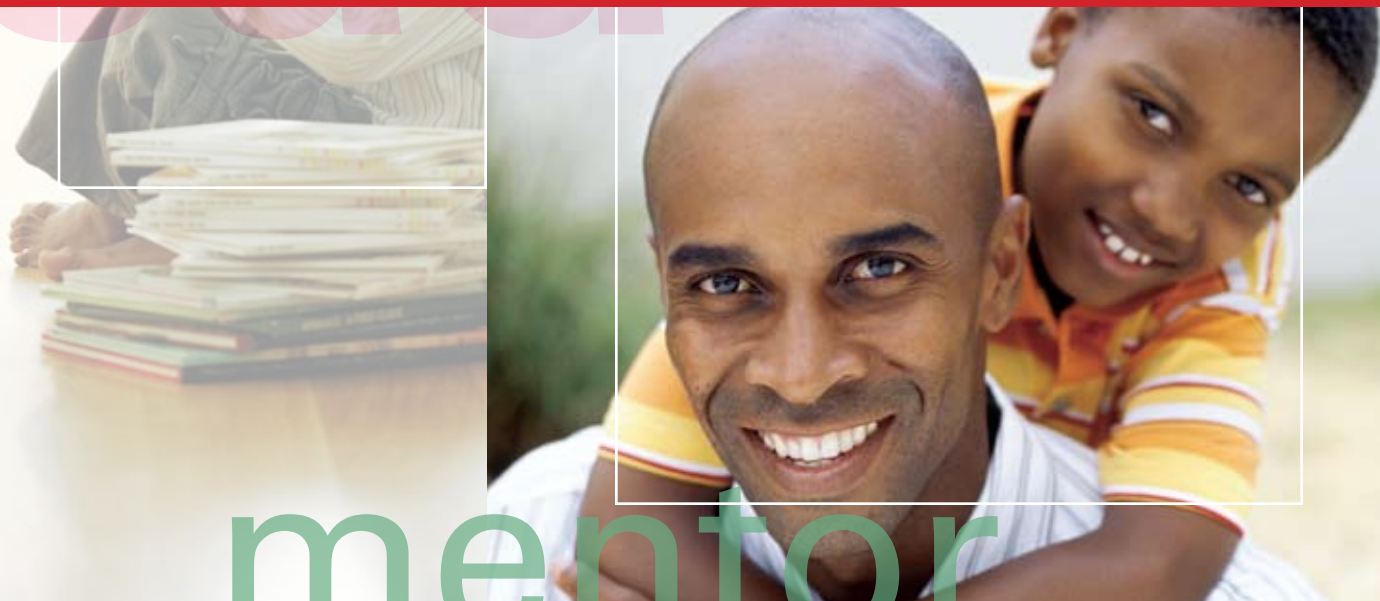


reachcare

NATIONAL **CARES** MENTORING MOVEMENT

a **mentoring** & **literacy** guide



mentor

2.4

million Black children have an incarcerated parent

Source: *All Alone in the World: Children of the Incarcerated*
by Nell Bernstein

Of all African-American births,

6.6%

are to girls under the age of 18

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

60%

1 in 8

of Black fourth-graders did not score at the basic achievement level on national reading tests in 2005

Source: 2005 National Assessment of Education Progress

African-American males between the ages of 25 and 29 is incarcerated.

Source: U.S. Department of Justice

And in some areas fewer than 20% of Black males are graduating from high school

Source: *Public Education and the Black Male Student*,
a report by Schott Foundation for Public Education

20%

we are the solution



Welcome to the **National CARES Mentoring Movement** (NCMM), which I originally founded as **Essence CARES** after the tragedies brought about by Hurricane Katrina. The CARES movement is a call to commitment and action to the Black community to mentor our vulnerable young. These are a few of the chilling facts: **Nearly 60 percent of Black fourth graders are functionally illiterate.** Among our young women, HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death, and among our young men, it's homicide. And nearly a million Black men are incarcerated. **Now it is time for us to act!**

NCMM is a fast-growing coalition of our most trusted organizations and

leaders, working together in communities throughout the nation to recruit caring mentors. Mentoring works miracles.

After 37 years at *Essence* magazine, I handed the reigns to the next generation so I could devote more time to what has become my passion and more pressing work: organizing CARES Mentor-Recruitment Circles to enlist volunteers and connect them with existing youth-serving local organizations. Caring adults can offer our children the compassion, guidance and encouragement they need to build happy, productive and self-sustaining lives. None of the negative forces imperiling our children's lives is stronger than our love and commitment.

We are the solution!

Let us link arms and aims. Please become a mentor. **Organize a CARES Mentor-Recruitment Circle** and work with your faith community, family, colleagues, and friends to recruit the caring adults needed to secure underserved youngsters in your area. Dedicating just four hours a month can save and secure a life.

Mentoring is the answer, and it's a privilege. Please get involved now.

Susan L. Taylor
*Founder, National CARES
Mentoring Movement*



You don't need any special skills to mentor. No advanced degrees or impressive resumes are required for making a difference in a young person's life. Honorific titles, fat bank accounts and well-tailored clothes are no guarantee that you will make a good mentor. However, motivation, empathy, commitment and flexibility will make it possible for you to enter a child's world and lovingly establish yourself as a trusted guide, a valued adviser, a cherished role model. Please get involved now.

Thomas W. Dortch Jr.
Chairman Emeritus

Chairman, National CARES Mentoring Movement

The crisis surrounding too many of our Black youth has been well chronicled, and solutions seem complex and expensive. The simplest and most effective way to combat the negative forces affecting our youth and to make a difference is for every able African-American adult to mentor at least one young person in need. The National Urban League and I are committed to lending our support and linking with other organizations to ensure that a caring adult is available to mentor every child who needs one.

Marc H. Morial
President and CEO



The YWCA USA has been in the mentorship “business” for nearly 150 years, and the empowerment of girls and women and the pursuit of racial justice have been the core of the YWCA mission. YWCA offers girls self-esteem-building programs, academic support, career planning, health information, fitness activities, and more. We have also been a leader in promoting literacy among youth and adults, including literacy for speakers of English as a second language.

*Lorraine Cole, Ph.D.
CEO*



100 Black Men of America is proud to support the National CARES Mentoring Movement. Nearly a year ago, a small group of leaders stood up before an audience at the Essence Music Festival and made a commitment to reclaim our youth. Our Atlanta CARES pilot has attracted more than 73 organizations and recruited nearly 800 men and women who have rededicated themselves to our youth as mentors and role models. We know that mentoring literally changes lives.

*Albert Dotson Jr.
President*



The Links, Incorporated, is proud to be a national partner with the National CARES Mentoring Movement because it builds on our 61-year tradition of providing services to youth both nationally and internationally through friendship. We invest in young people of African descent through mentoring, education, and enrichment programs because we recognize the need to serve as role models and mentors.

*Gwendolyn B. Lee, Ph.D.
National President*



national institute for literacy

Literacy skills are the building blocks for success in our lives, work and communities. The Institute is dedicated to improving opportunities for adults, youth, and children to increase their literacy skills so they can thrive in a progressively literate world. At the Institute, we seek to integrate knowledge, research, and practice to improve literacy and reading instruction. We welcome this opportunity to serve as an expert resource on literacy to the **National CARES Mentoring Movement** and applaud its efforts to make reading, writing, and other important literacy skills a part of its holistic approach to supporting our nation's youth and communities.

While the Institute views literacy as an individual's ability to read, write, speak in English, compute, and solve problems well enough to function on the job, in the family, and in society—reading is the cornerstone for all learning and skill mastery. We learn to read as youngsters, but as we grow older we rely on our reading skill to advance in school and work and to make sense of the world around us. Parents are a child's first teacher, but other caring adults can help children develop and strengthen their reading skills. *Mentors can be those other caring adults.*

*Sandra L. Baxter, Ed.D.
Director*

NATIONAL CARES objectives

- Fill the pipeline of existing local mentoring organizations with caring and committed men and women.
- Communicate to our at-risk youngsters that the adults in their community love and value them and will help them succeed.
- Increase literacy skills, a passion for learning, and academic achievement.
- Increase high school graduation rates among Black students by 10 percent annually.
- End violence in the Black community and the over-incarceration of our young males and females.



volunteer mentors

mission and goals

Our mission is to connect every vulnerable Black youngster with a caring adult. Through local CARES Circles, we recruit volunteers and connect them to established organizations that train mentors.

What is Mentoring?

The National Mentoring Partnership defines mentoring as “a structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character of the mentee.”

Building Circles of CARE. Local CARES Circles are taking hold in communities across the nation, rolling out through coalitions of local organizations. They are incorporating models for innovative gang-, gun-, and violence-prevention models developed by visionary psychiatrists, psychologists and educators.

CARES is mobilizing and connecting already existing mentoring groups with hundreds of thousands of caring and committed adults from every sector and class in the Black community—corporate and public sector employees,

entrepreneurs, union workers, civic and faith leaders, congregations, community activists, fraternities, sororities, and college students—to mentor and secure the educational and lifelong success of vulnerable young people.

We all had a caring person in our lives who helped us rise to where we are today. Young people—even those most challenged—thrive when caring adults show an interest in them, encourage them, and introduce them to a wider world of options than the narrow and painful places that too many Black youngsters call home each day. Don't let myths about mentoring keep you from getting involved.

Myth 1: Mentoring requires a lot of time

Fact: Mentoring does take commitment, but not a lot of time. It is the quality of the relationship that matters. Connecting for four hours a month is enough time to:

- Encourage a child each week
- Be available for a phone call or two
- Listen to challenges, ideas and even their jokes
- Help with problems at school
- Have a lunch or a snack

- Attend a worship service
- Introduce your mentee to other positive young people

Myth 2: Background checks aren't necessary

Fact: Background checks help protect children from predators and pedophiles and maintain accountability to the parents, guardians and organizations responsible for the children being mentored. It is a necessary insurance that children will be nurtured and loved appropriately. Keep in

mind that these background checks are necessary, confidential, and shared only with the agency doing the investigation. Your privacy is protected.

Myth 3: I will feel uncomfortable with a youngster I don't know

Fact: All youngsters are in need of love and affirmation; you only have to be yourself. Tune your ear and listen attentively. Be patient and open your compassionate heart widely. Give your most valuable gifts and share your wisdom and talents generously.



communicate encourage

What you can do:

- Commit to mentoring a child or form a mentoring group with family, friends or colleagues to support a larger number of youngsters in an underserved school, group home, rehabilitation or post-detention program.
- Support organizations that are working to secure the future of vulnerable children. 2.5 million Black children have a parent in prison.
- Recruit the caring adults in your family, faith community, and workplace to volunteer and mentor.

Mentoring models available:

- One-on-one/traditional mentoring—one adult to one youngster
- Group mentoring—a group of adults working with a larger group of youngsters
- Peer mentoring—a caring youngster, perhaps in high school or college, mentoring a younger person
- In-school mentoring—one-on-one mentoring or a group of caring adults giving support to several students or a class

Where does mentoring take place?

- Mentoring can occur in a variety of safe, public places like restaurants, parks, schools, libraries, recreation centers, and places of worship.

What should mentors communicate to youngsters?

Let youngsters know that they are smart, capable, valuable, and worthy of love and respect; that they should not be ashamed of what they don't know; that critical independent thinking and making good decisions are important.

We have a powerful potential in our youth, and we must have the courage to change old ideas and practices so that we may direct their power toward good ends.

—Mary McLeod Bethune

Recruit your **family, friends** and **faith community** to mentor.

Encourage high achievement in our children

- Help them understand the importance of reading, writing, and speaking well.
 - Give youngsters books about our history and great Black people.
 - Instill in them the importance of setting and achieving personal, academic and career goals.
 - If you weren't always a focused and disciplined student, tell them so and how you shifted your thinking and behavior.
 - Help youngsters to see that learning is a life-long journey, the key to self-sufficiency and being able to help our family and community.
 - Encourage mentees to give back to vulnerable youngsters what mentors have given to them.
 - Encourage your mentee to take the courses that prepare them for higher education and career training
- Tell your mentee:
- You **can** afford to go to college. Resources are available.
 - Your only competition is with who you were yesterday. You are working to grow academically and in wisdom and courage every day. Work toward taking challenging college preparatory classes in middle school and high school.
 - Never be ashamed of what you don't know. Ask for help and advice from teachers, counselors, librarians, and mentors, and work hard.
 - You were born to win. You **can** be a high achiever!



the power of literacy

literacy and mentoring matter

Literacy, it's more than reading!

Literacy is "... an individual's ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family, and in society."

— *Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Section 203*

Learn the Literacy Trends

Annually, the National Center for Education Statistics issues the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the nation's "report card" on what America's students know and can do in reading and in other subject areas.

You can find the latest results at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>

The National Institute for Literacy, a federal agency, was created to help our nation better meet some of its current and emerging literacy challenges. It also makes available free literacy publications for families and educators of adults, youth, and children. Visit: www.nifl.gov

For over five years, The Schott Foundation for Public Education has tracked the performance of Black males in public education systems across the nation. It's 2008 report: *Given Half a Chance: The Schott*

50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males, can be found at: <http://www.blackboysreport.org>.

Why Literacy is Important

Literacy skills are the building blocks of high academic achievement and success in life. Low literacy skills are not just a problem for our work life and economy. There are also consequences for keeping families healthy and for improving one's quality of life. Individuals with low health literacy are likely to struggle to find and understand the basic information required for appropriate decision-making on health matters.

foster a love for reading



literacy skills: the building blocks of academic achievement

Learning to read is one of the first skills a child must master to become a capable student. Teachers, parents, and mentors all can play an important role in helping children acquire the skills they need to become good readers. The skills children need include:

- **Phonemic awareness**, or the ability to notice and work with the individual sounds in spoken words
- **Phonics**, or the connection between letters and the sounds of spoken language
- **Fluency**, or the ability to read a text accurately and quickly

- **Vocabulary**, the words we must know to communicate effectively
- **Comprehension**, or making sense of what we read

Literacy Resources You Can Use to Support Your Mentee:

The National Institute for Literacy has resources you can use to help encourage your mentee to develop good skills in reading and learning. Visit www.nifl.gov to:

- Find tutorial and other support programs at the **America's Literacy Directory** for

children, youth, and adults who need help in learning to read.

- Obtain free publications on how children learn to read and to get copies of free materials to share with your mentee and his/her parent.

You can also find children's books and reading activities at **Reading is Fundamental** (RIF). RIF, the nation's oldest and largest non-profit children's literacy organization, prepares and motivates children to read by delivering free books and literacy organizations to those who need them most. Visit: www.rif.org or call 1(877)-RIF-READ

“Every great dream begins with a dreamer...you have within you the strength, the patience and the passion to reach for the stars and change the world.”

—Harriet Tubman

Share a book with your mentee during your time together. Reading with and to children can make a significant difference. Let them know you enjoy books and encourage them to tell you about the books they enjoy.

Here are some things that you can do to help your mentee or the youth in your life to build literacy skills and a love of reading:

Children in First, Second, and Third Grade

- Talk with younger children to help them build listening and speaking skills that support their literacy development.

- Ask your mentee to bring a book from school or home to read to you. Be patient if your mentee reads slowly. Let the child know how proud you are of his or her reading and progress.
- Help your mentee spell and write. Encourage them to write a letter to a family member or friend. Or write a simple story about an activity you've done together.

Middle School and High School Students

The focus of literacy skill building for many adolescents should be deepening background knowledge, expanding vocabulary,

and staying motivated. Middle and high school students who are familiar with the concepts and vocabulary of their school subjects are in a good position to learn more. Understand your mentee's interests and encourage him or her to develop more background knowledge about those subjects. For example, if your mentee is interested in other cultures or the environment, keep your eye out for books, specials on television or podcasts.

Mentors can build on activities like visits to museums or local attractions by sharing websites, magazine stories or other information connected to the activity.

we are the solution

Reading with your mentee for even 10-15 minutes a day can make a difference. Model good reading habits by letting your mentee see you enjoying books.

With the involvement of volunteer mentors and caring communities, young people can find support and enjoy the journey to becoming lifelong readers and learners. We hope you will be inspired to mentor a child who needs a caring adult. Become a catalyst, empower youth and their families to build basic literacy skills and foster a love for reading and learning.

how can you
get involved in
mentoring?

To connect with the
**National CARES Mentoring
Movement** and with a local
mentoring organization, visit
www.caresmentoring.com.



a **pledge** to rescue **our youth**

by **dr. maya angelou**

Young women, young men of color, we add our voices to the voices of your ancestors, who speak to you over ancient seas and across impossible mountain tops.

Come up from the gloom of national neglect; you have already been paid for.

Come out of the shadow of irrational prejudice; you owe no racial debt to history.

The blood of our bodies and the prayers of our souls have bought you a future free from shame and bright beyond the telling of it.

We pledge ourselves and our resources to seek for you clean and well furnished schools, safe and nonthreatening streets, employment which makes use of your talents, but does not degrade your dignity.

You are the best we have.

You are all we have.

You are what we have become.

We pledge you our whole hearts from this day forward.

NATIONAL **CARES mentoring** movement, a call for commitment to secure our young with the support of

100 Black Men of America, Inc.
National Urban League
The Links, Incorporated
YWCA USA

with expertise and resources from the **National Institute for Literacy**, MENTOR, and
and The Twenty-First Century Foundation

in partnership with

National CASA
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America
Concerned Black men
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.
Sigma Pi Phi
National Coalition of 100 Black Women

Mentoring USA
NAACP
United Negro College Fund
Children's Defense Fund
Girl Scouts of the USA
MAD DADS
Operation Hope

United States Navy
ESSENCE
BET J

and also with

A host of other fraternities, sororities,
civil rights organizations, and the major
African-American faith communities

Paid for by the National Institute for Literacy

This Guide contains information about and from public and private organizations for the reader's information. Inclusion does not constitute an endorsement by the National Institute for Literacy or the U.S. Department of Education of any products or services offered or views expressed.

Copywriting/editorial support: B. Denise Hawkins, National Institute for Literacy