



Northwest Minnesota Mentoring Program evaluation results

*Prepared for the Roseau County
Prevention Coalition and the Minnesota
Department of Human Services*

J U N E 2 0 1 1

Northwest Minnesota Mentoring Program evaluation results

*Prepared for the Roseau County Prevention
Coalition and the Minnesota Department of
Human Services*

June 2011

Prepared by:
Monica Idzelis

Wilder Research
451 Lexington Parkway North
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104
651-280-2700
www.wilderresearch.org

Contents

Background.....	1
Overview of evaluation.....	1
Description of respondents	2
Key findings.....	6
Mentor-mentee relationship.....	6
Impact on youth	9
Satisfaction with program.....	15
Conclusion and recommendations	20
Appendix.....	21
Open-ended comments.....	23

Figures

1. Youth characteristics.....	3
2. Parent characteristics at closing.....	3
3. Mentor characteristics.....	4
4. Mentor’s connection to program.....	4
5. Referral agent affiliation.....	4
6. Referral agent familiarity with mentoring program.....	5
7. Referral agent referrals to mentoring program.....	5
8. Mentor-reported time spent with youth.....	6
9. Youth-reported time spent with mentor.....	7
10. Parent perception of mentor’s time with youth.....	7
11. Mentor perception of mentor-mentee relationship.....	8
12. Youth-reported involvement in decision-making with mentor.....	8
13. Youth feelings about mentor.....	8
14. Youth-report of involvement in activities.....	9
15. Parent perception of changes in youth.....	10
16. Mentor perception of changes in youth.....	10
17. Referral agent perception of impact of mentoring program on youth.....	10
18. Youth perception of relationship with others at baseline.....	11
19. Youth report of individuals with whom they talk at baseline and closing.....	11
20. Youth report of time spent with family at baseline and closing.....	12
21. Youth perception of schoolwork effort at baseline and closing.....	12
22. Youth perception of school performance and attendance at baseline and closing ...	13
23. Youth perception of overall school performance at baseline and closing.....	13
24. Youth self-esteem at baseline and closing.....	13
25. Youth report of behaviors at home at baseline and closing.....	14
26. Youth report of participation in high-risk behaviors at baseline and closing.....	15
27. Youth perception of mentor and mentoring program.....	16
28. Parent perception of mentor.....	17
29. Parent perception of mentoring program.....	17
30. Parent satisfaction with child’s experience in mentoring program.....	17
31. Mentor match and preparation.....	18

Figures (continued)

32. Mentor perception of mentoring program.....	18
33. Referral agent perceptions of mentoring program reach and accessibility.....	19
34. Referral agent perceptions of mentoring program	19

Acknowledgments

The following Wilder Research staff contributed to the completion of this report:

Louann Graham
Heather Johnson
Nam Nguyen

Special appreciation is also extended to the current Roseau County Planning and Implementation (P&I) Coordinator, Tammie Doebler, as well as the former P&I Coordinator, Brenda Arntzen, for their input into the development of the evaluation instruments and their assistance in collecting the data from stakeholders.

Funding for this evaluation and report was provided by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division.

Background

The Northwest Minnesota Mentoring Program in Roseau County was first implemented in 1997. Through the program, mentors are paired with youth age 10 to 18 and engage in positive one-to-one relationships. Mentors promote healthy and active youth through positive role modeling.

Positive role modeling is the key component of the Mentoring Program. Mentors are encouraged to spend several hours a week with youth and engage in activities such as fishing, swimming, photography, attending local sporting events, assisting in completing homework, seeking and maintaining employment, and volunteering in the community.

Youth may be referred to the program in a variety of ways, including through the youth's school, the Diversionary Committee, social service agencies, the Department of Corrections, or the judicial system.

Overview of evaluation

An evaluation of the program was conducted by Wilder Research, with funding from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division. The evaluation assesses the impact of the mentoring program, as well as the satisfaction of the program's stakeholders, including youth, parents, mentors, and referral agencies.

Information was collected directly from youth at the time of their enrollment and at discharge from the program. Parents and mentors also provided feedback at the time the youth closed out of the program. Referral agencies ("agents") were contacted on an annual basis regarding their role in referring youth to the program.

Information was first collected beginning in early 2010 and continued through June 2011. Overall, limited data were available, partially due to the length of time youth remained enrolled in the mentoring program (i.e., some youth remained "open" in the program longer than anticipated, so closing data were not yet available), or because, families were simply difficult to track down at closing. Given the small number of respondents, the findings may not be representative of all stakeholders and should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Description of respondents

Youth

A total of 10 youth completed baseline surveys. Of these youth, about half (5 of 9 youth) were male, and about half (4 of 9 youth) were female. Most (6 of 9 youth) were in either sixth or seventh grade at the time they became involved with the mentoring program. The majority of youth (9 of 10 youth) identified as White or Caucasian; one youth identified as American Indian (Figure 1). A total of six youth completed surveys at closing, although demographic information was only available for four youth. Their characteristics were fairly similar to those youth who completed surveys at baseline (Figure 1).

Parents

A total of six parents completed the closing survey, all of whom identified as a biological parent or stepparent. All parents were White and between the ages of 30 and 49 (Figure 2).

Mentors

Six mentors completed the mentor survey. Of these, all six identified as White, five were female, and they ranged in age from 40 to over 60 (Figure 3). Mentors heard about the mentoring program from a variety of sources, including advertisements, work/colleagues, friends or neighbors, and a health fair (Figure 4).

Referral agencies

Of the five referral agents who completed a survey, most (N=4) were affiliated with schools or the court system. All five said they were either “very familiar” or “familiar” with the mentoring program and had referred at least three youth to the program within the last year (Figures 5-7).

1. Youth characteristics

Characteristics	Baseline (N=9-10) N	Closing (N=4) N
Gender		
Female	4/9	3/4
Male	5/9	1/4
Grade		
6 th grade	3/9	1/4
7 th grade	3/9	2/4
8 th grade	1/9	0/4
9 th grade	0/9	0/4
10 th grade	2/9	1/4
Age		
11-12 years old	4/9	2/4
13-14 years old	3/9	1/4
15-16 years old	2/9	1/4
Race/ethnicity		
White/Caucasian	9/10	4/4
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1/10	0/4

2. Parent characteristics at closing (N=6)

Characteristics	N
Relationship to mentored child	
Biological mother	4/6
Biological father	1/6
Other relative (stepmother)	1/6
Age	
Under 30 years old	0/6
30-39 years old	3/6
40-49 years old	3/6
50-59 years old	0/6
60 years old or older	0/6
Race/ethnicity	
White/Caucasian	6/6
Other races/ethnicities	0/6

3. Mentor characteristics (N=6)

Characteristics	N
Gender	
Male	1/6
Female	5/6
Age	
Under 30 years old	0/6
30-39 years old	0/6
40-49 years old	3/6
50-59 years old	1/6
60 years old or older	2/6
Race/ethnicity	
White/Caucasian	6/6
Other races/ethnicities	0/6

4. Mentor's connection to program (N=6)

How did you hear about the mentoring program?	N
Through work or a colleague	2/6
Through a friend or neighbor	2/6
From an advertisement	3/6
Recommended by another mentor	0/6
Through your school or your child's school	0/6
Other (Marvin annual health fair)	1/6

5. Referral agent affiliation (N=5)

To which of the following community-based organizations do you belong to professionally?	N
Schools	2/5
Court system	2/5
Victim service agency	1/5
Law enforcement	0/5
Social service agency	0/5
Religious organization/church	0/5
No professional association	0/5
Other	0/5

6. Referral agent familiarity with mentoring program (N=5)

How familiar are you with the Northwest Minnesota Mentoring Program and the services it provides?	N
Very familiar	3/5
Familiar	2/5
Somewhat familiar	0/5
Not very familiar	0/5
Not at all familiar	0/5

7. Referral agent referrals to mentoring program (N=5)

	Number who said "yes"
Have you referred youth to the Northwest Minnesota Mentoring Program in the past year?	5/5
1-2 youth	0/5
3-5 youth	3/5
6-10 youth	1/5
More than 10 youth	1/5

Key findings

The following summarizes the key findings from the evaluation. Due to the small number of respondents, the findings may not be representative of all youth, parents, mentors, or program referral agents and should be interpreted with caution.

Mentor-mentee relationship

Prior to enrolling in the mentoring program, youth were asked to describe what they were looking forward to about having a mentor. For many youth, this was simply having someone with whom they could spend time and talk, and have fun. According to the three mentors who provided input about the program, they mentored youth for one year, on average, and typically spent between one and four hours a week with youth. Two of the three felt they spent “the right amount of time” with youth, while one mentor “needed more time.” In contrast, three of the six youth providing feedback about the program said they spent less than one hour per week with their mentor, and five of the six felt they “needed more time” with their mentor. Four of the six responding parents thought their child spent enough time with their mentor, but two parents said their child “needed more time” (Figures 8-10).

8. Mentor-reported time spent with youth (N=3)

	N
How often did you typically spend time with this youth?	
Less than 1 hour a week	0/3
1-2 hours a week	1/3
3-4 hours a week	2/3
5 or more hours a week	0/3
Do you feel you spent the right amount of time with this youth?	
Yes, I spent the right amount of time	2/3
No, I needed more time	1/3
No, I needed less time	0/3
How long did you mentor this youth?	
Number of months	Range Mean
	6-18 12

9. Youth-reported time spent with mentor (N=6)

How many hours a week did you usually spend with your mentor?	N
Less than 1 hour a week	3/6
1-2 hours a week	1/6
3-4 hours a week	2/6
5 or more hours a week	0/6
Do you feel you spent the right amount of time with your mentor?	
Yes, I spent the right amount of time	1/6
No, I needed more time	5/6
No, I needed less time	0/6

10. Parent perception of mentor's time with youth (N=6)

Do you feel your child spent the right amount of time with his or her mentor?	N
Yes, my child spent the right amount of time	4/6
No, my child needed more time	2/6
No, my child needed less time	0/6

The three mentors perceived their relationship with the youth they mentored very positively. All three said that their mentee trusted and respected them, that the youth was comfortable talking with them about important things, that it was easy to contact youth, and that they enjoyed mentoring the youth. All three mentors also said they used the youth's input in deciding which activities to do, which is consistent with the reports of youth, all of whom said that they and their mentor "decided equally" which activities to do. In general, youth also rated their relationship with their mentor positively. All six youth felt that their mentor respected them, and five of the six youth said that they liked and trusted their mentor "a lot" and felt that their mentor cared about them "a lot" (Figures 11-13).

Mentors' desire to support youth and make a difference in their lives was the motivating factor for them to become a mentor. They reported enjoying seeing youth grow and try new things, as well as youth's pride in having a "special friend" like the mentor. Parents in particular appreciated the one-on-one time mentors were able to give to their children (see the appendix for a full listing of open-ended comments).

11. Mentor perception of mentor-mentee relationship (N=3)

	Number of respondents who said "agree" or "strongly agree"
I used the youth's input in deciding which activities to do.	3/3
The youth felt comfortable talking to me about things that were important to him/her.	3/3
It was easy to get in contact with the youth.	3/3
The youth trusted me.	3/3
The youth respected me.	3/3
I enjoyed mentoring this youth.	3/3

12. Youth-reported involvement in decision-making with mentor (N=6)

Who decided which activity to do most of the time?	N
My mentor decided	0/6
I decided	0/6
My mentor and I decided equally	6/6

13. Youth feelings about mentor (N=6)

Did you...	Yes, a lot	Yes, a little	No
Like your mentor?	5/6	1/6	0/6
Feel comfortable talking to your mentor about things that are important to you?	4/6	2/6	0/6
Feel that your mentor cared about you?	5/6	1/6	0/6
Feel that your mentor respected you?	6/6	0/6	0/6
Trust your mentor?	5/6	1/6	0/6

Impact on youth

The following summarizes the preliminary data related to the mentoring program's impact on mentored youth. Due to the small number of matched respondents, however, analyses comparing youth at baseline and closing could not be conducted. Therefore, changes in youth from baseline to closing should not be inferred from these results.

Youth involvement in activities

All youth, at both baseline and closing, were currently attending school at the time they completed the survey. One youth reported having a job, and one youth was involved in volunteer work, at baseline. Youth also reported involvement in various activities; more than half of the youth at baseline (N=7) had participated in religious activities in the previous three months. Information was not available for youth at closing (Figure 14).

14. Youth-report of involvement in activities

	Percentage of respondents who said "yes"	
	Baseline (N=10)	Closing (N=6)
Do you currently go to school?	10/10	6/6
Do you currently have a job?	1/10	n/a
Do you do volunteer work?	1/10	n/a
In the past three months, did you participate in the following...		
Extracurricular activities at school, such as student council or the math team (excluding sports teams?)	3/10	n/a
Extracurricular activities in the community, such as Open Gym, 4H, or Boy Scouts?	2/10	n/a
Organized sports, such as a sports team at a recreational center or at school?	1/10	n/a
Religious activities, such as a youth group at church?	7/10	n/a

Note. One page of information was inadvertently excluded from the youth closing form when it was administered. As a result, some of these data were unavailable for youth at closing.

Adult perceptions of program impact

Parents, mentors, and referral agents were asked to rate the extent to which the mentoring program has impacted youth in his/her relationships, school life, home life, and other behaviors. The three mentors were somewhat more likely to perceive improvement in youth in a variety of areas as compared to parents. For example, two of the three mentors

felt the youth they mentored improved “a lot” in the areas of decision-making skills and achievement in school. Meanwhile, none of the parents thought their child improved “a lot” in these areas. However, four of the six parents did feel that their relationship with their child had improved “a little” since their child had enrolled in the mentoring program (Figures 15-16). All five referral agents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the program makes positive changes in the lives of youth (Figure 17). Referral agents felt the program was beneficial to youth because it gave youth a source of support and positive role model (see the appendix for a full listing of open-ended comments).

15. Parent perception of changes in youth (N=5-6)

Since your child has participated in this mentoring program, how much have the following improved?	A lot	A little	No change
Your relationship with your child?	0/6	4/6	2/6
Your child’s relationship with his or her siblings?	1/5	1/5	3/5
Your child’s relationship with his or her peers/friends?	0/6	1/6	5/6
Your child’s self-esteem?	1/6	3/6	2/6
Your child’s achievement in school (e.g., completing homework, grades)?	0/6	2/6	4/6
Your child’s attendance in school?	0/5	1/5	4/5
Your child’s decision making skills?	0/6	4/6	2/6

16. Mentor perception of changes in youth (N=3)

Since you have mentored this youth, how much do you feel the youth improved his or her...	A lot	A little	No change
Relationship with his or her parents?	1/3	2/3	0/3
Relationship with his or her siblings?	1/3	1/3	1/3
Relationship with his or her peers/friends?	1/3	2/3	0/3
Self-esteem?	2/3	1/3	0/3
Achievement in school (e.g., completing homework, grades)?	2/3	1/3	0/3
Attendance in school?	1/3	1/3	1/3
Decision making skills?	2/3	0/3	1/3

17. Referral agent perception of impact of mentoring program on youth (N=5)

	Number of respondents who “agreed” or “strongly agreed”
This mentoring program makes positive changes in the lives of youth.	5/5

Youth perception of program impact

Relationships

All youth reported getting along with parents, siblings, and their friends at least “somewhat well” at baseline. More than half of the 10 youth respondents said they talk with parents or friends about things that are important to them, at baseline. Others talk with school counselors, teachers and coaches, mentors, siblings, grandparents, and other family members (Figures 18-19). Due to missing data, youth reports of their relationships and who they talk to at closing were not available. Youth were also asked to indicate how much time they engage in fun activities with their family. At baseline, half of the ten youth (N=5) said they did so once or twice a week; four youth indicated they did so more frequently. At closing, three of the five youth respondents also said they spent time doing fun activities with their family once a week, with one youth noting this happened even more frequently (Figure 20).

18. Youth perception of relationship with others at baseline* (N=9-10)

	Very well	Somewhat well	Not very well
How well do you get along with your parents/caregivers right now?	1/10	9/10	0/10
How well do you get along with your siblings right now?	3/9	6/9	0/9
How well do you get along with your friends right now?	7/10	3/10	0/10

* Responses at closing are unavailable because page 2 of the youth closing survey was inadvertently not administered to youth.

19. Youth report of individuals with whom they talk at baseline and closing*

Who do you talk to about things that are important to you?	Baseline (N=10) N	Closing (N=0) N
Parents/guardians	8/10	n/a
Friends	7/10	n/a
School counselor	5/10	n/a
Teachers/coaches	4/10	n/a
Mentor	3/10	n/a
Siblings	3/10	n/a
Grandparents	2/10	n/a
Other family members	2/10	n/a

Note. Youth could indicate more than one individual.

* Responses at closing are unavailable because page 2 of the youth closing survey was inadvertently not administered to youth.

20. Youth report of time spent with family at baseline and closing

In a typical week, how often do you do something fun with your parent/caregivers? (For example: make dinner together, watch TV or a movie, play cards, work on a project, attend a sports game, etc.)	Number of youth	
	Baseline (N=10)	Closing (N=5)
Every day or almost everyday	2/10	1/5
Three to four times a week	2/10	0/5
Once or twice a week	5/10	3/5
Almost never	1/10	1/5

School

At baseline, all but one of the ten youth respondents said they put in at least “a little” effort into their schoolwork. Similarly, all but one of the six youth respondents at closing reported putting in at least “a little” effort into schoolwork (Figure 21). Two of 10 students reported skipping a full day of school or getting suspended/expelled at least once in the three months prior to their entering the mentoring program. Seven students were tardy or failed a class at least once in the three months preceding their enrollment into Northwest Minnesota Mentoring Program. A similar pattern of findings emerged at closing (Figure 22). In addition, of the 10 youth respondents at baseline, most felt that they were doing “okay” (N=6) or “not very well” (N=3) in school. Of the six youth respondents at closing, four felt they were doing “okay” in school, while the remaining two said they were doing “not very well” (Figure 23).

21. Youth perception of schoolwork effort at baseline and closing

How much effort do you put into your schoolwork, such as paying attention in class and doing homework?	Baseline (N=10)	Closing (N=6)
	N	N
A lot	2/10	2/6
A little	7/10	3/6
None at all	1/10	1/6

22. Youth perception of school performance and attendance at baseline and closing

In the past three months, how many times did you do the following?	Baseline (N=10)				Closing (N=6)			
	0 times	1-2 times	3-4 times	5 times or more	0 times	1-2 times	3-4 times	5 times or more
Skip a full day of school	8/10	1/10	0/10	1/10	5/6	1/6	0/6	0/6
Be late or tardy for school	3/10	3/10	1/10	3/10	1/6	3/6	1/6	1/6
Fail a class	3/10	5/10	1/10	1/10	1/6	2/6	3/6	0/6
Get suspended, expelled, or dismissed from school	8/10	2/10	0/10	0/10	5/6	1/6	0/6	0/6

23. Youth perception of overall school performance at baseline and closing

How do you think you are currently doing in school?	Baseline (N=10)	Closing (N=6)
	N	N
Very well	1/10	0/6
Okay	6/10	4/6
Not very well	3/10	2/6

Self-esteem

Youth were also asked to report on aspects of their self-esteem. At baseline, almost all of the youth respondents (9 of 10 youth) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that there are a lot of things about themselves that they are proud of, and that they are happy with who they are. Seven of the 10, however, felt they often cannot do anything right. Similarly, at closing, all but one of the six youth respondents felt there were things about themselves that they were proud of and that they were happy with who they were. Two of the six students at closing said that they could not do anything right (Figure 24).

24. Youth self-esteem at baseline and closing

	Number of youth who “agreed” or “strongly agreed”	
	Baseline (N=10)	Closing (N=6)
There are a lot of things about me that I am proud of.	9/10	5/6
I often feel that I can’t do anything right.	7/10	2/6
I am happy with who I am.	9/10	5/6

Note. Scale is: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

Behavior

Youth also reported on the frequency of various behaviors at baseline and closing. All 10 youth at baseline, and all six youth at closing, reported helping out someone in their family with a task or activity at least once in the prior three months. All but one youth respondent at baseline, and all respondents at closing, also said they helped with chores around the house at least once in the past three months. Only one youth reported running away at baseline, and at closing, although at least a couple of youth at both time points indicated that they broke curfew or got in trouble at home at least once in the previous three months (Figure 25). Youth also indicated their involvement in various other high-risk behaviors. Few respondents reported engaging in these types of behaviors at either baseline or closing. The most common “risky” behaviors engaged in by youth in the three months before they began the mentoring program were theft and physical confrontations. At closing, the most common “risky” behaviors reported also include theft, physical confrontation, as well as vandalizing property (Figure 26).

25. Youth report of behaviors at home at baseline and closing

In the past three months, how many times did you do the following?	Baseline (N=10)				Closing (N=6)			
	0 times	1-2 times	3-4 times	5 times or more	0 times	1-2 times	3-4 times	5 times or more
Help someone in your family with a task/activity?	0/10	4/10	3/10	3/10	0/6	2/6	3/6	1/6
Help do chores around the house?	1/10	3/10	1/10	5/10	0/6	2/6	2/6	2/6
Break a curfew?	4/10	6/10	0/10	0/10	4/6	2/6	0/6	0/6
Get in trouble at home?	1/10	5/10	2/10	2/10	2/6	3/6	1/6	0/6
Run away from home?	9/10	1/10	0/10	0/10	5/6	1/6	0/6	0/6

26. Youth report of participation in high-risk behaviors at baseline and closing

In the past three months, how many times did you do the following?	Baseline (N=9)				Closing (N=6)			
	0 times	1-2 times	3-4 times	5 times or more	0 times	1-2 times	3-4 times	5 times or more
Drink alcohol	8/9	1/9	0/9	0/9	5/6	1/6	0/6	0/6
Take drugs, such as meth, prescription pills, cocaine, etc.	8/9	0/9	0/9	1/9	6/6	0/6	0/6	0/6
Smoke cigarettes	7/9	0/9	1/9	1/9	6/6	0/6	0/6	0/6
Smoke marijuana	9/9	0/9	0/9	0/9	5/6	1/6	0/6	0/6
Get arrested or be charged with an offense*	8/9	1/9	0/9	0/9	5/6	1/6	0/6	0/6
Drive after drinking alcohol	9/9	0/9	0/9	0/9	6/6	0/6	0/6	0/6
Vandalize property	8/9	1/9	0/9	0/9	4/6	2/6	0/6	0/6
Hit, punch, or get in a physical fight with someone	4/9	5/9	0/9	0/9	4/6	2/6	0/6	0/6
Steal something	5/9	4/9	0/9	0/9	4/6	2/6	0/6	0/6

* Because an older version of the closing survey was administered at posttest, this response category at posttest was actually presented as two separate response categories: get arrested, and have a court hearing for an offense or alleged offense. Because only one youth reported that he/she “had a court hearing for an offense or alleged offense” and none reported an arrest, this category was collapsed at closing to match the category at baseline.

Satisfaction with program

Youth, parents, mentors, and referral agents reported on their satisfaction with the mentoring program at the time of a youth’s closing out of the program.

Youth satisfaction

Overall, most youth were very satisfied with the program and their individual mentor. All youth respondents at closing “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that their mentor: was a positive role model, talked with them in a way they understood, respected their rights, understood their problems, gave useful advice, was easy to contact, and was caring and warm. All six youth respondents would also recommend their individual mentor to other youth. Five of the six would recommend the mentoring program to other youth and were satisfied with their experience in the program (Figure 27). Youth identified a variety of activities that they most enjoyed doing with their mentor, including cooking and going out to eat, playing sports, playing with animals, and simply talking with him or her. When asked what they would change about the services they received, several youth mentioned having more time with their mentor. See the appendix for a full listing of open-ended comments.

27. Youth perception of mentor and mentoring program (N=6)

	Number of youth who “agreed” or “strongly agreed”
My mentor was caring and warm.	4/4
My mentor was knowledgeable.	5/6
My mentor was a positive role model.	6/6
My mentor talked with me in a way that I understood.	6/6
My mentor respected my rights	6/6
My mentor understood my problems.	6/6
My mentor gave me useful advice.	6/6
My mentor understood my culture and background.	4/5
It was easy to contact my mentor when I needed to.	6/6
I would recommend my mentor to other youth.	6/6
I got to do things I hoped to do with my mentor.	5/6
I am satisfied with my experience in the mentoring program.	5/6
I would recommend the mentoring program to other youth.	5/6

Note. Scale is: *strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.*

Parent satisfaction

All six parent respondents rated their child’s mentor and the mentoring program very highly. All “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the program met their expectations and would recommend their child’s individual mentor to other parents (Figure 28). All six parents would also recommend the mentoring program to other parents. Five of five parents said that their child’s mentor was a positive role model and that the mentor followed their “house rules.” Five of six felt the mentor was a good match for their child; one parent wanted to be notified more, presumably about what was occurring during the mentoring time (Figure 29). Overall, all six parents said they were either “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the mentoring program (Figure 30). When asked what they would change about the mentoring program, a couple of parents suggested more group activities (see the appendix for a full listing of open-ended comments).

28. Parent perception of mentor (N=6)

	Number of respondents who "agreed" or "strongly agreed"
My child's mentor was caring and warm.	6/6
My child's mentor was knowledgeable.	6/6
My child's mentor was respectful to my child.	6/6
My child's mentor was respectful to me.	6/6
My child's mentor was sensitive to cultural issues.	6/6
It was easy to contact my child's mentor when I needed to.	6/6
I received clear information about this mentoring program.	6/6
This mentoring program met my expectations.	6/6
I would recommend my child's mentor to other parents.	6/6

Note. Scale is: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

29. Parent perception of mentoring program (N=5-6)

	Number who said "yes"
Do you feel the mentor was a good match for your child?*	5/6
Do you feel the mentor was a positive role model for your child?	5/5
Were you formally introduced to your child's mentor?	6/6
Did the mentor follow your "house rules," such as curfews and groundings?	5/5
Would you recommend this mentoring program to other parents?	6/6

Note. Scale is: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

* Parent who said "no" explained that he/she "needed to be more notified."

30. Parent satisfaction with child's experience in mentoring program (N=6)

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Overall, how satisfied are you with your child's experience in this mentoring program?	3/6	3/6	0/6	0/6

Mentor satisfaction

Mentors were highly satisfied with the program. Of the three mentor respondents who provided feedback about the program, all three felt they were appropriately matched with their youth mentee and that they were prepared to mentor the youth (Figure 31). All three also “strongly agreed” that they were appropriately introduced to their youth; that program staff supported them, gave them resources, and were organized; and that the program met their expectations. In addition, all three “strongly agreed” that they would be a mentor for the program again and would recommend the mentoring program to other adults interested in becoming a mentor (Figure 32). When asked what they would change about the mentoring experience, one mentor mentioned wanting more time in his/her schedule, while another mentor suggested spending more time on decision-making. See the appendix for a full listing of open-ended comments.

31. Mentor match and preparation (N=3)

	Number who said “yes”
Do you feel that you were appropriately matched with this youth?	3/3
Do you feel you were prepared to mentor this youth?	3/3

32. Mentor perception of mentoring program (N=3)

	Number of respondents who said “agree” or “strongly agree”
The role and responsibilities of being a mentor were clearly defined.	3/3
I was appropriately introduced to the youth that I worked with.*	3/3
It was easy to log my mentoring hours.	3/3
Program staff supported me as a mentor.*	3/3
Program staff gave me resources to be a good mentor.*	3/3
Program staff were organized.*	3/3
I could easily contact program staff when I needed to.	3/3
This mentoring program met my expectations.*	3/3
I would be a mentor for this program again.*	3/3
I would recommend this mentoring program to other adults who are interested in becoming a mentor.*	3/3

* All three respondents “strongly agreed” with this item.

Referral agent satisfaction

Five referral agents reported on their satisfaction with the mentoring program. Four of the five “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the program is well advertised, that it is reaching youth who need this type of service, and that staff are accessible. Four of four felt the mentoring program has been beneficial to the youth involved, while four of five would refer youth to the mentoring program again in the future. Four referral agents identified other agencies or programs in the community that they feel should be referring youth to the mentoring program, including the schools, Northwest Community Action, probation, social services, Northwest Regional Inter-district Council, Head Start, and preschool (Figures 33-34). Referral agents offered a few suggestions for improving the mentoring program, including getting more mentors, especially males; recruiting mentors who can manage youth with behavior problems; and expanding the program to serve the entire county. See the appendix for a full listing of open-ended comments.

33. Referral agent perceptions of mentoring program reach and accessibility (N=5)

	Number of respondents who “agreed” or “strongly agreed”
This mentoring program is well advertised.	4/5
This mentoring program is reaching the youth who need these types of services.	4/5
The mentoring program staff are accessible if I have questions or need assistance.	4/5

Note. Scale is: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

34. Referral agent perceptions of mentoring program (N=4-5)

	Number who said “yes”
Do you feel that this mentoring program is beneficial to the youth involved?	4/4
Would you refer youth to this mentoring program again in the future? ^a	4/5
Are there organizations, agencies or programs in the community that you think should consider referring youth to the Northwest Minnesota Mentoring Program? ^b	4/4

^a The remaining respondent said “maybe.”

^b Organizations/agencies identified by respondents included: schools/school systems (n=2), Northwest Community Action (n=2), probation (n=1), social services (n=1), NWRIC (n=1), Head Start (n=1), and preschool (n=1).

Conclusion and recommendations

The preliminary data suggest that youth, parents, mentors, and those who refer youth to the Northwest Minnesota Mentoring Program are generally very satisfied with the services offered to youth through this program. Parents, mentors, and referral agents tend to feel that the program is having a positive impact on youth, although more outcome data are needed to support this claim. Based on these preliminary findings, the mentoring program may want to consider the following recommendations going forward:

- Ensure that youth are receiving adequate time with their mentors to maximize their experience and the program's impact on youth.
- Consider partnering with local agencies and organizations, such as schools, Northwest Community Action, and others, to increase their referral of youth to the mentoring program.
- Invest resources in efforts to recruit additional mentors, especially male mentors. Identify organizations within the community that might contribute mentors, including large-scale employers.
- Consider organizing group activities for mentors and youth.
- Ensure that parents are adequately informed about the mentoring program and are well-connected with their child's mentor, to keep apprised of mentoring activities.
- Continue the current evaluation efforts, using the existing surveys and databases, to collect additional outcome data that will examine the impact of the program on youth.

Appendix

Open-ended comments

Open-ended comments

A1. Open-ends: Why did you want to become a mentor? (*Mentor responses*)

I was soon to be an "empty nester." We were also foster parents. I miss my children and their friends, but one thing I have noticed is kids need someone to talk to and listen to them! I love being a mentor.

To help support and encourage youth.

To help kids and give back.

I like children.

I want to make a positive difference in the life of another.

An opportunity for me to "give back" to my community. An opportunity to support and provide assistance to others in need, through my time, skills, experience, and knowledge. An opportunity for me to learn more about my community.

A2. Open-ends: What did you most enjoy about your mentoring experience with this youth? (*Mentor responses*)

Going out in public and running into her friends and her introducing me as her mentor. She was proud to have a special friend to do things with her.

She had a great spirit and was willing to try new things.

Seeing [youth] grow and become more confident.

A3. Open-ends: If you could change one thing about this mentoring experience, what would it be? (*Mentor responses*)

More time in my schedule, but it all worked out.

Maybe spend more time on decision making.

A4. Open-ends: Do you feel that this mentoring program is beneficial to the youth involved? If yes, how so? (*Referral agent responses*)

Gives a support person to youth who may not have anyone else really who supports them.

I think it is a great program that I have utilized to help students that come from homes that cannot provide both parents, or that have too many children to allow a student to get more one on one time. It improves every aspect I can think of for a student.

I believe that the people that I refer to the mentoring program are in great need of a positive role model in their life and I believe that this program is providing that.

A5. Open-ends: How could the mentoring program be improved? (*Referral agent responses*)

Hopefully get more mentors and expand program.

Better recruitment of mentors that can handle youth with problem behaviors.

The program has always responded quickly to any request I've made. They do a wonderful job and the program is run well. Also able to get male mentors has been great.

Be offered through the entire county more. It seems to be utilized in 1/2 of the county more.

A6. Open-ends: Do you feel that the mentor was a positive role model for your child? If yes, why? (*Parent responses*)

Very active outdoors and knew what kids like.

She took the time to care about [child] and did things with her.

A7. Open-ends: What was the best part about having a mentor for your child? (*Parent responses*)

[Child] got to interact with her mentor and have time to be with friends.

She was someone [child] could talk to about things she didn't want to talk to me about.

The one on one time with my child

Having a positive male role model outside the house who gave him something to do besides playing video games.

One on one with my child.

She had someone to talk to and do things with.

A8. Open-ends: If you could change one thing about this mentoring program, what would it be? (*Parent responses*)

Move time together. Although a lot of times she couldn't get a hold of [child].

More group activities.

A regular schedule for meetings between mentor and child so I can plan for it better.

Needed more group activities.

Nothing.

None.

**A9. Open-ends: What are you looking forward to about having a mentor?
(Youth responses)**

Looking for things to do and for things to try.

Having someone like a second dad who can do the things that my own dad can't.

Spending time with her and having a good time doing anything.

Have someone else I can talk to and it will be fun.

Having someone to talk to.

I don't know.

Having fun and building confidence.

Someone to hang out with.

**A10. Open-ends: Name one activity you enjoyed doing the most with your
mentor. (Youth responses)**

I really had fun cooking and playing with my mentors.

Playing with dogs. DQ (Dairy Queen).

Going out to eat.

I really enjoyed going to Grand Forks with [mentor], but I mostly enjoyed getting to converse with [him/her].

Volleyball.

Going with [mentor] to visit a friend.

**A11. Open-ends: If you could change one thing about the services you
received, what would it be? (Youth responses)**

Nothing. (2 respondents)

More time.

To not to.

I would have gotten a better communication method so we could've met up more often.

More time with mentor.
