

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dayton, OH, January 15, 2008

THE MENTORING COLLABORATIVE ANNOUNCES MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S 2008 OUTSTANDING MENTORS OF YOUTH

Guest Speaker: Dr. Mark C. McGuire, Sr. – Youth Ambassador, Senior Pastor – St. Paul Global Outreach Ministries

***See Attachment for full Bio of Speaker**

Montgomery County Mentoring Collaborative has selected five (5) individuals and one (1) group to receive its sixth annual **OUTSTANDING MENTOR AWARD**.

Community-based agencies nominated individuals who display extraordinary commitment to assisting young people in achieving their full potential by guiding them toward making positive life choices. Recipients of this year's award are:

John Allerding – Montgomery County Juvenile Court Reclaiming Futures

John has been a Natural Helper for two youth in the Drug Court Program where he has shown tireless commitment, patience and time. John retired from Montgomery County Juvenile Probation and returned after retirement to continue working with the youth of the community because it is truly his passion to work with youth by providing care and support. John embodies all of the best qualities needed for an individual providing positive mentorship to youth who are in need of adult guidance and structure.

Kathy Baldrige – Life Resource Centre

Kathy embodies the essence of a mentor through her genuine willingness to “make a difference.” Kathy has the type of personality that immediately “clicks” with young moms. Kathy mentored two young moms, Angie and Ashley, on a weekly basis. This was quite a commitment, but Kathy was determined to make both relationships work. Kathy was a constant source of encouragement for Angie and Ashley and went out of her way to help them search for employment and worked on life skills they needed to get a job. She accompanied them to appointments and did not give up on them. Kathy was able to help Angie secure a \$500 scholarship so that she could attend a STNA program. Angie has completed that program and now has the means to get a higher paying job and hopes to become an RN one day. Kathy has proven that one person CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE . . . it takes perseverance and believing and caring for someone and letting them know you care.

Kathy Bates – Miamisburg Schools Mentor Program

Kathy has been a mentor for two years in the Miamisburg Schools Mentor Program. Kathy currently is mentoring Samantha in a one-to-one mentoring relationship. Samantha comes from a large family where her parents work odd hours to provide for the family. Kathy has been available to help Samantha with projects, assist with homework and take Samantha to school events. Kathy has shown determination in gaining Samantha's trust as well as the families. She has shown Samantha that you can be busy in your own life and still make time to give to others. Kathy helps Samantha to value education, make good choices in life and how to have fun.

Freddie Fields – Jefferson Jr./Sr. High School Mentor Program

Mr. Fields has a full plate being in charge of the In-School Suspension and pinch hitting as the school's Counselor. In addition to his work duties, Mr. Fields finds time to mentor two young men; one in the eighth grade and one in the seventh grade. He has transformed these two young men to become model students. Jalen, Mr. Fields 8th grade mentee, is now excited about his grades and is now talking about the importance of working hard and making good grades. Mr. Fields has met the mentees' parents at their homes. He has taken the young men out to dinner where they had a chance to sit down and dine in a nice restaurant. He has taken them to The Ohio State University for a tour. He takes quality time out of his busy schedule for his mentees and he cares so much for them and they are so much better off with Mr. Fields being their mentor. Mr. Fields not only inspires the student mentees, he inspires everyone he comes in contact with. He is teaching his mentees life skills that they will need in order to successfully survive at school and in the world.

Kelly Schweickart – Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Miami Valley

Kelly has been matched with her Little Sister for about a year and during this time Kelly and her Little Sister get together once a week to do fun and exciting things. Some of their match adventures include going to festivals, parades, getting glamour shots, Miami Valley site seeing, shopping, cooking, playing games, and attending Big Brother Big Sister sponsored match activities. One of the reasons that Kelly exemplifies excellence in her role as a Big Sister is this past Christmas. Knowing the financial circumstances of her Little Sister's single-parent family, Kelly asked her friends, family and co-workers to help her make Christmas special for not only her Little Sister but her entire family. Little Sister, Hailie and her family joined Kelly for Christmas dinner. Although Big Brothers Big Sisters doesn't require Kelly's type of generosity many of our Big Brothers Big Sisters do in fact go above and beyond the call of duty as mentors. Kelly serves as a role model for the brand of Mentoring. Kelly enrolled as a Big Sister to enable a vulnerable child to grow into a resilient young woman by being a mentor, what she learned was that by becoming a mentor she acquired the best gift of all, the gift of friendship.

Wright Patterson Air Force Base – Area Coalition for Education-Excellence Mentors – Parity, Inc.

The mission of the Parity, Inc. Education Initiatives focuses on restoring the value of a quality education, improving youth self-esteem and helping youngsters graduate from high school and mature into productive members of society. Our mentoring program, a partnership among students, mentors, parents, and the Dayton Public Schools, focuses using positive role models to promote academic excellence and social development at local middle schools in the Dayton Public School system. A goal of the Area Coalition for Education is to "inspire public school students to complete their education and provide increased opportunities for experiencing self-esteem. Because of the commonality of our mission, goals and objectives; ACE-E and Parity, Inc., with the support of the Mentoring Collaborative, decided to pool our efforts to offer one-on-one mentoring services to middle school students in the Dayton Public Schools.

No one expected the level of diversity we've experienced from the WPAFB military and civilian community. We have colonels and enlisted military and senior level civilians GS 15 and below – engineers, business professional and executive secretaries. We have also been able to recruit relatives of existing mentors who appreciate what we are attempting to do for our youngsters.

No one expected the degree of commitment we've observed from these volunteers. For example, in addition to struggling to maintain phone contact with mentees whose phones are often disconnected, and multi-tasking to get off from work to have lunch with a mentee who may have been suspended that day, the following are examples of how they have gone "above and beyond" the call of duty;

- One mentor, who is Spanish speaking, not only has agreed to mentor 4 Hispanic children, but also has made the commitment to stick with these youngsters until they graduate from high school.

- Another mentor not only has mentored youngsters for what is now three years, but also has offered personal plane rides to mentees who excel in our three “A” – Attendance, Academic Achievement and Attitude.
- Another mentor, arranged to stay in contact with his mentee after being transferred to Romania.
- One of the newest mentors found out that his mentee is a great fan of the NFL. So, he took the child to an Indianapolis Colts game in Indiana.

These are just a few examples of how much these mentors have contributed to our “at-risk” youngsters. Despite the tremendous surge in duty obligations due to the on-going Global War on Terror, these mentors continue their over-the-top volunteerism to give back to the community and the Dayton Public School district.

Please contact Kim Gambrell, Resource Coordinator, Mentoring Collaborative at 937.236.9965 x2238 or gambrell@mentoringcollaborative.org with any questions or concerns.