

Mentoring Spotlight Interview Questions

1. Tell us about your program. Where are you located? What population are you providing services to?

The Achieving Independence Center (AIC) is located in Center City Philadelphia on 1118 Market Street. We are dedicated to serving foster youth ages 16 to 21 years old; that are aging-out of the foster care system, and transitioning into adulthood. The AIC strives to help its members reach self-sufficiency by offering an array of programs; one in particular being our mentoring program managed by PathWaysPA.

2. What is something a mentor/mentee has learned from their experience with mentoring?

One of our mentoring pairs A. Johnson and M. Brooks have been matched for over one year. Mentor A. Johnson states:

“I have learned more about the difficulties that foster care youth transitioning into adulthood have to face. In addition, I have learned a lot about the experience of a transgendered individual's experience. My mentee has taught me a lot about resiliency!”

3. Is there a special story about a mentoring pair you would like to share? A Mentor or Mentee who's life you have seen improve since joining the program? Tell us about them.

Although, A. Johnson and M. Brooks came from two diverse backgrounds and life experiences; their relationship has truly blossomed over the past year. Since joining the AIC Mentoring Program, mentee, M. Brooks has graduated from high school, enrolled in a Medical Assistant program, and is living independently (out of the foster home). The pair meets on a regular basis; and can most likely be found chatting at their favorite coffee shop.

4. What activity do your mentoring pairs like doing most?

For the past two years, the mentoring pairs have really enjoyed our: Karaoke at Aqua event. This event is so popular because we combine a social and cultural immersion experience. During this activity, mentors and mentees sing their favorite tunes and enjoy Thai and Malaysian cuisine at a local restaurant.

5. Have you reached a benchmark or significant mile stone recently? Are you employing new techniques? Starting a new program?

Yes! From November 5-6th, mentee D. Wilson and Program Supervisor S. Sylvain attended a Youth Summit sponsored by the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) in Virginia. They co-facilitated an interactive workshop on communication and resilience within mentoring relationships for other mentoring providers.

Additionally, this fiscal year we began a prevention program entitled Up in Smoke where presenters from various health organizations discuss the dangers of tobacco consumption, share resources and methods of quitting the habit.

6. In your opinion, what makes mentoring such an asset to the community?

Mentoring positively affects future generations! All youth can benefit from a dedicated and caring adult-figure in their lives. Especially with foster care youth; approaching adulthood can be a frightening time, thus having a mentor by their side it very important.

Please contact Natashja Rinaldo at 215-574-9194 x234 or nrinaldo@aicenter.us for additional information on becoming a volunteer mentor.