



**Prevention Approach to Gang Violence**  
**Garden Pathways Comprehensive Mentoring**  
**QUARTERLY REPORT: MARCH 2010**  
**Success Stories**

*These stories and letters highlight participants who were referred to Garden Pathways' **Family to Family Mentoring** program for comprehensive mentoring services. Adult and youth participants initially attended a one-week group mentoring workshop and then voluntarily returned for additional group mentoring and/or individual mentoring. The names of participants have been changed.*

**ADULT**

**A letter written by Sheila to Family to Family Mentoring after completing the workshop**

During these past two weeks, there has been the type of encouragement that molded together my point (purpose) in this life. Now I can continue working on **changing the present moment** to reach my **extending goals** and my **daily goals**. Class has been a great tool. Each facilitator has inspired me to use these tools I have been given in life to continually **apply to my life and all interaction** with others. I found out that my inside is separated from my outside. This program showed ways to identify where I am inside myself on a daily basis (moment by moment sometimes). The atmosphere that was in class with each facilitator was **safe** and **calm** for me. That is something I definitely need at this point in time. All the topics that were addressed were presented on several different levels to where I can attain more knowledge to **apply** to my life and interacting with people. I have really enjoyed being present in these groups. It is a place where exchanging tools and communication is on a higher level and at the same time building and securing them in my life for **strength to obtain my distant goals**. Being committed to the fact I must suit up and show up. At this point and time it is hard for me to engage in society, so being here every day has been productive in **directing my mind** to a **higher** place. Not just for the 4 hours but my **whole day** has been guided and directed by the knowledge that is being addressed in class.

**A letter written by Laura to Family to Family Mentoring after completing the workshop**

I have been through the washing machine and rung out. I am still dirty but much cleaner. By that I mean in this class I have been able to get out a lot of **feelings that were bottled up** and I needed to **release them**. I have made some goals for my future. Right now they seem far away. I am **determined to reach my goals** and not beat myself up on the way.

**A letter written by Angie to Family to Family Mentoring after completing the workshop**

I have really enjoyed my experience here interacting with others. It has helped me grow in different areas in my life and open up. I really think and feel that I will keep coming to these classes because it will help me and my family **change for the better**. This has had a great impact on me and has also given me a challenge. The challenge within me is one that has shown me that I can surround myself with others and learn more about the tools Garden Pathways has to offer in these Family to Family Mentoring classes. It has **changed** my way of **feeling, thinking, responding** and so much more. There is so much more change to come for me because I have been through so much. Overall, my experience here was and is a very positive one. I have enjoyed it and will enjoy more when I return.

*Update*

Angie is faithfully attending ongoing group mentoring and has begun to open up about the painful experiences she has been through. Garden Pathways was able to find a therapist to work with her individually -- to walk her through the healing process. She has found **support** and **tools** to help her **move forward** in life.

**A letter written by Rita to Family to Family Mentoring after completing the workshop -- excerpt from December 2009 Quarterly report**

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the classes. The staff was kind understanding and very helpful. It's giving me some **new tools** to apply in my life. I was able to talk to them and they listened and gave me different ideas. They made me feel like **I mattered**. Everyone was always kind and courteous.

*Update on Rita*

Rita meets with her mentor on a regular basis. She used to struggle with a lot of fear. She had been assaulted in her home and was struggling with being alone. Rita had struggled with a **poverty mentality** (the fear of never having enough) and hoarded things. Through a **consistent, loving, relationship** with her **mentor**, Rita learned that she could **trust** another person again. She was able to find a **new home** which was smaller, however in much safer neighborhood. She had to downsize in order to move into the new home. She **trusted** her mentor enough to allow her to go through her belongings (her life's possessions) and help make very personal decisions on what to keep and what to give away in preparation for the move into the new home. The new home is a place of great **safety** and **security** for her. She continues to meet with her mentor and is now receiving individual counseling to assist her with the healing process. Rita continues to make healthy choices for her life. She has expressed that she now feels that she has **hope for the future**.

**A letter written by Rosie to Family to Family Mentoring after completing the workshop**

I really enjoyed and learned a lot in class. I've learned that **I am worthy**. I see that **I really can change** a lot of things in my life to better it. I have the faith and the will to do it. I am now looking forward to each new day.

*Update*

Rosie and her daughter were temporarily homeless. She (with care from her mentors) was able to move into a two- bedroom apartment. Many people in the community stepped up to provide furnishings for their home. She feels very blessed and continues to volunteer and serve at Flood Bakersfield Ministries (a community outreach that helps feed and clothe the homeless).

**A letter written by Erik to Family to Family Mentoring after completing the workshop**

I felt that this was a very good place to discuss my problems and learn **good communication skills**. I loved how nonjudgmental and supportive this program has been. I felt that though this was faith-based, no one was trying to force religion on me and everyone was **very supportive** and **genuinely concerned about my future**.

**A letter written by Molly to Family to Family Mentoring after completing the workshop**

I feel I have **gained confidence** and learned how to **communicate** better with others.

*Update*

After Molly completed the workshop, she was matched with a mentor. Molly tends to be more on the shy side. Her mentor noticed immediately that her **self-esteem** had greatly improved. She was **joyous, happy, and more courageous**. She was eager to step out and **help other people** who were in difficult situations. She had gained **strength** to overcome **trust** issues she had because of trauma earlier in her life. She is developing a **trusting relationship** with her mentor.

**ADULT – Parents on a Mission**

*Letters below are from participants who went through the Parents on a Mission (POM) class, a 6-week gang prevention parenting course focused on empowering parents to raise strong, confident children.*

**A letter written by Jose to Family to Family Mentoring after completing POM**

I have been to other courses before and they were a great help too. They would teach us about the problem, how to target the problem. But during this class you not only taught me how to target the problem, but also how to **apply every resource** given to me. Example: I knew my car had problems. I could hear the problems under the hood. I could feel the problems accumulating. People could also hear there was something going on and probably soon to break down. But you didn't just help me find this problem. You showed and gave me the **tools** to fix my car, not just for the moment, but for **life**. Thanks!"

A letter written by Carla to Family to Family Mentoring after completing POM

Thank you so much! These POM classes have been extraordinary! Knowing how I was raised so emotionally detached from my parents and making the same mistakes with my children is what brought me here. I wondered if it would be possible to have my kids' hearts turn back to me as a mom. I learned through the POM sessions that **change** comes from **me first** and that my **relationship** with them was more important than always making them obey rules. You have to have a **connection** with your children first and you should be the one who **initiates the peace** with your children. Thank you.

A letter written by Cheryl to Family to Family Mentoring after completing POM

This program has been very helpful and insightful. It helped me to see that some of my "ways" have not been the best "ways," or in the best interest of my children. I've learned to see myself and my children differently-in a more **positive light**. My errors have been pointed out and I have been shown how **I** can make things **better**. I've gained **important tools** to work with. Things were explained in **details** and in **love**.

A letter written by Inez to Family to Family Mentoring after completing POM

I am grateful for this class because it showed me that it's not about who's right and who's wrong, and also where the change could start. Now I don't see my kids like they're the kids and I'm the parent. We are a family and we work together -- finding things together and how to make them feel **valuable**. Not just how to keep them from negative things, but how to really become a **family united**, with **love, understanding**, being an **example, trust, loyalty**, and lots of change without judging and pointing fingers. Also that we are their heroes and we have to keep that in mind so our children grow up to be awesome people and great parents themselves.

A letter written by Sharon to Family to Family Mentoring after completing POM

I learned good and positive **parenting skills**. I can use the **tools** that I learned to be a **positive parent** and person. I'm learning to **believe in myself** and make **healthy choices** that I can **share** with my **children**. Garden Pathways is great. I like the positive teachers and think this is a great organization to help parents and people grow into **healthier** people. I learned **great tools** and want more of these classes so I can use the tools to be a better person. I think this class is kind of short and think that we learn a lot in a short period of time. I see my **growth** as a **person** and as a **parent**. I'm glad you have this program and I highly recommend it for other people and parents.

## YOUTH

### Letter written to Family to Family Mentoring regarding her brother Lee who has been in the youth program for a year and half

Hi my name is Gina and I wanted to write this letter to thank everyone at Garden Pathways. I wanted to thank all of you because you have made such a tremendous change in my brother's life. My brother's name is Lee and he started attending the program in October of 2008. When Lee started your program he was a boy that didn't know what he wanted. He was **fascinated** by **gangs** and other things that were not good for him. Since he started the program I have seen him grow into a **responsible** intelligent young man. He now thinks about his **future** and wants to **make something of himself**; he now has a **career** in mind. My parents and I thought we were going to **lose him to a gang**, but thankfully we found your program just in time to **save** him. My parents and I cannot thank you enough for what your program is doing for us. Keep up the good work and may God bless all of you.

### Information given to Family to Family Mentoring from Sue's father to her mentor after she completed the workshop

Sue is 13 years old and is in the seventh grade at Chipman Jr. High School. Sue heard about the program from two of her step siblings that are currently going through the mentoring program. She attended the January 2010 workshop. On the fourth day of the workshop, her father came to tell me that he could already see a **difference** in his daughter. Her **attitude** was changing; she was starting to **communicate** more with him, and was no longer **rude** to him. He feels that if she continues to participate in the mentoring program she will learn how to **respect her parents, herself, and others**. He feels that having a **mentor** will give her someone to talk with about issues at home and school and that it will result in her **grades improving** and her **life getting better**. He shared that he wants his kids to make better choices and do good in life. He believes that the mentoring Garden Pathways is providing to his kids is working and would like for Garden Pathways to keep up the good work.

### Letter written to Family to Family Mentoring regarding his mentee Daniel who has been in the program for five months

Daniel came to Garden Pathways looking for a hand with getting back on the right path of life. Coming from a **dysfunctional family** and having been **in trouble** himself, he was ready to **change**. To those who don't know Daniel, he seems like a quiet, shy, seventeen-year old; out in the world like any other ordinary teenager. In the past few months that he has spent here at Family to Family Mentoring, we have grown to learn that David is not like any ordinary teenager in the real world. Give him your **trust** and **friendship** and you come to find out that he is a **well mannered young man** who has grown up in the wrong environment and around the wrong people. His parents are divorced; he is living at home with his mom, older sister and younger brother. He has had a few altercations with "friends" of his sister. These altercations led to something bigger, forcing his mom to move to a different neighborhood to avoid future

problems. Daniel is **attending school** and continues to be faithful to the mentoring program here at Garden Pathways. He and his sister attend ongoing mentoring every Tuesday. I became his mentor and am working with him to help him get back on track. He expressed to me, "I'm tired of living like this and hurting my parents, that's why I want to change." Together we have set **goals** for his future. I have seen him **mature** and become more **responsible to pursue his goals**. He is committed to doing his **school work** so that he can **graduate** from high school this year. He is pursuing his driver's license when he turns eighteen (in six months) and he is filling out the financial aid paperwork so that he can enroll in community college this fall. He wants to be a **good role model** for his fifteen year old brother. He sees that he is in danger of going down the wrong path (like he did). He is really encouraging his brother to get involved in the youth mentoring program so he can be surrounded by **encouraging** people.

### Information given to Family to Family Mentoring from Mrs. Holmes, community counselor at West High School after Vincent completed the workshop

Mrs. Holmes is a community counselor at West High School. She referred two brothers (Vincent and Luke) to the mentoring program. Staff youth coordinators went to the school to talk with the brothers to share with them about the youth mentoring program. The brothers revealed that their **father was killed** in a car accident and were dealing with **anger** and **grief** over the loss of their father. The oldest brother Luke was doing his best to step up and support his mother. The staff youth coordinators encouraged them to attend the upcoming workshop. They participated in the workshop and began sharing about the issues they were dealing with. They were given **tools to move forward** in life. Most of all, they appreciated the **love** and **encouragement** they received. After the workshop, the youngest brother Vincent went back to his school community counselor and thanked her for encouraging them to attend the youth workshop and shared with her that they both learned a lot in a short period of time. He was so excited about what he **learned** that he began **sharing** with his **friends** about the program. He told Mrs. Holmes that he feels that **all** kids need to have **someone to talk to**. Mrs. Holmes was thrilled to see the positive change in Vincent. He used to be very shy and did not like talking with people. Now he is learning to **open up** and **express** himself. He told her he is looking forward to attending the on-going group mentoring sessions and youth activities.

### Youth responses after the one week mentoring workshop

- I wrote a letter to my father to rebuild **relationship** with him. (*Her father has been in prison since she was 1 year of age.*)
- I am **behaving** better at school.
- My **attitude** is a lot better.
- I had an F in my math class because I hated doing my homework. Since the workshop, I have been doing my math **homework every day**.
- I have friends that need to come to this program.
- I want to come back for ongoing group mentoring and fun youth activities.