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Oxford Educational Foundation Marks National Mentoring Month

This January marks the 15th annual National Mentoring Month, and the Oxford Educational Foundation's goal is to expand quality mentoring opportunities in the Oxford Area School District to connect more of our young people with caring adults.

"There is a powerful mentoring effect demonstrated by research and the experiences of young people who are connected to a mentor in real life" said Dr. Raymond A. Fischer, OEF Executive Director. "Mentoring is linked to improved academic, social and economic prospects for young people, and that ultimately strengthens our community."

Research has shown that when matched through a quality mentoring program, mentors can play a powerful role in providing young people with the tools to make responsible decisions, stay focused and engaged in school, and reduce or avoid risky behavior like skipping school, drug use and other negative activities.

For example, in a recent national report called *The Mentoring Effect*, young people who were at-risk for not completing high school but who had a mentor were 55 percent more likely to be enrolled in college than those who did not have a mentor. They were also:

- 81% more likely to report participating regularly in sports or extracurricular activities.
- 78% more likely to volunteer regularly in their communities.
- More than twice as likely to say they held a leadership position in a club or sports team.

This same report found that **one in three young people in our country will grow up without a mentor.**

Today, in our community there are students who could benefit from having a mentor. As we focus on engaging more community members in volunteering as mentors, we will share a simple message: Mentor IN REAL LIFE. Mentoring relationships are basic human connections that let a young person know that they matter and mentors frequently report back that their relationships make them feel like someone is there to help them make the right choices in life.

More mentors are needed. If you know of anyone who could give an hour or two a week to serve as a mentor (maybe you?), please contact OEF's Volunteer Coordinator, Karen Olivieri at oxfordedfound@yahoo.com