

**Spring 2016**

Call 435-260-9646  
for more information.

[www.grandmentoring.org](http://www.grandmentoring.org)

# GRAND AREA MENTORING COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

*“Far and away, the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.” –Theodore Roosevelt*

## Grand County School District



## A Link Between Tourism and Mentoring

The American outdoor industry is booming, and Moab's need for youth mentors continues to grow as the region attracts greater numbers of tourists to its natural wonders. Additional visitors apply high demand to the service sector – particularly in the dining, recreation, and hospitality industries. Consequently, seasonal and low-wage workers move to the area.

Many parents take on two or three jobs, which may leave children without guidance after school. 95% of mentees qualify for free or reduced lunch. According to CliffsNotes, “Poor families experience much more stress than middle-class families. Besides financial uncertainty, these families are more likely to be exposed to negative events and ‘bad luck,’ including illness, depression, eviction, job loss, criminal victimization, and family death.”

Children of parents with limited post-secondary education may be less likely to pursue advanced education. Students recommended for mentoring often struggle academically and with attendance and social skills.

Never before has Grand Area Mentoring received so many mentee referrals from teachers, parents, and counselors. In response to the deluge in 2015/2016, Grand Area Mentoring has supported a record 85 matches to date.



*Continued on reverse...*

## GrandAM Launches Pilot Mentoring Project

In October, Grand Area Mentoring won support from Four Corners, GE Capital Bank, Invest in Success, Fifth Ocean Consulting, and the Community Foundation of Utah to create a new program element. Under the Veteran Mentor Pilot Project, Grand Area Mentoring pays a highly experienced mentor to take on seven additional mentees. These students are classified as high-risk due to age, behavior, or disability and would otherwise never get matched with a mentor. Rather than languish on the wait list, these children meet

weekly with mentor Michele Onderko. By leveraging Ms. Onderko's considerable skill in guiding children, Grand Area Mentoring aims to serve the school district's highest risk students. The program will run the pilot through 2016/ 2017 and track the outcomes for these children. If results are promising, Grand Area Mentoring may seek to sustain or expand the project.



### Top Partners:

George S. & Dolores Doré  
Eccles Foundation

Grand County School  
District

Laurie Michaels & David  
Bonderman

Jennifer Speers

Grand County Education  
Foundation

Four Corners Community  
& Behavioral Health

Beacon Afterschool  
Program

Red Cliffs Lodge

Fifth Ocean Consulting

Carl George Bjorkman  
Foundation

Footprints, Inc.

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Canyonlands Inn

Rocky Mountain Power  
Foundation

HMK Community Council

The Synergy Company

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GE Capital Bank and the  
Community Foundation of  
Utah

Back of Beyond Books

Moab Points and Pebbles  
Club

Desert West Office Supply

Moab Regional Hospital

Moab Sun News

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Sweet Cravings

[www.AWebStudio.com](http://www.AWebStudio.com)

## Grand Area Mentoring

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[Moab Community Action Coalition](#)

**Next Mentor Orientation:**

Please call for time and location. 435-260-9646

### About GrandAM...

*In May, Grand Area Mentoring will conclude its eleventh year of service. The program is generously funded by the Grand County School District, the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation, Jennifer Speers, Laurie Michaels & David Bonderman, Four Corners, the Carl George Bjorkman Foundation, Grand Co. Education Foundation, Red Cliffs Lodge, and many other kind organizations, partners, and donors.*

*Adult mentors meet with students in one-on-one settings to encourage growth and bolster self-confidence. Their weekly sessions sometimes include board games, basketball, and computers. Other matches pursue crafts, reading, and talking about life. Under GrandAM's care, mentors and students seek activities that are mutually enjoyable and enriching.*

*Grand Area Mentoring creates lasting and fruitful relationships using an evidence-based approach. New volunteers are trained in mentoring best practices and always supported with regular staff contact. Volunteers offer one meeting per week and receive the satisfaction of positively impacting a life forever.*

## Tourism & Mentoring (continued)

Communities of similar size often have difficulty recruiting even half this number of mentors. Combining Moab's generous citizens with children who most need guidance produces excellent results. Grand Area Mentoring consistently surpasses goals set by experts for grade, attendance, and social skill improvement. Moab's school-based mentoring relationships last more than 400% longer than the national average, an indicator of program quality.

In addition to immediate changes, mentored youth are more likely to break out of the cycle of disadvantage in the long-term. They are 55% more likely to

enroll in college, 81% more likely to participate in sports, and 78% more likely to volunteer in their own communities.

While national park visitation soars and hotels proliferate, poor families continue to settle in Moab to make ends meet. In response to the booming need, Grand Area Mentoring has created 25 new matches this year and now supports the region's largest and strongest weekly volunteer corps. Moving ahead into this era of growth, the program will continue to channel generous contributions of mentors' time and funder resources to our community's most vulnerable yet promising youth.

## A Mentee's Perspective

Numbers impress, especially in today's data-driven climate of objective measures. Policy-makers and bureaucrats want to see statistics. In this regard, Grand Area Mentoring stacks up very well. Each year the program outstrips its numerical goals.

However, the softer nature of mentoring demands that we take a moment to consider subjective feedback too. For example, the meaning behind this third grader's statement defies quantity: **"If you've been shy or mad or scared, a mentor will make you feel good and make you not as scared of things."**

When considering the impact of mentoring on fulfillment and happiness, we need more than a number. Something

more profound takes shape when a tenth grader says: **"There was a day I actually tried to commit suicide. But then when I got my mentor, it made me feel better."**

Improved school attendance means more once a fifth grader has explained: **"Before, I didn't like school. Now I look forward to mentoring and come to school every day."**

Sure, 72% of mentees exhibited improved social skills, but that fails to describe the fifth grader who said: **"Now I don't feel so alone."**

The importance of mentoring resonates beyond the numbers when a child states: **"Mentoring is my favorite thing."**



**Grand Area Mentoring**

## BE A MENTOR

Mentoring helps children gain confidence, enjoy school more, and get along better with others. The real benefits come from improved happiness and mental health. Sometimes putting a smile on a child's face is just the right intervention.