

November 27, 2009

United Way of Morris to train mentors

Special to the Daily Record

United Way of Morris County will host a free training class for individuals interested in becoming mentors for local middle school students.

The four-part session will be held at the United Way of Morris County, located at 222 Ridgedale Ave. in Cedar Knolls, from 6 to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 1; Thursday, Dec. 3; Tuesday, Dec. 8; and Thursday, Dec. 10.

This training class is for a new four-tiered middle school mentoring project called "I Can, Transforming Communities by Mentoring Across Generations."

It is supported by United Way of Morris County's Youth Empowerment Alliance (YEA). The project, developed in collaboration with Morristown Neighborhood House, Frelinghuysen Middle School, and Empowerment Solutions, began in October and will run through the 2009 - 2010 school year.

"This pilot project is in response to a survey and extensive focus group discussions with local middle school students conducted by United Way. The findings indicated middle school students' desire for more positive adult role models. The I Can project will help better connect young teens with the community and across generations," said Liz Warner, YEA project leader at United Way of Morris County.

The YEA has recruited and trained mentors of all ages to participate in the I CAN project.

While the response from the community has been inspiring, mentors are still needed - especially college students and young professionals.

There are two opportunities to get involved: group mentors to meet with students once a month and individual mentors to meet with one student weekly.

Meredith Kirsch of NewBridge Services in Pompton Plains is volunteering her time to mentor a Frelinghuysen Middle School student.

"The free training classes provided by United Way and Patrick Fennell really prepared me to make a lasting impact in my life and the life of my mentee," said Kirsch. "As a recent graduate of Providence College, my life has changed from student to young professional. This transition left me feeling at a loss for ways to occupy my free time. Mentoring has helped fill that void while benefitting my community."

The I Can project is touching the lives of mentors and mentees alike.

Jaeshawn Moore, a seventh grader at Frelinghuysen Middle School, is excited to be a part of this pilot project.

"The I CAN mentoring project is helping me academically and making me more active in my life," Moore said. "I am looking forward to learning a lot from my mentors."

The December free training sessions will be facilitated by Patrick Fennell, founder and president of Empowerment Solutions, LLC, in Pine Brook and creator of the I Can middle school mentoring

project.

To learn more about the I Can middle school mentoring pilot project, contact Liz Warner at 973.993.1160, x107 or liz.warner@uwmorris.org.

To register for the mentor training session, contact Kate Anthony at 973.993.1160, x108 or kate.anthony@uwmorris.org.
