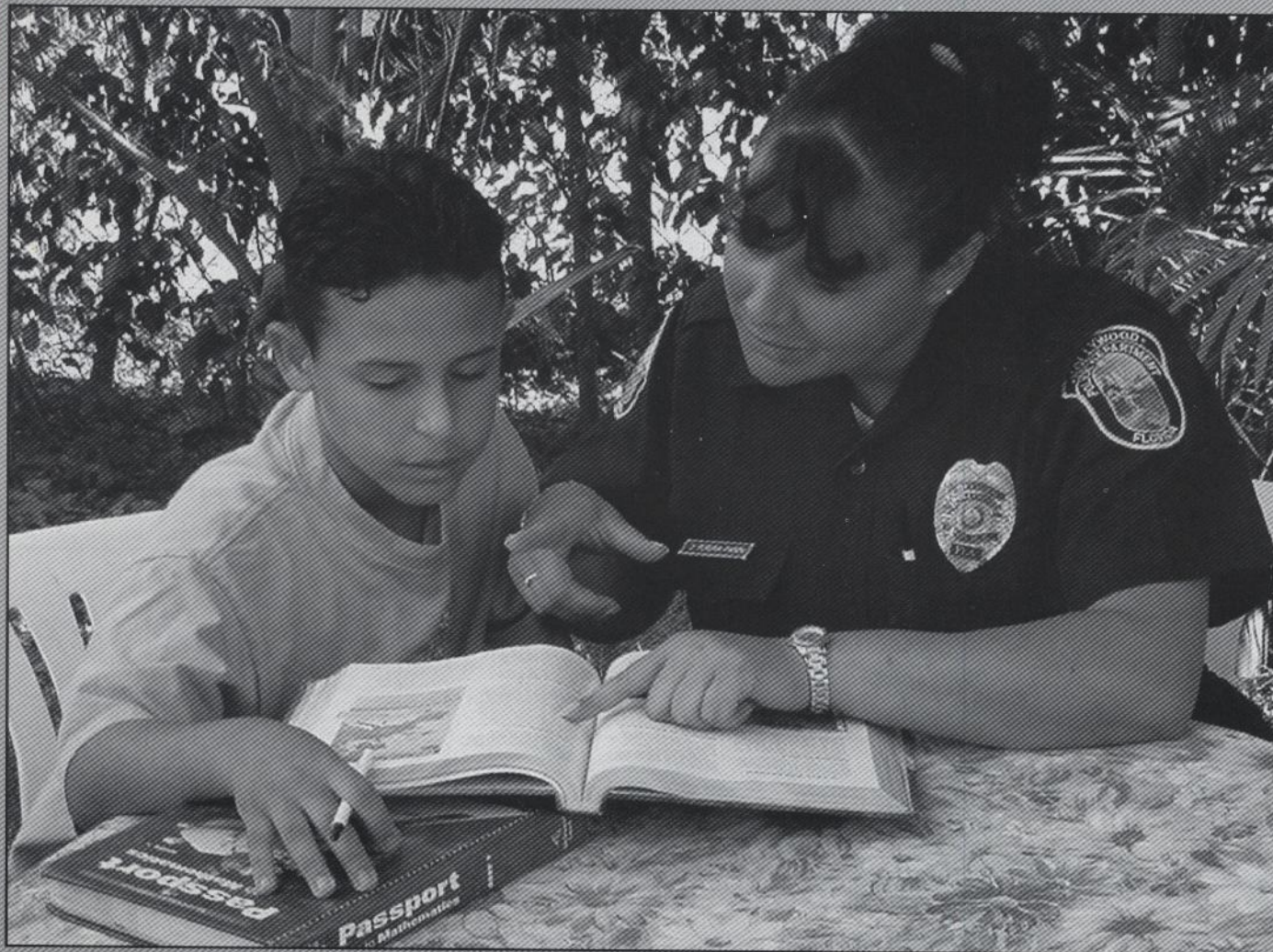


The Official Publication of the  
Florida Police Chiefs Association

# The Florida Police CHIEF

JUNE  
2002



## COPS MENTORING KIDS

THE NEW D.A.R.E.: JUST THE FACTS • M-26 TASER: A SKEPTIC'S JOURNEY • NUTRITIONAL HABITS  
OF POLICE OFFICERS • COPS MENTORING KIDS • FLORIDA'S LAW ENFORCEMENT RECRUITING  
AND RETENTION SERIES • FPCA LEGISLATIVE AWARDS

# Cops Mentoring Kids

*By Lieutenant Tom Sanchez, Hollywood, Florida,  
Police Department, Youth Services Section*

## **Mentor and change a child's life for the better**

Police Departments around the country are embracing mentoring. In Florida, the Governor's Mentoring Initiative allows all State employees to mentor one hour weekly during work. Through the Take Stock in America Program, Florida has 4,000 youths enrolled in the program. The Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office, along with several South Florida Police Departments, participates in mentoring. Hollywood's Mentoring Program has expanded to all City employees, including the Fire Department.

Two years after implementing a Youth Mentoring Program, the Hollywood Florida Police Department has over 50 employees mentoring students. Both sworn and civilian police employees are allowed to mentor a student for an hour a week while working. These mentors report positive experiences while mentoring and feel a sense of satisfaction. Mentors have said, "It is the best part of my week. I look forward to it each week." The School Board of Broward County recruits, screens, and matches mentors with students of similar interest. The students selected are at-risk children that need emotional support.

## **Research**

Researchers have identified three vitally important areas to the success of any mentoring program:

- Screening
- Orientation and training
- Support and supervision

Research also indicates that a young person who meets regularly with a mentor is:

*(Continued on page 18)*



*The adult people are (clockwise): Lt. Tom Sanchez, Officer Diane Paborn-Perriare, and Officer Chris Christianson at Hollywood Park Elementary.*

## Cops Mentoring Kids . . . (Continued from page 17)

- 52% less likely to skip a day of school
- 46% less likely to start using drugs
- 33% less likely to engage in violent behavior
- 27% less likely to start drinking

### Role

The mentor relationship should be one of a friend, not a Police Officer. The mentor's role is not explicitly to change behavior, but also to lend emotional support to the student. A mentor helps the student to believe in himself or herself and to raise the students' aspirations. Educational goals are lacking in a large percentage of at-risk kids, especially minorities. Nationally, the dropout rates from low-income families are 41% for Hispanics, 24% for blacks, and 19% for whites.

### Matching

Programs should make same race and sex matches whenever possible. But at the same time, a youth who has to wait for a particular match is delayed the benefits that a mentor of any race can provide. To increase minority mentors, the Hollywood Police partner with minority youth organizations like Aspira (a Hispanic Leadership Program).

### Recruiting

Police Departments needing to recruit mentors can find suitable candidates through the specialized units in their departments and by addressing Roll Calls. To help encourage participation, departments can advertise the mentoring program's accomplishments through commendations, newsletters, and local media.

Agencies not able to recruit mentors can apply to the government to receive volunteers from AmeriCorps. These volunteers get federal subsidies and educational aid to work for a year with local nonprofit groups in areas such as mentoring and reading. If the President's proposal for "Freedom Corps" passes, AmeriCorps would expand by 25,000 members.

### Scholarships

The Take Stock in America Program offers college scholarships to any mentored student who meets their criteria. There are also a number of other organizations that offer scholarships for youths successfully involved in a mentoring program. Many communities have both public and private organizations that are involved or interested in starting a scholarship program.

### Tracking

Tracking the mentoring activity can be a challenge. In addition to self-reporting, surveys can be filled out by the mentors and students. The supervisor may also decide to have a police mentor visitation log at each school. Computer Aided Dispatch can be used to track visits by having the mentors advise a certain signal on the radio when mentoring.

### Funding

In fiscal year 2003, President Bush has allocated \$25 million for mentoring children of incarcerated parents, and there are a number of grants for hospitals to initiate Mentoring Programs. Partnering with a local hospital is a great way to gain mentors from their staff. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP) has \$16 million in grants to award to new programs.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, everyone benefits by mentoring. Mentoring by Police Officers strengthens the relationship between police and at-risk youth. Another benefit of police mentors is the presence of Police Officers and their marked vehicles at schools. Youths are less likely to be truant from school if they are expecting a visit from their mentor. On several occasions, mentors have diffused disruptive situations while on campus. The presence of an adult authority figure contributes to the overall safety of the school. In addition, it helps strengthen relations between Police Officers in different sections within the department. When different units of a department work together they can have a substantial impact on crime. ☐

### For further information contact:

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America (215) 567-7000,  
[www.bbbsa.org](http://www.bbbsa.org)

Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse, (800) 638-8736, [www.ncjrs.org/ojjhome.htm](http://www.ncjrs.org/ojjhome.htm)

National Mentoring Partnership, (703) 224-2200,  
[www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org)

Take Stock in Children, (888) 322-4673

YMCA of the USA, (312) 977-0031, [www.ymca.net](http://www.ymca.net)



**Franz Tiemann**  
Textiles Sale

2400-A West 8 Lane  
Hialeah, FL 33010  
Ph: (305) 885-9797  
(305) 885-9756  
Fx: (305) 885-9728  
[telasexp@bellsouth.net](mailto:telasexp@bellsouth.net)

PHONE: 305 888-1486



**Westbrook Motors Inc.**

DAY AND NIGHT WRECKER SERVICE

1759 PALM AVENUE  
HIALEAH, FLORIDA

**FIUR**

The Warehouse People®  
The Fiur Organization, Inc.  
Industrial Real Estate Broker

469 West 83rd Street  
Hialeah, Florida 33014-3607  
305-557-7770