



Prevention Approach to Gang Violence Garden Pathways Comprehensive Mentoring

QUARTERLY REPORT: MARCH 2009 Success Stories

*These letters and stories were written by participants who were referred to Garden Pathways for mentoring services through community partners. Adult participants attended a **Family to Family Mentoring** group mentoring workshop for one week (4 days; 4 hours/day) and then voluntarily returned for an additional week of group mentoring (4 days; 4 hours/day). Youth participants attended a **Family to Family Mentoring** group mentoring workshop for one week (5 days; 2 hours/day) and then voluntarily returned for additional group mentoring or individual mentoring. The names of participants have been changed.*

YOUTH

A letter written by a mentor to Family to Family regarding his mentee “Ray”

Ray lives with his mother in a very rough area of Oildale. His father had been in jail most of his life, so he hasn't had a lot of good role modeling. Ray was referred to the youth mentoring program. It was obvious that he had a lot of behavioral issues, and did not know how to act appropriately in social situations. Ray finished the workshop and was matched with me as his mentor. It's only been a few months and I have seen some great changes in his life. **His self-esteem has greatly improved, his character has really developed and now his behavior is changing.** He is more calm and respectful in group situations. He is maturing. **He is more conscious of others people's needs (not just his own) and has expressed an interest in helping others.** He is attending school regularly and is **on track to graduate from junior high school in May 2009.**

A letter written by a mentor to Family to Family regarding her mentee “Monique”

Monique was referred to the youth mentoring program by the Probation department. **She was on Probation for truancy, getting in trouble at school, and hanging out with the wrong people.** She lives with her grandmother, who stated that, “she could not deal with what Monique was doing in her life right now; she will not listen, she is staying out all night at other people's houses that she does not know.” Her grandmother just wanted her to graduate and leave her house. Monique started the mentoring program in June 2008. Staff commented that Monique was such a physically beautiful young lady. However, they noticed right away that she had very low self esteem and she had no goals in her life. At times she appeared to be angry about her life (not having her parents). She shared that she has no contact with her mom or dad. She had never known her mother and her father had several children by different

mothers. She lived with him when she was younger, but he married a woman who did not want her around. At a young age, her father sent her to live with her grandmother. During the workshop, she started to feel accepted and cared for. Afterwards, I was matched with her as her mentor. I began sitting down and talking with her. **She set some short terms goals for her life.** That really helped her. **She finished high school and is enrolling in Bakersfield College.** She is still living with her grandmother and is now helping with the day care her grandmother has in her home. **She completed all the community service hours and is no longer on Probation.** She is continuing to attend on-going life skills sessions at Family to Family Mentoring and continues to meet with me. **I have seen a change in her attitude; she appears to listen, wants to help others, and she is really working hard on her short term goals.** Her attitude about life seems to be changing; in her words, “Nothing in life is free. You have to work for what you want.”

A letter written by Dana’s mentor (to Family to Family Mentoring)

Dana’s background is very rough. She is a foster child and has been moved from home to home. She eventually wound up in a group home. In her natural family, she had experienced a neglect and abuse. Dana was referred to the youth mentoring program by her group home. She had a lot of behavior problems. One of her issues was having unhealthy sexual relationships (this is how she felt loved) with older men. She started the youth workshop and **the staff observed how low her self esteem was. She appeared to be crying out for “attention.”** They showed her love and acceptance and encouraged her to see how “valuable” she was. She really wanted a mentor. They matched us together. It appears that having a consistent relationship in her life was influence her in a positive way. She started to realize that she had value and started wanting to help other hurting youth. There was an opportunity for some of the youth in our program to help three hundred (300) homeless people through a non-profit program called “Flood” that feeds and clothes hundreds of people each week. It was very cold the night our group volunteered. She recognized many of the people there. They were from her old neighborhood. It really saddened her and her heart was filled with compassion to help. She handed out food, gave encouraging words to people, and expressed to folks that there is “hope”. **A few months ago, Dana would have only been concerned with herself. Now that she has learned to value herself, she is concerned for and values others.**

ADULT

Mary Wayner

Please see [attached article](#) that was published in *The Bakersfield Californian* on the power of Mentoring and how it changed Mary’s life and the life of her daughter.

A letter written by Ellen’s mentor (to Family to Family Mentoring)

Ellen was referred by the Probation department to Garden Pathways in June of 2008. She was having truancy problems with her two sons. **She had been having relationship problems with her fiancé (who was a drug addict) and with her parents (who were very controlling).** She has three children. They are seventeen, twelve, and ten years old. She had custody of her two oldest children, while living and being supported by her parents. Her youngest was living full time with her father.

Ellen went through the adult mentoring workshop. She received a lot of acceptance, encouragement, and tools to overcome her past. She learned how to **break patterns in her life and set healthy boundaries.** Currently, Ellen has purchased a newer car to be able to work and take her children to school. She is **working full time** (and some extra hours) each week. She has **custody of all her children.** Her eldest is getting **good grades in school** and her other son is doing better as well. She has gotten her **own place to live with her kids.** She has **mended the wounded relationship with her parents** and they are moving forward in a positive manner. She has **broken all past unhealthy relationships with males** and now **knows what to look for in a future healthy relationship.**

A letter written by “Sonia” to Family to Family Mentoring at the end of two weeks of group mentoring

When I called this phone number (Garden Pathways) in the yellow pages I really didn’t know what I was getting into. **I was lost...my ground was shaking.** I wanted answers. Coming to this program and learning from our mentors and the people who were here with us for two weeks (the workshops), helped me to understand that life goes on no matter what the circumstances are. All of our problems are different but at the same time very similar. We all wanted “light.” **I found peace and I feel better about myself...I was so focused on being the perfect mother, the perfect wife that I forgot about myself. I almost lost everything. I know now that I lost what I had to lose (a dysfunctional relationship with her ex-husband) to keep the best thing, my children.** I want to be a better person for myself, for my children, but most of all for God. I can never thank you enough for all the help I got during this program. I can’t wait to see you all again. Thank you for your prayers and for your warm smiles. Thank you for being there for us. God Bless you all!

Update on Sonia

Sonia is doing very well. She has a full time job at a grocery store. Her two sons enrolled in our youth mentoring program. They are both doing well in school and are playing sports. The family is communicating much better, and the boys are showing more respect to their mother.

Garden Pathways extends heartfelt thanks to Kern County, mentors, donors, and other supporters for partnering to transform lives and to transform our community.