Mentoring: Always There for a Child in Need

Melinda Iannarone, Volunteer and Resource Specialist and mentor John Morris.

John Morris is a long-time mentor with Children’s Aid and Family Services. He has influenced the lives of five children and finds his role as a mentor has impacted his own life; he shares that he has “a deeper appreciation for his family and upbringing.” John works with each child to teach them life lessons, such as counting change after making a purchase, calculating percentages while discount shopping or leaving a tip for a waiter, and holding the door for the next person. He encourages the children to make decisions by sorting through every option and then forming their own opinion. He knows they were not given these opportunities growing up and wants to enforce these life skills.

John is a hands-on mentor and stresses he will always be there for his mentees. One of the children is now a young adult. Steven is 19 years old and has a job working at TGI Fridays. Some nights he gets off work at 1:30 a.m., and he will occasionally call John for a ride. Although he may be tired, John always makes the trip to pick up Steven. When Steven moved, John was there with a rented U-Haul truck to help him out.

“It is important for the children in our care to have a trusting, responsible, and positive influence they can rely on in their lives,” says Jerry Binney, President & CEO of Children’s Aid and Family Services. “So often they’ve been let down by the adults in their lives. A mentor plays a huge role in helping them to develop trust.”

John believes more people should get involved in Children’s Aid and Family Services’ mentoring program. He says, “You have to be someone who is patient because it is not an instant reward but rather a long-term one; the process is definitely worth it.” He is also a valued volunteer with us, helping out at special events.

Children’s Aid and Family Services has an urgent need for mentors. Our program offers children in foster care the opportunity to receive adult guidance from a different perspective other than a teacher or staff member. The mentor/mentee relationship helps to create stability in a child’s life. Please contact Marcia Fisher at 201-261-2800 or visit www.cafsnj.org for more information.

Grants UPDATE

Children’s Aid and Family Services wishes to thank the many generous organizations and foundations that recently provided vital support to its programs for vulnerable children and families.

- AIG Multinational
- Myron and Elaine Adler Foundation
- BD
- Ethel and Philip Adelman Charitable Foundation
- BJ’s Charitable Foundation
- CME Group Community Foundation
- Steven and Alexandra Cohen Foundation
- Copper Beech Foundation
- Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
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- Greater Newark Holiday Fund
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