**GRIT Village Meeting**

**May 9, 2023**

Speaker: Alicia Stromme Tobin, Executive Director, Safe Yakima Valley

Safe Yakima Valley is a two-pronged program, helping to provide a drug-free environment and providing mentors for youth 10-17 years old.

Alicia invites community members to the Hide in Plain Sight event on May 31, 2023 (see the attached flyer in English and Spanish). Parents/caregivers will walk through a mock teen bedroom and try to identify 70+ items, which can indicate problem or risky behaviors.

Alicia outlined Safe’s youth mentoring program which has a mission to enhance the academic, social, and emotional growth of Yakima County youth through meaningful connections with mentors. She encourages qualifying adults to contribute their time as a mentor, enhancing both the youth’s and the adult’s lives.

Tamia Welch is Safe’s primary contact for community members interested in becoming a mentor and for schools that wish to participate in our youth mentoring program. She may be reached at safespecialist@yakima.org or by calling (509)945-2445.

**Mentor Program information per the attached PowerPoint**

*Mentee Criteria:*

* Be at least 18 years of age and reside in Yakima County.
* Be willing to adhere to all Safe Yakima Valley Mentoring Program policies and procedures.
* Agree to a 9-month time commitment, spending 4 hours per month with mentee.
* Be willing to submit monthly mentoring report forms.
* Have access to an automobile or reliable transportation.
* Have a clean criminal history.

*Success Stories:*

* Increased number of participating schools from 1 to 7 schools inless than 1 year.
* Quadrupled number of mentees in less than 1 year.
* Ike/Whitney Pilot
* More schools on deck for fall.
* Truancy rates down, improved academic performance, increased interest in attending college, improved behaviors.

*Mentor Requirements*

* Submitted application.
* Completed interview.
* Provide a minimum 3 references.
* Satisfactory background check.
* Attend orientation and required training(s).
* Signed Handbook (code of conduct & responsibilities)

*Mentee Criteria*

* Be 10-17 years old (younger mentees may be accepted on a case-by-case basis).
* Resides in Yakima County.
* Demonstrate a desire to participate in the program and abide by Safe Yakima Valley procedures.
* Parental/guardian permission to participate in the program.
* Agree to a 9 month commitment to the program, spending one hour a week with the mentor.
* Complete the screening procedure.
* Safe Yakima Valley's Mentoring Program is PREVENTION-based.

*Benefits of Becoming a Mentor*

* Make a lasting impact in a young person's life.
* Flexibility to meet when your schedule allows.
* Build professional and social connections in the mentor community.
* Have fun! We plan monthly events to connect with your mentee.
* We support you so you don't have to do it alone.
* Strengthen your resume and expand professional references.

*Students with a Mentor Demonstrate:*

* Enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence.
* Stronger relationships with family, teachers and peers.
* Decreased likelihood of substance misuse.
* Increased school performance and graduation rates.
* Higher college enrollment rates.
* Stronger positive lifestyle choices.
* Increased sense of belonging in schools.
* Improved communication skills.
* Improved interpersonal skills

*Success Stories*

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