



QUALITIES OF SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOM MENTORS

- **Personal commitment to be involved with a group of students for an extended time — full school year.** Classroom Mentors have a genuine desire to be part of a group of student's lives, to help them with tough decisions and to see them become the best they can be.
- **Respect for individual students and the group for their abilities and their right to make their own choices in life.** Mentors should not approach the students with the attitude that their own ways are better or that participants need to be rescued. Mentors who convey a sense of respect and equal dignity in the relationship win the trust of their class and the privilege of being an advisor to them.
- **Ability to listen and to accept different points of view.** Most people can find someone who will give advice or express opinions. It's much harder to find someone who will suspend his or her own judgment and really listen. Mentors often help simply by listening, asking thoughtful questions and giving students an opportunity to explore their own thoughts with a minimum of interference. When people feel accepted, they are more likely to ask for and respond to good ideas.
- **Ability to empathize with another person's struggles.** Effective mentors can feel *with* people without feeling pity *for* them. Even without having had the same life experiences, they can empathize with their students' feelings and personal problems.
- **Ability to see solutions and opportunities as well as barriers.** Effective mentors balance a realistic respect for the real and serious problems faced by their students with optimism about finding equally realistic solutions. They are able to make sense of a seeming jumble of issues and point out sensible alternatives.
- **Flexibility and openness.** Effective mentors recognize that relationships take time to develop and that communication is a two-way street. They are willing to take time to get to know their students, to learn new things that are important to their students (music, styles, philosophies, etc.), and even to be changed by their relationship.