

Just a couple months ago there was a house down my street that was caught for drug abuse. At the time there were two kids living in the house when the parents were caught for the selling of drugs. The children in the house were old enough to understand what was happening in their home, which has led them to believe that this is what family life consists of. Since the children have grown up seeing drug deals in action, this bad behavior has caused some children to believe that participating in drugs is normal. There is at least one child every day that is a bystander of someone else's actions. There is not always a way to stop bad behavior from happening because this behavior is not always drug related. There are other issues that children have become bystanders of, which include but not limited to profanity and arguments that occur in their homes. Even in our small town there have been many cases where children are bystanders of someone else's wrongdoings.

Children that live in homes where drug deals and other issues occur have a higher risk of growing up not knowing what family life should consist of. By living in these families the children do not receive proper role models in their life which is a necessary component for positive youth development. Some of these children that have grown up seeing drug and other issues will end up participating in the same kind of activities as they get older. Like I said, we are not able to stop every situation that occurs in Nelson County but we can do something about the influence that these children gain during their youth years. A role model, which is defined as a person someone looks up to, is a very important need in a child's life. But there are many children throughout Nelson County that do not have a role model which causes them to be more likely to have future problems. This lack of a proper role model can lead to an increase in the amount of problems that occur in our community by younger juveniles. By not having a role model a child has less respect for others and he or she tends to be less responsible. When children have proper role models early in their life they can learn life lessons for their future. A role model can show children the difference that being respectful and responsible can make in one's life.

Creating a mentor program in Nelson County would be a solution for these children and teens that need a proper role model. This program will help these kids by placing them with a mentor that is best for them. In order for this program to be put into action in our community, there will be specific resources needed. A major resource that will be needed is a centralized building in town where kids in major neighborhoods can go to. This centralized building is needed so the program can reach the greatest amount of kids that would be able to benefit from the creation of this program. The building would also serve as an area for kids to go if they need to get away from what is going on at their homes. The inside of the building would need an open area for the kids to go play games, but there would also need to be some smaller rooms where students can sit, talk, and do other activities. The support from our community would be a critical component of the success of the program in our community. We would need

local businesses to help by sponsoring the center and the center's activities. The program would need individuals from the community to volunteer to be mentors for the children. When the center hosts events or activities for the children there would have to be adults there to keep the children safe. These adults would need to be volunteers from the community.

The center must have equipment for when there are activities and events hosted for the kids. This equipment would include items such as sports equipment, tables, chairs, and other small items for teens and children to enjoy. All these items could be donated from businesses and families. The center would have to hire at least one person to work at the center during the day. This person would maintain the facility during the day. The worker would have to be someone who is willing to talk to the kids if they were to come by and need someone to talk to. The worker would be in charge of organizing events and activities for the kids throughout the year. The worker would ensure the center has plenty of sponsors, mentors, and volunteers to keep the center running properly. In order to pay the worker and for any needed supplies, there would need to be fundraisers hosted so the program will continue to have money to keep the center running. Some of these fundraisers could include car washes, yard sales, and other ideas that could gain the center some money.

The mentor program would need people from the community to sign up to be mentors. All people that wish to be mentors would be required to pass a background check before they can be matched with a child to help insure each child's safety. Children and volunteers that wish to participate in the program would fill out a short document that states what he or she enjoys doing. The mentor would be matched to each child according to the answers from the paper each individual filled out. Each mentor would meet with the children and get to know each other. The mentor and the child would meet once or twice a month to talk about anything the child needs to say. If the child needs help with homework or anything else the mentor would be there to support and help the child. When the mentor and the child get together throughout the month they would participate in fun activities that the child would enjoy. The purpose of these fun activities would be to keep the child's mind off of what is happening at home.

There would be requirements set that each mentor must follow. In order to keep the children as safe as we can there will have to be some restrictions made as to what type of activities the kids are allowed to participate in with the mentor. Before the mentor and the child are allowed to meet off the center's grounds they will have to meet at the center. Each child's parents must fill out a medical release form and sign a waiver. The waiver will state that any injury that occurs while the child is at the center or with the mentor off campus is not on the center or the individual's insurance. He or she will not be allowed to sue the center or the mentor. Once these requirements have been finalized the child will be allowed to participate in

the program and any activities that the center hosts. The center will be able to host group events where multiple mentors and children can get to know each other.

Many of the children that will join the mentoring program will come from very similar backgrounds. Many children come from homes with only one parent. In addition, this program will help them be able to connect to other children in similar situations. But not all the children that are raised by single parents grow up the same; some have role models while others do not. This program will allow the children to meet each other, and it will give children the ability to encourage each other through what they are going through. These parents try to give their children a good life by working to support the family but as the children get older they need more than just the money. The children need love and support that can only be provided by someone who truly cares for them.

As a senior at Nelson County High School being raised by a single mother I can connect to some of the kids that this center would reach out to. I have seen children that do not have parents who care about them. Not having someone in the child's life that cares about them is detrimental to their childhood. Without a proper role model in a child's life, children will search for a role model and fall into pits with people who seem to care for them. But these supposed friends are truly looking to cause harm by involving he or she in activities which often leads to bad endings.

I have been lucky enough to have a mom that loves and cares about my future and that wants me to achieve. Some children are not as lucky as me because I have a parent that cares so much about me. There are children in my school that get into trouble every day. By having a proper role model to help shape each child, these troubles might be avoided. If only the kids had a role model like I had when I was younger. Then he or she would not get in as much trouble because they would have learned from a proper role model.

Offering role models to these children can benefit them by teaching each child how to show respect and responsibility every day. The role models can demonstrate to the children respect and responsibility by caring for the children and by telling them about how they succeeded. Children learn by example, so when a younger child sees someone older than them doing something they often repeat what they see. For example when a little kid sees an older kid do something they usually end up repeating the same action. Respect and responsibility are both very important characteristics for a child to learn as they grow up because those skills will help with future jobs and endeavors. If a child does not show respect and responsibility, he or she will struggle when they get older and start looking for a job. Respect and Responsibility are so important for a child, and this mentor program is a way for the kids to see why it is important for their future.

Both the children and the community would benefit from the creation of this program because it would provide children a place they can go to instead of causing trouble in the community. Multiple children in our community look for a way to get out of their home environment. In order for children to escape his or her present home situation, they engage in activities that can be both negative and positive. Children feel they must engage in good and bad activities such as drugs and alcohol or hanging out with friends in an attempt to escape their home life. When you ask a teenager that goes to parties and gets high every weekend why they do these things. They say the activities make them feel good for the moment. But what these teens do not understand is that once they come off their high everything they were trying to escape from comes right back. If we were to create a mentoring program in Nelson County teens and children would have somewhere to go when they need to get away from their houses. The center would be a place for the children and teens to go instead of causing harm to their bodies or anyone else.

Lastly, a mentoring program can give children and teens guidance on how to fill out information that he or she can use later. If that is what the child needs the most then the mentor will be there to teach them how to fill out paperwork and whatever else he or she might need help with. There are many teens in my school that have no clue how to properly fill out paperwork such as job applications, FAFSA, and a resume. A mentor can help the students with life decisions such as what college they should attend and what career path is best for them to take. The mentor can also help the teens learn how to both prepare for an interview and obtain the skills necessary for success. The mentors would be able to host a fake interview session at the center so students can get a feel about what an interview is like. The skills that a mentor can teach a child can be used for the rest of their lives and eventually the children would be thankful for everything their mentor did for them.

If this program were put into place in Nelson County it would have many positive effects on our community. The program would supply the teens and children the role model that they need in their life. The children and teens in our community would be the main focus for the creation of the mentoring program. By reaching out to the children in our community that need role models it can also affect the future of Nelson County. When the kids we help have their own families they can become mentors in this program to help other kids in the community that are in need. The mentoring program will teach these children how to be both supportive and a good influence to their children. Families would benefit from the mentoring program. Eventually the impact that this program has on the community would become visible throughout the community and its families.