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**Volunteer Kansas awards Kansas Mentors
\$30,000 KBI Background Check Grant**

Funds will help ensure safety of Kansas youth engaged in mentoring programs

WICHITA, Kan., January 21, 2014 – Volunteer Kansas, for the fourth year in a row, has awarded funding to the Kansas Mentors program for distribution to qualifying mentoring organizations. The \$30,000 grant will afford mentoring organizations in Kansas the ability to conduct KBI background checks on potential mentors. Last year, nearly two dozen mentoring organizations took advantage of this funding, resulting in the safe matching of nearly 3,000 mentors/mentees throughout the state.

“January is Kansas Mentoring Month and seems the perfect time to announce this grant and the importance of high-quality mentoring programs in our state,” said Volunteer Kansas Executive Director Nola Brown. “The need for high-quality, caring mentors continues to increase every year and the urge is to quickly place someone interested in mentoring with a child in need. As well intentioned as this is, it is not the best approach for our youth. Background checks are an essential step in ensuring the safety of mentees.”

Kansas Mentors has been chosen as the fiduciary agent for the KBI Background Check Grant disbursement because of their work in connecting existing mentoring programs with one another, their guidance to communities wishing to start mentoring programs and their focus on helping new and existing mentoring programs commit to maintaining a high set of standards that will ensure a quality mentoring experience.

“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. We are thrilled to continue our partnership with Volunteer Kansas—and are grateful for their passion to keep Kansas youth safe.”

Mentoring organizations who would like to benefit from this grant should visit www.KansasMentors.org or contact Cheri Faunce with Kansas Mentors at 785-368-6211 to determine if they qualify.

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 other Kansans who 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 four for volunteerism to number one.

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.