

## NORTHFORCE's New Team Member Leads Year Two of Mentor Connection

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It's been a busy fall for [NORTHFORCE](#), the Northland region's talent development initiative jointly administered by Northspan and the Area Partnership for Economic Expansion (APEX). NORTHFORCE has launched another round of its Mentor Connection program and brought on Krissy Johnson to serve as its Young Professional and Development Consultant.

Mentor Connection, a long-running program that moved under the NORTHFORCE umbrella last year, connects local college students with professional mentors who help build their networks in the Duluth area and coach them on life in the working world. This year, Mentor Connection has 56 participating students, all of whom have been successfully matched with a mentor in their field. Approximately one half are students in the College of Business at the University of Minnesota Duluth, while the other half are from the College of St. Scholastica. The program gives the students a window into the Duluth area professional world and helps retain them in the region after graduation.

**Mentor Connection is made possible by strategic support from:**

Area Partnership  
for Economic  
Expansion (APEX)

College of St.  
Scholastica

University of  
Minnesota Duluth

Mentor Connection  
Advisory  
Committee

The student-mentor pairs are divided into nine industry groups, which allow for small group interaction within particular fields. The program consists of six formal events, with opportunities to interact one-on-one with mentors and in small and large groups. Through these sessions, students to hone their personal branding, engage in speed networking, and reflect on their experiences to date. The pairs will attend the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce's annual holiday party in early December to network with community leaders, and later events will take place at Glensheen and the Kitchi Gammi Club before Mentor Connection culminates in a graduation ceremony.

Krissy is a NORTHFORCE success story herself: after commuting from Duluth to the Twin Cities for a year, she stumbled on NORTHFORCE, where she found her current position. She brings a strong background in business, from the corporate world to working with small start-ups, and has been involved in mentoring programs that leave her well-prepared to guide an initiative such as Mentor Connection. Northspan is pleased to have Krissy on the NORTHFORCE team and looks forward to seeing the program grow under her leadership.