

SCHOOL-BASED TEAM MENTORING PROGRAM

The Issue

Following the civil unrest after the Rodney King verdict in 1992, the National Mentoring Partnership and several prominent citizens funded the creation of Los Angeles Team Mentoring (LATM) to provide middle school aged youth with positive alternatives to gang violence, drug abuse, and the negative role models that dominated their communities. Research has shown that youth involved in gang violence and drug use are more likely to enter the criminal justice system. Mentoring is a proven intervention strategy. The funders wanted a plan that would create thousands of mentoring relationships annually.

“The number one student-cited benefit is increased social skills leading to improved relationships, attitudes, and academic performance.”

- Public / Private Ventures,
2001 Group Mentoring Impact Study

Our Client's Challenge

With the South Central Los Angeles in crisis, the Los Angeles Unified School District teachers' union on the verge of a strike, and key funders pressing the National Mentoring Partnership for a plan, DMT was hired to craft a mentoring solution.

National Mentoring Partnership's leaders were clear: they wanted thousands of high-risk youth in mentoring relationships within a year. DMT needed to think outside the box and develop an innovative approach that could be implemented immediately and scaled up rapidly. Failure would mean the loss of an incredible opportunity to position mentoring as a solution to problems confronting disadvantaged youth.

Enter Dare Mighty Things

Working closely with LATM, LA School District officials, and key donors, DMT designed a school-based team mentoring model that could produce over 1,000 mentoring relationships within nine months. The model would engage mentors and youth in small teams, each working through a curriculum designed to cultivate individual mentoring relationships and develop leadership capabilities within middle school youth. DMT worked with National Mentoring Partnership staff to implement the plan by developing the curriculum, creating the operations and training tools, hiring the program staff and launching the model.

DMT provided intensive, onsite technical assistance for several years to improve and expand the program, while building revenue streams that would sustain the program after the initial venture capital ran out. Since 1992, LATM has positively impacted over 13,000 students in twelve middle schools, and has been replicated in several other cities.

Results

Participants reported change in behavior:

- Better Self-Esteem: 68%
- Better Attitude Toward Family: 72%
- Better School Participation: 80%

