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BILL SNYDER, CHAIR

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Mentoring Matters in Kansas
*Celebrating five years of keeping Kansas' youth safe
through background check grant funding*

TOPEKA, KAN. – Every January during the past five years, in honor of Kansas Mentoring Month, Volunteer Kansas has awarded background check funding to Kansas Mentors for distribution to qualifying mentoring organizations. This grant funding allows mentoring organizations in our state, that meet minimum qualifications, the ability to conduct Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) background checks on potential mentors. Since the inception of this grant, mentoring programs have been able to safely match 9,554 youth with adult mentors.

“Kansas’ mentoring programs are reporting significant declines in funding while an increase in the need for services,” said Cheri Faunce, director of Kansas Mentors. “These funds are a strategic investment to ensure more young Kansans have access to a safe and caring adult role model.”

Background checks are an essential component of the screening process to help guarantee the safety of youth involved in mentoring programs. The cost of criminal background checks, however, is substantial, considering every mentor should complete and pass a check before they can begin mentoring. This can be a huge funding barrier that can potentially limit the number of young people a program serves, or even worse, put youth in danger should a mentoring program forgo the background check because of the cost.

Nola Brown, director of Volunteer Kansas, said: “The goal of Volunteer Kansas is to increase volunteerism across our state. Mentoring is one of the most important and rewarding ways to volunteer. With budget cuts to so many mentoring programs, our fear was children would miss out on opportunities for positive direction from qualified adults simply because reputable mentoring programs could no longer afford the necessary KBI background checks. We hope this grant will bridge the gap, encourage continued recruitment of volunteer mentors and ultimately result in positive life outcomes for kids in Kansas who are matched with caring mentors.”

For the complete application instructions, blank application and w-9 form, visit www.KansasMentors.org or contact Kansas Mentors by phone at (785) 368-6211 or mentor@ksde.org.

Kansas Mentors is a statewide mentoring partnership that connects existing mentoring programs with one another and serves as a resource center for communities wishing to start a program. Kansas Mentors works to promote the great mentoring opportunities found throughout the state. We believe that all children deserve a caring adult role model in their lives to support and guide them; our mission is to help make this a reality.

Volunteer Kansas, Inc., is a 501(c)(3) charity based in Wichita, Kan. Volunteerkansas.org is the organization's website devoted to increasing volunteerism in the state of Kansas and providing a hub for Kansans to find organizations that may need volunteer or material help. The website is a free service to individuals and organizations. The vision of Volunteer Kansas is to move Kansas from the state ranking of number five for volunteerism to number one.



KANSAS VOLUNTEER COMMISSION
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volunteerkansas.org