

## Seedling: A Prescription for Success



### **What do we do?**

As a Seedling mentor we are a consistent (we show up each week), supportive (we are that trusted listener, a sounding board for that student) presence of an adult friend. We are this person, this source of encouragement and empathy for our mentee. We go each week and sometimes are met with a big smile, a fist bump or high five, maybe even a hug. Sometimes though, those little reassurances are missing. And we might start to wonder - how do we know we are making a difference?

### **Why and how we do it**

The Seedling Mentor Program is based on research, including research on Adverse Childhood Experiences. The research tells us we are serving a population that is often hidden and overlooked and has experienced a trauma or at least something that is highly stressful with lasting impacts. Research also tells us that resiliency is paramount to being able to function and flourish despite those traumas or stressors. In order to help our mentees build resiliency our goal is to reduce risk factors and add in protective factors. We pay attention to them. We praise and encourage them. We empathize with the challenges they face and give them a safe and constructive place to figure out how to handle them. This leads to enhanced coping skills and adaptive capacities. We do this in partnership with the school. The school is a social hub for these students filled with peers, teachers and other adults. They are trusted by families and thus are a safe space for a mentoring relationship to flourish.

### **How do we know it works?**

Returning mentors may remember emails and reminders you receive in May each year asking you to complete a survey regarding your experience as a Seedling Mentor. That survey is part of a much bigger overall evaluation of the Seedling Mentor Program, the results of which tell us each year that we are making a difference and how. In addition to those Mentor Surveys, Seedling also conducts surveys with our School Contacts, with Teachers of elementary students and with Seedling mentees themselves. Within these surveys, we are able to measure things like Social Acceptance, Interpersonal Relationships, Attendance, Attitude Toward School, Academic Effort, Academic Self-Confidence, College Aspirations and Hope. The results of these evaluations tell us that we are impacting these students in varied and positive ways. The most recent annual evaluations are always available on the Seedling website which you can view by [clicking here](#). The 2016-17 School Year evaluation is anticipated to be posted in late November.