

PRESS RELEASE

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Oakland County Youth Assistance Presents “Mentor of the Year” Award

Oakland County, MI (February 8, 2007) – In celebration of National Mentor Month, a special award ceremony took place during the annual Mentors Plus Recognition Banquet honoring Jay Reynolds as this year’s recipient of the “Mentor of the Year” award. Reynolds, a Youth Assistance Mentors Plus volunteer for over six years, was presented the award in recognition of his devoted involvement and his extraordinary commitment to the lives and future of young adults. The award ceremony was held at Santias Banquet Center in Keego Harbor on January 25 in conjunction with “Thank Your Mentor Day,” the official day selected by many mentoring programs as a day to recognize volunteers.

Reynolds connects passionately to his mission as a mentor. He has been a match to four boys over the years – one he has mentored for all six years. Nominated by staff in the Royal Oak Youth Assistance office, he is known as a “model mentor” who leads by example, teaches by modeling, and is unfailingly reliable. He regularly provides encouragement and support to fellow volunteers at the Mentor Plus Committee meetings and often shares information about upcoming activities in the community. At one meeting, he came with a list of 100 great things to do with kids! He attends most of the Youth Assistance sponsored events at the county even in the worst weather because, well, he made a commitment.

“The joy that mentoring brings to Jay Reynolds is apparent every time you hear him talk about his mentees,” commented Judge James Alexander, Chief Judge Pro Tem/Presiding Judge of the Family Division of the Circuit Court. “He is symbolic of the successes our Mentors Plus program has enjoyed all over our county. But as successful as this has been, there is still a significant need for more mentors.”

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The Oakland County Mentors Plus program has been in existence since 1973. Presently, there is a need for more male volunteers to work with at-risk youth who are in its Prevention Program or help those with minor court involvement get back on the right track through its Intervention Program.

Studies from long-term mentoring programs have shown that after only 18 months, those who met with their mentor an average of only three times per month, were 46% less likely than a control group to start using drugs, 27% less likely to start drinking, 53% less likely to skip school, and 37% less likely to skip a class. They were found to be more confident in their schoolwork, less likely to hit someone, and were doing better within their families.

If you have previously considered volunteering as a mentor, why not take the step? Contact Oakland County Youth Assistance at 248-858-0041 for more information. You can make a difference in someone's life!

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An electronic photograph of the event is available. For a copy, please contact Marcia Travis at travism@oakgov.com