



Submitted by: Bruce Montville
Company/Organization: LifeWise

Challenge or Opportunity:

In 2003, LifeWise was happy and content in delivering our Water Guardians, a Source Water Protection Enrichment Program to middle school students in their classrooms, but realized that 30% of the 5th to 8th grade students would never participate. We also found, after some research, that those same students would also be more apt to drop-out of school.

Approach or Solution:

Later that year we launched Wildcat Youth Mentors, engaging young adult role models to provide trusting friendships, applying their presence physically, 1 on 1, at the schools - consistently, each week. Our school liaisons became the guidance departments, as they easily knew which students needed a boost. Our consultant friend trained our first group of mentors and the rest is history. We have honed our WYM Program to become known for its therapeutic listening and changing attitudes that result in cutting down absences, reducing poor social behavior and improving academic productivity.

Impact:

Today, WYM is recognized by the NH Health and Human Services Department as a provider of therapeutic mentoring (no other NH nonprofit has this distinction). Presently, WYM serves 12 schools (including those teaching children with disabilities). We have over 100 mentors and now expect volunteers from many other colleges. The WYM formula for dropout prevention is working so well, we are planning to take our "magic" statewide. LifeWise simply could not ignore our 2003 discovery of need.