

MONTHLY



UPDATE

A Note from Our Team

Wow, this summer is flying by! With the news of virtual school starting in the fall, we are digging into how we can best support our mentees in this transition. We hope everyone is finding ways to connect safely with others during this time. While this pandemic is finding us in a continued state of isolation, we still remain strong in our perspective that social distancing does not mean relational distancing. Our mentors and mentees are showing us that relational connections can remain strong and are ever-important during this time.

Mentoring As Students Prepare for Fall

As students and families get more information about what school will look like this fall, watching the news, reading articles on Facebook, and getting school emails can be overwhelming! With the current uncertainty and range of thoughts and emotions that our students are feeling these days, mentoring becomes even more important and a great resource for students to have one more caring adult in their lives who can walk with them through a school year that may look quite different than what they're used to as many schools begin virtually.

To gain some insight about what students may be facing this fall, we caught up with Cory Foster, the Student and Family Engagement Coordinator at Toki Middle School. In

this position, he focuses on "getting more parents of color involved with Toki's everyday life." Cory explained, "Bringing partnerships (local business) to Toki has [also] been one of my strong focuses. I believe every student deserves a champion to fight for them. I see myself as the bridge to the school and the community. Pivoting myself in this position will create a significant sense of community that will lead to trusting each other again, or a sense of belonging."

A strong sense of community supports student success, and mentors play an important role in their mentee's support system. Cory stated, "In short, I think it is important to have a mentor in your life. Some students do not have anyone

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Shout-out

To our
SCHOOLS & TEACHERS
as they prepare
for a virtual entrance
to this fall.



Food for Thought

Greater access to
and leverage of
SOCIAL NETWORKS
increase a student's
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to look up to or someone to ask for advice. Even if the student has some sort of older siblings at home, they might not be able to go to them for help. Their siblings are most likely having the same or more difficult challenges than them, and this is happening on a daily basis." Mentors can provide that different perspective of someone who is not going through the exact same thing but can still relate and offer support.

As students will have many emotions about the fall, they will also be watching how their trusted adults react to the plan. Staying positive and flexible can be a good model for students as they navigate this year. Knowing that school will look different, how can we start the conversation and what should we be ready for?

"Some of the academic challenges students may face [this fall] are anxiety, some nervousness as well to be back in a learning environment. This is all due to not having the greatest physical/mental engagement

for roughly four months or so [when schools all went virtual this past spring]," stated Cory. To help students through this, "mentors' initiative should be on that friend/life coach approach; building and sustaining the relationship is paramount! Without taking these measurements into account, we will be doing the student a disservice. Students may or may not want to jump in learning right away. There needs to be some type of healing process." Having real conversations with students and allowing them to voice their opinions, concerns, and hopes can be a great way to start helping students to prepare for a virtual start.

Cory concluded saying, "Thank you to all of the mentors who go above and beyond to carrying out this unpaid work!" Your volunteering truly makes a difference in these students' lives. If you or anyone you know is interested in becoming a mentor, contact us today! We are looking to add 10-20 pairings this school year and would love to kick off the fall with at least ten of these already in place!

Upcoming Events

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madison.com/events](https://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.

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.

