

2016 DAVIS 1,000 MENTORS FOR YOUTH CHALLENGE



"This is not the first time in our national history that widening socio-economic gaps have threatened our economy, our democracy, and our values. The specific responses we have pursued to successfully overcome these challenges and restore opportunity have varied in details, but underlying them all was a commitment to invest in other people's children. And underlying that commitment was a deeper sense that those kids, too, were our kids."

--Robert Putnam, "Our Kids"

"By sharing their own stories and offering guidance and advice, mentors can instill a sense of infinite possibility in the hearts and minds of their mentees, demonstrating that with hard work and passion, nothing is beyond their potential."

--President Barack Obama proclaiming January as National Mentoring Month (January 4, 2016)



2016 DAVIS
1,000
MENTORS
FOR YOUTH
CHALLENGE

The City of Davis and the Davis Joint Unified School District (DJUSD) share a steadfast commitment to the youth in our community. From individual classrooms to Camp Putah summer camp; from the Davis Bridge afterschool homework club to city-run recreational swimming, gymnastics, or basketball programs and the Davis Children's Nutcracker; to a plethora of parks and the Brunelle Performing Arts Center; our distinct institutions and programming strive to put children first.

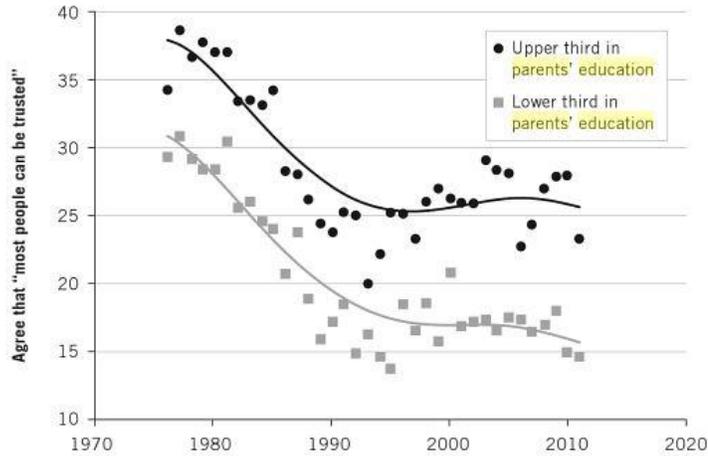
Thankfully, we are not alone. A wide range of local businesses and community organizations partner with us and have developed programs to engage volunteers and help youth access opportunities and realize their potential. This shared trust results in "social capital" – ties to family and friends, and involvement in civic organizations, service clubs, faith-based communities, arts, athletics, music and more – which has a powerful effect on the sense of belonging and well-being for both young people and adults.

Yes, in Davis we care about kids and we have resources to support them. But are we doing enough?

The Mentor Effect, the first nationally representative survey of youth on the topic of mentoring produced by the National Mentoring Partnership (<http://www.mentoring.org/>), found that **one in three**

youth did not have a mentor when growing up. The 2014 report projected 16 million youth will reach adulthood without connecting to a mentor even once.

Figure 5.5: Social trust, by parents' education, 12th graders, 1976–2011



Source: Monitoring the Future annual surveys.

reduced price lunch program, an indication of their fragile socio-economic status. That percentage has been gradually on the rise in our town.

So the City Council and the School Board are in complete agreement. It's time to kick it up a notch! We believe that it's time for additional collaboration between the City and School District to rally the resources of the Davis community to be even more purposeful in support of our children.

On Wednesday, January 20 at 6 PM at the Blanchard Room of the Mary L. Stephens Davis Branch Library we will launch the **2016 Davis 1,000 Mentors for Youth Challenge**. Mentors of all ages are invited to join this community cause and help reach and support school-aged children. Our goal is to have a minimum of 1,000 new volunteers supporting Davis youth by this December.

Through the City cityofdavis.org and DJUSD <http://www.djUSD.net/volunteer> websites and the Challenge Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/2016-Davis-1000-Mentors-for-Youth-Challenge-533842946782306/info/?tab=page_info), we will promote opportunities for you to participate – in the time and manner most convenient for you.

Many mentorship opportunities already exist, such as internships through the good auspices of Davis Chamber of Commerce member businesses, or Writing Buddies for second and third graders at Montgomery Elementary led by community volunteers Robbie and Tony Fanning, or the Dialogic Reading Project with transitional kindergartners and kindergartners at Korematsu and Montgomery Elementary Schools led by long-time youth activist Martha Beetley.

"I've seen children bloom with just a half hour a week with a caring mentor who offers them individual attention and encouragement," says Beetley. "At the same time, the adults experience a sense of connectedness and willingness to pay it forward that just can't be realized in any other way."

And yes, we'll keep our children safe. All volunteers will be screened through existing organizational protocols before any individual works directly with youth.

In *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*, Robert Putnam mines the data of the Monitoring the Future annual surveys (<http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/>) to illustrate declining national trends in social trust, with a widening opportunity gap between those children whose parents have higher education and those who don't. Illustration source: *Our Kids* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015), p. 220.

In the 2014-15 school year, the Davis Joint Unified School District served 8,626 school age children. 21.7% percent of those participated in the federal free or

As always, *The Davis Enterprise* will be a strong community partner in this endeavor. In the coming months, expect to see stories about Davis mentors and the youth they serve, and the programs with which you can get involved and contribute.

We live in an extraordinary community, one that never fails to support our kids. Please join us in the New Year by meeting this new challenge: 1,000 Mentors for Youth.

Davis City Council and School Board members:

Tom Adams, Barbara Archer, Robb Davis, Alan Fernandes, Lucas Frerichs, Brett Lee, Susan Lovenburg, Rochelle Swanson, Madhavi Sunder and Dan Wolk