



FY 2017 Impact Report | Mentoring



<http://StarfishAlliance.org>
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A Welcome from Our Executive Director

Since July 2016, I have had the great privilege and honor to serve as Executive Director of Starfish Alliance, Inc. I present to you the 2016-17 Annual Report, which highlights our flagship program, Results-Oriented Mentoring (formerly known as LINK22).

For almost 15 years, we have served Franklin County and the child welfare community through advocacy and sponsorship of direct service organizations that support current and former foster youth. Our efforts were primarily focused on outcomes for children. In 2012, we turned our attention to transition-aged youth who were in the foster care system or “aging out.” Creating caring communities through mentoring and enrichment workshops became major focus areas of our work. The workshops range from social development, fiscal management, and entrepreneurship to goal-setting and goal-planning.

This year, it became clear that our target audience extended beyond foster youth; including youth who have experienced trauma and found themselves in the “system” as a result of the situations that caused the trauma. This new expanded view, enables us to serve youth involved in multiple systems and youth with no system involvement with a singular connection - trauma. We expanded our definition of trauma to include community violence and poverty in addition to loss, abuse, neglect, and separation.

These changes all stemmed from a very simple question “when our youth return home, will we stop serving them?” The answer was a resounding “of course not!” Now, here we are with an expanded view and extended reach.

This year, we are focused on creating trauma-informed communities; designing an organizational and fiscal structure that sustains our mission and supports growth; and developing partnerships that increase our social capital and fiscal capacity.



Starfish Alliance’s community includes volunteer mentors, sponsors, donors, educators, businesses, and non-profit partners – affectionately called community connectors. I’d like to thank every community connector for their contribution of time, talent, and treasure. We especially thank our major funder, the Ohio Department of Education - Community Connectors initiative.

Thank you for your support of The Alliance.

Jennifer McKenzie

Mentees

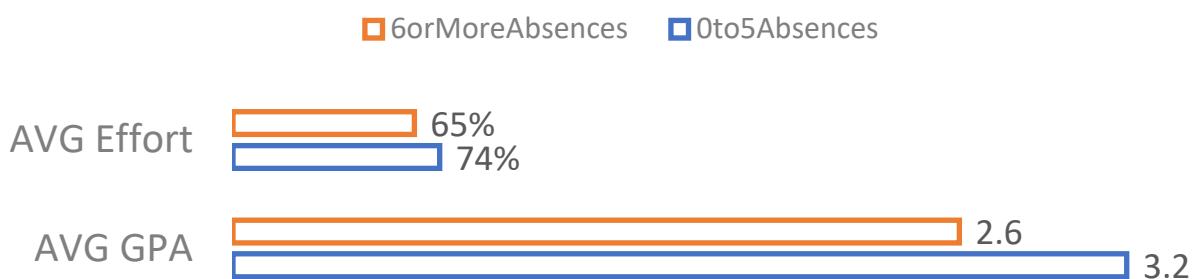
We facilitated mentoring programs for youth with attendance and academic issues across the State of Ohio in FY2017. Our journey took us into multiple academic settings with youth who were often over-age and under-credit. We used tools like Mindset Assessment Profiles to understand how our young people made the connection between success and effort. Our mentors leveraged this insight and coached students towards more hopeful futures.



BARRIERS and BRIDGES

Many of our youth had serious unexcused absences, with the average being 8 days (about two school weeks) per semester! Our Program Coordinator noticed that youth with poor attendance were not trying to make up ground for their missed days. In fact, they identified that they were putting forth a little less effort than the rest of the group. This was getting complex, so we simplified things by looking closer at GPAs.

Absences, Effort, and GPA (Oh My!)



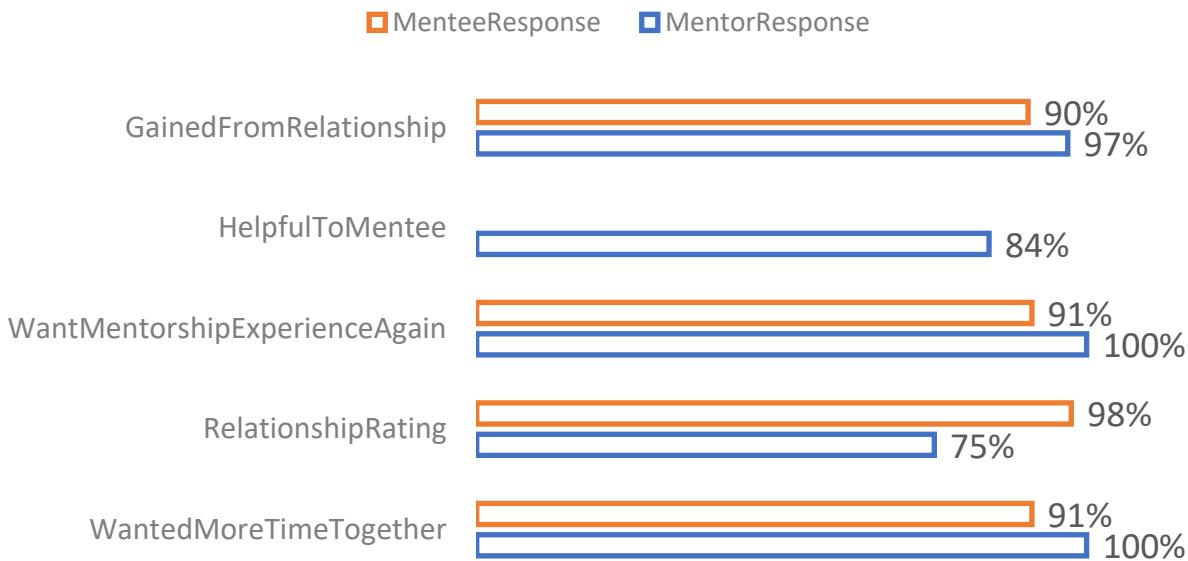
The light bulb switched on for us! The effort that our young people were investing in themselves was not the best they COULD do, but it was the best they knew HOW to do. This became an important distinction for us to make this year. We saw that there was even more hope than we realized, but we had to spend even more time training mentors and clearing the way for them to establish influence.





This year we spent more than 160 hours in training with our team of mentors. From the outset, we believed that mentoring was a two-way relationship. At the end of each year, we conduct a satisfaction survey based on the Mass Mentoring Partnership's work in program evaluation. Though we ask nearly two dozen questions, a few responses stuck out to us . . .

FY2017 | MENTORSHIP EXPERIENCE SURVEY



Key Points |

- Mentor Satisfaction
 - Overall, mentors felt that their experience was positive
 - All mentors wanted to spend more time with their mentees
 - All mentors wanted to mentor again with us in the future
 - Nearly all mentors felt that they gained from the relationship with their mentee
 - More than 4 in 5 mentors felt that they were helpful to their mentees
- Surprises
 - Though 3 in 4 mentors felt that their relationship with their mentee was developed, nearly every youth felt that the relationship was developed. This adds more fuel to our fire – as adults, sometimes we expect attention and importance to look a certain way, but when working with youth we should be mindful that more gets in than we realize.

Our model emphasizes multiple touch points with each youth, each month. We collaborated with community partners to host group mentoring workshops. As we reflect on the year, we are proud to have clocked over 150 hours of mentorship this cycle. Each mentor served multiple youth allowing for cultivation between young people, and their schools, and the communities they live in.



We are moving forward into FY 2018 with strong mentors and an ever-growing network of Starfish Allies. Our goal is clear: we want to help grow youth into the best versions of themselves, by keeping them on the path to their purpose.



Our Program

Assessment

Continuous improvement is an important element of our growth plan at Starfish Alliance. Each year we conduct several layers of evaluation to ensure that we are doing what we have dedicated ourselves to do. We take progress seriously. We collect our data using a three-pronged approach: surveys, fiscal review, and focus group work. This year, our survey data gave us some great supportive direction as we move into FY 2018.

RED LIGHT

1 in 4 youth is not completely interested in being a mentee again

YELLOW LIGHT

1 in 7 mentors wants more training

GREEN LIGHT

95% of youth and 100% of mentors were pleased with our Program Coordinator

Results

We used a scale that ranked satisfaction from 1 – 4 on each surveyed item. Typically, a score of ‘3’ indicated that respondents were favorable to the strength-based questions we asked, however, we strive for the high-commitment that comes with responses of ‘4.’ Therefore, we have 91% youth who are favorable to mentorship again, but from that total number 75% are completely interested in receiving mentorship again.

We also heard the ask for more training from our mentors loud and clear. Though we averaged 8 hours per mentor, we are looking to add even more targeted professional development from our consulting arm. Topics for FY 2018 include a poverty simulation, iGen value systems, single-parent families, and motivational interviewing.

It was nothing short of validating for our Program Coordination team to receive such high marks from both mentees and mentors. In a subsequent measure, Program Coordinators with Starfish Alliance were rated as very comfortable to talk to by most of adult and youth respondents.

Moving forward, we are adapting our youth onboarding process so that they can have clearer expectations of the mentorship role. Our model is designed for ages 14 – 24. Even though it adapts to needs we identify through our assessment process, collaborating for clear expectations is an important step we will endeavor for even better outcomes.



COMING SOON

FY 2017 was an amazing year at Starfish Alliance. We are excited for FY 2018 where we dig deeper into the consultancy work that we've done for over a decade.

Caring Communities

Developing and evaluating systems of care for youth and young adults in crisis.

Foster Parent Mentoring for Recruitment and Retention

Reducing foster parent burnout using evidence-informed case management and prevention strategies.

Family Mediation to Prevent Formal System Involvement

Interventions for families who don't know where to turn, when traditional counseling hasn't worked.

Creation of Mentoring Curricula

Concept-to-completion development of curriculums that adapt to client needs for best case outcomes.

Workforce Engagement Services

Strategic case management, soft skill training, hard skill certifications, and etiquette for 16-25 year olds.





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