



HOLISTIC LIFE FOUNDATION

The Holistic Life Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to nurturing the wellness of children and adults in underserved communities. Our comprehensive approach helps children develop their inner lives through yoga, mindfulness, and self-care.

HOLISTIC ROOTS

Holistic Roots Mentor Program

Holistic Roots is a mentoring program for Holistic Me graduates who are now in middle school and high school. Holistic Roots aims to bridge the gap between the elementary level Holistic Me and high school level mindfulness programs to create a “continuum of care” that starts in elementary school and supports students through high school graduation and beyond.

Mission:

Holistic Roots’ mission is to nurture, inspire, and motivate mentees to successfully navigate middle school and expand their vision for the future. The program supports students with a network of care, which is especially vital for those living with trauma. The program will introduce students to people and ideas that will help them flourish in middle school and successfully advance to high school.

Mentorship Guiding Principles:

Mentoring is a positive force that is truly life changing for both mentors and mentees alike.

Mentoring focuses on building a relationship that will benefit both the mentor and the mentee. Mutual respect is a cornerstone of the mentoring relationship.

Goals:

The program matches each student with four mentors from various walks of life and ensures multiple points of contact every week between students, mentors, and HLF. Our goals are:

- 1) For students to have the same positive role models throughout the program, thus providing a stable support system to offset the transience that many mentees experience in their lives;
- 2) Students are exposed to and inspired by cultures, people and concepts outside of their normal daily life;
- 3) Students are supported to achieve their academic, physical, and mental needs and can take control of their future to succeed in any venture they may choose.

Vision:

A generation of healthy, supported, mindful students with the knowledge, access, and support to be successful.

Why a Mentor Program?

Participants in HLF programs come from Baltimore's most disadvantaged neighborhoods, with high levels of violence, unemployment, and poverty. Growing up in this kind of environment leads to chronic and toxic levels of stress, which in turn engender poor performance in school and work and an increased likelihood of perpetuating the cycle of violence and poverty. Almost one third of children ages 0-17 living in Baltimore have two or more adverse childhood experiences based on extreme family hardship, family disorder, living with someone with an addiction problem, being a victim or witness of neighborhood violence, living with someone suicidal/mentally ill, witnessing domestic violence, parent served time in jail, treated or judged unfairly due to race/ethnicity, or death of parent. (US Department of Health & Human Services, 2014). 33.5% of Baltimore City's children live in poverty (Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance 2017). Nearly 1 in 4 Baltimore residents lives in poverty, versus 1 in 6 Americans overall (American Community Survey 2015).

Fifteen percent of Baltimore's teens ages 16-19 are not in school and are not working (Annie E. Casey Foundation KidsCount 2015). 37% of black men ages 20-24 in Baltimore are unemployed, compared to 10% for their white counterparts (U.S. Census Bureau, 2013). 54.5 % of Baltimore City households are headed by a single female parent with children under 18 (Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance 2017). Baltimore City experienced 16.1 violent crimes (murder, attempted murder, rape, etc.) per 1,000 residents in 2015. There were 3.2 shootings per 1,000 residents in 2015. (Baltimore Neighborhood Indicators Alliance 2017).

BCPS students' pass rate on the Partnership for 2017 Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests was 15% for English and less than 12% for math. Students receiving Free and Reduced Price Meals (FARMS) consistently scored the lowest on PARCC tests. African American students were the most underperforming demographic.

The Mentor Program has selected youth who have been involved in HLF programs for years, and need the most support.

Much research has been done on the tribulations of middle school years. Dr. Jean Rhodes, Director of MENTOR/University of Massachusetts Boston Center for Evidence-Based Mentoring says:

Virtually every aspect of human development is fundamentally shaped by interpersonal relationships. So it stands to reason that when close and caring relationships are placed at the center of a youth intervention, as is the case in mentoring programs, the conditions for healthy development are ripe.

It is an unfortunate fact that many Baltimore City students lack those positive

relationships and structures from which to draw the necessary love, support and positivity to succeed. Combining the power of interpersonal relationships and some of the best practices prescribed in the *Middle School Matters Field Guide*, which is a summary of best research based principles, practices and strategies critical for the positive development of middle school students, HLF believes that a mentoring program is perfectly suited to meet the need of Baltimore City Middle School students.

The Mentor Family

A 'Family' of Mentors: Each student will be matched with a group of mentors who assist them in different ways and remain with them through middle school and beyond. In addition, mentees' parents or caregivers are invited to all program components. The family will consist of numerous mentors with varying experiences and areas of expertise.

At minimum the Mentor Family constituents will include:

- 1) A peer mentor. The Holistic Roots peer mentor will also be an HLF program participant two-four years older than the mentee.
- 2) A college and/or International mentor.
- 3) A business professional and/or faith-based community member. Depending on the needs and interests of the student, a mentor will be assigned with business expertise to provide career guidance to the mentee.

HLF will practice "purposeful matching" in identifying appropriate alignment between mentors and mentees. To help encourage the success of that practice, HLF will look to match students with mentors with similar interests and to identify mentors to fill certain roles within the Mentor Family.

To provide accountability, a Mentor Family Captain will be elected by the family group. This will be the person in the group whose responsibility it is to make sure that each mentor is carrying his/her weight in establishing a relationship and proper points of contact with the mentee.

Program Components

Academic/SAT Prep: Many students in our target demographic struggle academically. In order for youth to achieve any goals, HLF is of the firm belief that academic success is one of the only ways to lay a foundation where a positive future has an opportunity to grow. Mentor Families will collectively provide academic help on homework, tests, and difficult academic hurdles.

Entrepreneurial Program: "Entrepreneurial Night" is a monthly event that teaches students strategy-based games, introduces them to community leaders, and helps them develop an action plan to benefit their community or the Coleman Elementary

Neighborhood. HLF believes that by utilizing strategy-based games and thriving business people from the community, students will learn about business and gain a level of financial literacy.

Intercultural Exposure: International students from local universities lead discussion on various cultures and issues, to expose students to new beliefs and concepts.

Physical Fitness: Mentees will take control of their physical health through self-defense and personal training. This training will further their already growing sense of self worth, confidence and internal locus of control. These training sessions will occur through the engagement of two partners.

Through this integrative team, programmatic efforts, and the proven practices of HLF, the Holistic Roots program will develop nurtured, inspired, and motivated mentees more likely to succeed in their transition to high school and beyond.

Expectations

Remember: Mentoring focuses on building a relationship that will benefit *both* the mentor and the mentee

As a mentor, we expect that you:

- Come to learn
- Provide a warm environment
- You are not here to “save” anybody
- You are not just here to give
- You will be respectful and mindful
- You will not take on roles that are outside of your duties as a mentor.

Your goal is to work yourself out of a job and to help develop a mentee who is so independent, resourceful, and successful that they no longer need you! Anything that you do should be to achieve that goal. If you have question about how to proceed in a situation, ask yourself: what can I do to make that goal happen?

As you make these commitments yourself, this is what to expect from your mentee:

- They also are here to learn
- They are not passive takers
- They will be respectful and mindful

If you sign on as a mentor, you are agreeing to fulfill the following **commitments**:

- Each mentor will be responsible for one in-person meeting per month and another point of contact each week. The weekly contact can be made via phone or other connection.

- You attend Tuesday weekly meetings and/or Saturday meetings as much as possible.
- You attend mandatory events
- You attend community service events

As a mentor, you will sign a Mentor Agreement confirming your commitments to the program. The Agreement will affirm your commitments as stated above.

Schedule

Every Tuesday: 4:00 - 7:30pm. Academic Time and Enrichment.

Every other Saturday: 10:00am - 2:00pm. Tutoring and Physical Fitness.

As Scheduled: Community Service, Field Trips as designated

Questions?

What if I want to be involved but I don't think I can commit?

If you can't commit, that's fine. Be honest. The worst thing you can do is say yes to being a mentor and then drop out. This could provide further trauma for the mentee instead of providing pathways to support.

There are other ways to be involved!

Tuesday nights:

- Be a tutor
- Create games for Entrepreneur Night
- Are you an entrepreneur? Do you know one? Help us find partners to speak or provide services

Or you can support on field trips or community service opportunities.

What if I don't fit into the categories and roles listed above?

Don't worry. If you are a caring individual who wants to play a supportive role in the life of another Baltimore city community member, we'll find a place for you.

What if I don't have anything to talk about?

Don't worry! HLF will provide activities, ice breakers, and events through which you can develop the foundation of a relationship with your mentee.