

# MONTHLY



# UPDATE

## A Note from Our Team

Happy Autumn! We hope the cooler weather catches up to us soon! It has been a wonderful transition into the new school year. We have been thankful for the opportunity to work with so many school partners and MMSD schools to kick off the year. Our team is constantly amazed at all the awesome work being done to support the community, and we are excited to continue collaborating with families, schools, and organizations. Intentional Mentoring is currently able to pair about 15 new mentors with 15 amazing students, so if you or anyone you know is interested in investing your time, please let us know!

## Fostering Focus to Build for Success

Each of us has a unique set of interests and strengths. Learning something new can be both exciting and daunting for us as adults, stepping outside our comfort zones, not knowing whether we'll be any good at it or even like the activity at all. Students also experience this in school where they are met with new classes, new topics, and new skills on a regular basis. Working toward something new engages us with the learning process. And learning is just that -- a process. It takes perseverance and focus through some of those challenging moments when learning just takes time. It's in the practice, the repetition, the trial and error where we build resilience, confidence, and success.

So, how do we set students up for success? How do we help them to engage and focus so that they can feel comfortable taking those healthy risks and embrace the learning process?

We caught up with Marguerite Fairchild-Gongora, who has taught in 6th, 7th, and 8th grade for over ten years in the Madison Metropolitan School District. Marguerite has been involved with Intentional Mentoring as a classroom teacher, supporting the program, suggesting possible pairings, and getting information about the program to students and families at Toki Middle School. She helps mentors support their students in school and seeks to provide opportunities in the classroom for mentors and mentees to work on academics.

Inside the classroom, students engage in a variety of activities and interact with others throughout the process. Teachers set up their learning environments in a way that engages students. "Starting the year with clear routines and explicitly teaching and reinforcing positive behaviors [are

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### Shout-out

To the CBCR cohort of mentoring programs working to **SUPPORT** our students!



### Food for Thought

Sharing your own experiences of self-doubt with someone in a similar position can help give them the **CONFIDENCE** that they, too, can succeed.

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### Online

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important]," Marguerite explained. "We establish a sense of community early in the year." She added, "It's important to spend time getting to know students first and meet them where they are at. If students trust the adult working with them, they are more likely to take risks." These risks are a part of the learning process and are necessary for students to keep making progress.

Helpful resources, like technology, can also engage students during the learning process and provide them with choice, opportunity, and important skills. "Our school went one-to-one with digital devices a few years ago, and I have fully embraced how efficient and effective



Google Classroom and other Google apps are for students," Marguerite reflected. "Technology provides options. Some kids love listening to an audiobook, and other students prefer to hold a paperback book and turn the pages at their own pace." The opportunity for choice helps to foster focus and keeps students interested.

Through all of this, staying organized is also necessary. "Your planner can be your best friend," Marguerite stated, noting how she herself also thrives with the use of her planner and to-do lists. Helping our students to find a good method for organization will help them to stay on top of their school work and keep track of the activities in their schedule.

Teachers, mentors, families, and community members can work together to encourage our students to be organized, work hard, stay focused, take healthy risks, and celebrate their successes so that they can gain confidence and embrace the work that they do as learners. Marguerite advised, "I know it only takes one adult to change a child's life. Step up, be that person. You don't need to be perfect. Sometimes you just need to be there."

## Upcoming Events

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madison.com/events](http://intentionalmentoringmadison.com/events)

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Interested in getting involved with Intentional Mentoring but not sure you have the skill set or the available time for coaching/mentorship? We still value your contributions! Consider monthly community outreach or helping to organize one of our events. Have questions about what help Intentional Mentoring could use or other ideas for ways you think you could help? Email us at [katiemae@intentionalmentoringmadison.org](mailto:katiemae@intentionalmentoringmadison.org).

**Contact Us**

## Our Mission Statement

*With guidance from coaches, mentors interact with school staff, community members, and families in order to strengthen the support network for students facing adversity.*

