

# President Obama Proclaims January as National Mentoring Month

January 3, 2012: President Barack Obama has issued a [proclamation](#) designating January as National Mentoring Month, saying, "Every day, mentors help young Americans face the challenges of growing into adulthood. By setting a positive example and sharing their time, knowledge and experience, mentors play an essential role in preparing our Nation's youth for a bright future. During National Mentoring Month, we celebrate the contributions of all those who cultivate a supportive environment for the next generation, and we recommit to expanding mentorship opportunities across our country."

January 2012 marks the 11th anniversary of National Mentoring Month, an annual media campaign to recruit volunteer mentors for young people. Spearheaded by the Harvard Mentoring Project of the Harvard School of Public Health, MENTOR and the Corporation for National and Community Service, this year's campaign tagline is ***Invest in the Future. Mentor a Child.***

Mentors, backed by quality mentoring programs, play a powerful role in preventing substance abuse and youth violence, as well as boosting academic achievement and workforce readiness. Studies have shown a more than 250 percent return on a \$1 investment in mentoring and a myriad of quality of life benefits to the mentor, too. Mentors help build young people's character and confidence, expand their universe and help them navigate pathways to successful adulthood. Despite this proven impact, the gap between the number of mentors and the number of young people who need a mentor is still too large. While three million young people have a mentor, 15 million need a caring adult mentor in their lives.

"National Mentoring Month gives the mentoring field an opportunity to collectively celebrate the proven impact of quality programs and the impactful service of mentors nationwide while also sounding the call to grow the movement through increased volunteerism and financial investment," said MENTOR's President and CEO David Shapiro. "We thank our national partners across sectors, including the media and funders who make it possible to sound that call, and we thank the *Mentoring Partnerships* and programs that creatively implement and expand the campaign every year and work to close the mentoring gap everyday."

"We feel fortunate that President Obama shined the spotlight on National Mentoring Month in this proclamation, and we applaud his and First Lady Michelle Obama's personal commitment and example through their mentoring programs in the White House," Shapiro added.

In his proclamation, Obama noted, "Last January, we partnered with businesses across America to launch the Corporate Mentoring Challenge, which calls on corporations to begin or expand mentoring programs that pair children with positive role models, foster leadership skills and put them on the path to success in school and beyond. As part of our steadfast commitment to support our service members and their loved ones, we are funding new mentorship opportunities for children from military families. And we are continuing to engage faith and community groups to help recruit mentors who can guide our youth in education, employment and engaged citizenship."

Michelle Obama announced the Corporate Mentoring Challenge at the first National Mentoring Summit last January. MENTOR will again host the Summit, along with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Harvard School of Public Health, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and United Way Worldwide, January 24 and 25 in Washington, D.C. The Summit gives the field and cross-sector partners an opportunity to learn and grow together to better meet the mentoring needs of the nation's young people.

For additional information about National Mentoring Month, visit [SERVE.gov/MENTOR](http://SERVE.gov/MENTOR). For more information and resources on quality youth mentoring and MENTOR's network of *Mentoring Partnerships* and programs, visit [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org).