendigo primary schools runs mentoring for students to grade 6.

There are no programs in the Shires of Macedon Ranges, Central Goldfields, Mount Alexander, Loddon or Buloke.

**The Youth Mentoring Network**—national  
<http://www.youthmentoring.com.au/>

**Victorian Youth Mentoring Alliance**—State  
[www.youthmentoringvic.org.au/index.html](http://www.youthmentoringvic.org.au/index.html)

**Loddon Mallee Youth Mentoring**—regional  
<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/lcandy/web/index.html>

**Loddon Mallee Youth Mentoring**—program co-ordinators  
<http://mc2.vicnet.net.au>

The last site is a co-ordinators resource that requires co-ordinators to become mc2 members, then find **Loddon Mallee Youth Mentoring** in the a-z list. It's easy and it's a goldmine of good information.

**the mentor—no2:** bi-monthly youth mentoring news in and for the Loddon Mallee region from the LM youth mentoring co-ordinator. Next issue mid-November. Feedback and suggestions to [l.candy@stlukes.org.au](mailto:l.candy@stlukes.org.au) or 5440 1127.