

MENTORING FOR COLLEGE ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY:
EXPANDING AN AMERICAN TRADITION

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Introduction

From historical documents and oral histories, mentoring has been a tradition in the United States from the time of the founding fathers to the present. Among those who dominate our public and private institutions, including the government and the private sector, and prestige occupations such as physicians and lawyers, mentoring continues to prepare the next generation of decision-makers. Today, mentoring deserves further discussion as a means of access to and success in higher education and employment for historically underrepresented, poor and otherwise under-resourced youth. Mentoring can serve many purposes: to help students earn better grades, to resist substance use and abuse, to foster a growth mindset, to overcome institutional barriers to higher education, and to assist in the transition to a college environment. This paper examines the history of mentoring, its role in the acquisition of social and cultural capital, the efficacy of mentoring, and the urgency for increased mentoring of racial minority and impoverished youth.

History of Mentoring

The term Mentor first appeared in Homer's *The Odyssey*, as the character of Mentor, friend of Odysseus and escort to Telemachus, son of Odysseus. Athena, the goddess of war and wisdom, acts as Mentor to guide Telemachus and to assist Odysseus during

journey home after the Trojan War.¹ Since antiquity, mentors impart comprehensive advice to ensure sound mind and body of their charges. Universally, mentors direct and inspire youth to realize their potential for greatness through a relationship typically marked by communication, supervised progress towards attaining a skill or set of skills that may include academic, personal or social areas, modeling of behaviors, and encouragement. Through sustained communication over a period of time, mentors establish rapport and gain the trust of their protege. In what became a popular 18th century child-rearing guide, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, English philosopher John Locke addressed the necessity of a suitable tutor for the education and social grooming of young men. Although the word “breeding” is not typically used in contemporary writing because of its connotation to eugenics, the following quote explains how the tutor, or governor, contributes to the formation of civility as a lifelong trait:

To form a young gentleman as he should be, 'tis it his *governor* should himself be well-bred, understand the ways of carriage and measures of civility in all the variety of persons, times, and places, and keep his pupil, as much as his age requires, constantly to the observation of them.

Nothing can give it but good company and observation joined together . . .

Breeding is that which sets a gloss upon all his other good qualities and

¹ The Goddess Athena in Homer's *Odyssey*, *Museum of the Goddess Athena*, accessed July 23, 2017. <http://www.goddess-athena.org/Museum/Texts/Odyssey.htm>

renders them useful to him in procuring the esteem and good will of all that he comes near. ²

In the next paragraph, he continues, “Good qualities are the substantial riches of the mind, but it is good breeding [that] sets them off, and he that will be acceptable must give beauty as well as strength to his actions.” ³Civility, moderate diet, social dancing, drawing, some knowledge of Latin and facility in French, and European travel, formed the character and culture of upper-class young men during Locke’s era.

In 1749 Virginia, seventeen-year-old George Washington wrote to his mentor, Lord Fairfax, regarding advice on surveying.⁴ In October 1750, Lord Fairfax gave George over 400 acres of land in northern Virginia.⁵ Although Washington hailed from landed gentry, his relationship with Lord Fairfax and the newly acquired land propelled him into a higher social class in Virginia. Thomas Jefferson, in an autobiographical account written at age 77, eloquently noted the transformational aspect of his relationship with William Small while he was at the College of William and Mary:

It was my great good fortune, and what probably fixed the destinies of my life that Dr. Wm. Small of Scotland was then professor of Mathematics, a man profound in most of the useful branches of science, with a happy

² John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education (1693) and Of the Conduct of the Understanding*, (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996), 65.

³ Ibid.

⁴ From George Washington to Thomas, Lord Fairfax, October-November 1749, *Founders Online National Archives*, accessed July 23, 2017, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/02-01-02-0006>

⁵ Land Grant, from Thomas, Lord Fairfax, 20 October 1750, *Founders Online National Archives*, accessed July 23, 2017, <https://founders.archives.gov/?q=lord%20fairfax&s=1111311111&sa=&r=10&sr=>

talent of communication, correct and gentlemanly manners, & an enlarged & liberal mind. He, most happily for me, became soon attached to me & made me his daily companion when not engaged in the school; and from his conversation I got my first views of the expansion of science & of the system of things in which we are placed. ⁶

Small, prior to returning to Europe, introduced Jefferson to lawyer George Wythe. “Mr. Wythe continued to be my faithful and beloved Mentor in youth, and my most affectionate friend through life. In 1767, he led me into the practice of the law at the bar of the General court, at which I continued until the revolution shut up the courts of justice.” ⁷ Jefferson enjoyed the benefit of an mentor as a university student (Dr. Small) and continued with a new mentor, Mr. Wythe, who supervised his foray into the legal profession. The practice of mentoring and of financial patronage thrived as a common practice among the American 18th century elite. Similar to other institutions previously dominated by white, land-owning and mainly Protestant men (secondary and higher education, property ownership, voting, the professions), mentoring is an ingrained practice among the ruling elite. Demographics show that about 50% of children in public schools are poor, and of this group, a disproportionate amount are Latino or Black. ⁸ Mentoring has great potential if available with the same consistency and fervor

⁶ Autobiography by Thomas Jefferson 1743-1790, *The Avalon Project Yale Law School*, accessed on July 23, 2017, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/jeffauto.asp.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Southern Education Foundation, *A New Majority: Low Income Students Now a Majority in the Nation's Public Schools*, January 2015, accessed on July 25, 2017, <http://www.southerneducation.org/getattachment/4ac62e27-5260-47a5-9d02-14896ec3a531/A-New-Majority-2015-Update-Low-Income-Students-Now.aspx>.

for historically underrepresented and poor students as it has been for the intellectually and economically elite. Mentoring can serve as a panacea to overcome inequalities in income, status, and historical disenfranchisement. Perhaps we have reached the point when it simply makes sense for our country's economic and social survival to have structures in place so that all children earn a quality education. If we create pathways to higher education and increase social and cultural capital for our neediest students, the bastions of power in government, finance and the professions will eventually reflect the country's demographics.

Despite famous mentoring pairs within the white, high SES populations, some notable people of color have achieved academic and career success with the help of a mentor. In 1958, John Lewis, who contemplated applying to the segregated Troy State University, met with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Ralph Abernathy, and others. Although Lewis ultimately did not apply to Troy State, he continued to maintain a relationship with Dr. King. Later that year after King was arrested in Montgomery, Lewis wrote him a letter on behalf of his faith-based youth group, stating, "We are with you 100%." ⁹ King replied to Lewis, "These are the type of gestures that serve to give one strength and courage in the midst of a difficult struggle." ¹⁰ This exchange highlights the mutual benefits of mentoring for both student and mentor. Since 1987, Lewis has served the state of Georgia as a member of the House of Representatives. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, in an interview for the Princeton Alumni Review, credits her mentor,

⁹ Letters, Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project, accessed July 23, 2017, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/king-papers/about-papers-project>

¹⁰ Ibid.

Peter Winn, one of her professors at Princeton, for helping her to succeed in college despite her disadvantaged background:

. . . you need to find a mentor sensitive to these kids' needs who can help them take in the process step by step, and not let them be blinded by how much there is to do. It's not that you have to do remedial training. But you do have to help them navigate an existence that is very different from the one they have come from. ¹¹

Winn describes Sotomayor's unique qualities when she was his student. "My first impressions of Sonia were mixed. She did not radiate charm or magnetism, nor was she polished or cool. But she had an appealing sincerity and directness, and there was something centered about her that was unusual among first-year minority students at Princeton." ¹² The Winn-Sotomayor pair demonstrates a highly beneficial relationship to the mentee despite differences in ethnicity and sociocultural/socioeconomic status.

Efficacy of Mentoring

While these examples highlight individuals possessing extraordinary levels of resilience, motivation and work ethic, most people would agree that mentoring has an positive effect on youth. An impact study in 1995 by Private/Public Ventures showed the benefit

¹¹ Mark F. Bernstein, *A Moment with . . . Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor '76*, Princeton Alumni Weekly, March 6 2013, accessed on July 23, 2017, <https://paw.princeton.edu/article/moment-supreme-court-justice-sonia-sotomayor-%E2%80%9976>.

¹² Peter Winn, *Mentor at Princeton Recalls Sotomayor's Evolution*, The Washington Post, July 12, 2009, accessed on July 23, 2017, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/07/09/AR2009070902391.html?sid=ST2009071302618>.

of having a Big Brother/Big Sister among youth ages 10-16 (n=4221) with similar socioeconomic status (80% impoverished) from eight cities (Columbus, Houston, Minneapolis, Rochester, Philadelphia, Wichita, Phoenix, San Antonio). Over eighteen months, youth who participated in the Big Brother/Big Sister program, which consisted of weekly meetings of approximately three to four hours with a mentor, had lower rates of first-time drug use, alcohol use, better familial interactions, higher GPAs, and increased confidence in their abilities compared to those who had not.¹³ The New York State Mentoring program cites the Public/Private Ventures study to support mentoring's efficacy. The program, originally started in 1984 by Governor Mario Cuomo and Matilda Cuomo, has been reinstated by current governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo. Prospective mentors may apply through an online application, then are subsequently screened and if accepted, participate in training prior to working with a student.¹⁴ In 2014, through presidential memorandum, President Obama created the My Brother's Keeper Task Force to provide mentoring programs at the state and local level for boys and young men of color who were deemed at-risk to overcome achievement gaps and obstacles to success.¹⁵ According to the 2016 report, 250,000 communities across the country have received funding (from an alliance of nonprofit organizations such as the

¹³ Joseph P. Tierney and Jean Baldwin Grossman with Nancy L. Resch, *Making a Difference; An Impact Study of Big Brother Big Sister*, Public/Private Ventures, 2000, accessed July 23, 2017, <http://www.issuelab.org/resources/11972/11972.pdf>

¹⁴ The New York State Mentoring Program, January 2015, accessed July 23, 2017, <https://www.ny.gov/new-york-state-mentoring-program/new-york-state-mentoring-program#top>

¹⁵ The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, *Fact Sheet: My Brother's Keeper--Two Years of Expanding Opportunity & Creating Pathways for Success*, April 22, 2016, accessed July 25, 2017, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/04/22/fact-sheet-my-brothers-keeper-%E2%80%93-two-years-expanding-opportunity-creating>

College Board and the Ford Foundation) for mentoring programs for both males and females. After accessing the volunteer link and conducting a cursory search for mentoring within a 15-mile radius of a New York suburb, available opportunities included Big Brother/Big Sister, a writing enrichment program for girls, and a program for student-athletes.¹⁶ A report from My Brother's Keeper notes the long-standing disparities among young men of color regarding high school graduation and college degree attainment, and the resulting disadvantages to the United States' economy from unemployment and incarceration among Hispanic and Black males.¹⁷ In *The Trouble With Black Boys*, Pedro Noguera supports mentoring as "a tangible action that can be taken immediately to respond to the needs of Black youth, particularly males who often face the greatest peril."¹⁸ Mentoring serves as a means to mitigate the deleterious effects of attending schools with high poverty rates, a dearth of resources (including lack of access to advanced classes), and environmental barriers including health issues and the absence of a father figure (which renders Black males more vulnerable to at-risk behaviors). Given the demographics of poverty and that nearly half of public school children now are economically disadvantaged, mentoring warrants further attention as a local and personalized method to counter the institutional and cultural barriers among our neediest youth. Indeed, mentors may nurture the natural qualities of

¹⁶ Corporation for National and Community Service, *Mentor, the National Mentoring Partnership*, accessed July 25, 2017, <https://www.serve.gov/mentor/search#mentor-search>

¹⁷ Executive Office of the President of the United States, *Economic Costs of Youth Disadvantage and High-Return Opportunities for Change*, July 2015, accessed July 25, 2017 https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/mbk_report_final_update1.pdf

¹⁸ Pedro Noguera, *The Trouble With Black Boys and Other Reflections on Race, Equity and the Future of Public Education*. San Francisco, CA: J. Wiley & Sons, 2008, 38.

pride and pugnacity, extolled by William James, to promulgate increased effort and achievement.¹⁹

Mentoring as a Means to Acquire Social and Cultural Capital

The acquisition of social capital has been a challenge for racial minority and poor youth in the United States. To gain social capital, youth need to have functioning and supportive relationships with institutional agents, or mentors (those who may serve as a liaison to gatekeepers of opportunity, such college admissions offices and employers). According to Stanton-Salazar (1997), the institutional agent (mentor) provides a fund of knowledge both academically and culturally, bridges the distance between student and the gatekeepers, serves as advocate, role model, and a source of moral and emotional support.²⁰ More recently, sociologist Anthony Jack explored the role of social and cultural capital for black students from private and public schools transitioning to an elite college environment.²¹ From Jack's qualitative study (n=35), he coined the terms, "Privileged Poor" and "Doubly Disadvantaged." The Privileged Poor benefited from their experience at private boarding schools, where they gained social and cultural capital through a structured, caring environment and close proximity to white, high SES peers. They also acclimated to an academically rigorous institution where accessing one's professors during office hours was the norm. The Doubly Disadvantaged students

¹⁹ William James, *Talks To Teacher on Psychology: And to Students on Some of Life's Ideals* (Rockville, MD: Arc Manor, 2008), p. 65.

²⁰ Ricardo Stanton-Salazar, *A Social Capital Framework for Understanding the Socialization of Racial Minority Children and Youth*. *Harvard Educational Review*, Spring 1997, vol. 67(1).

²¹ Anthony A. Jack, *Culture Shock Revisited: The Social and Cultural Contingencies to Class Marginality*. *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 29, No. 2, June 2014.

arrived at college lacking an understanding of the social and cultural mores that dominate elite colleges, and encountering new terms (e.g., syllabus, office hours) and expectations in a demanding academic environment. One of the Privileged Poor students, who described his transition to college as easy, said, “I learned how to interact [with professors] because of my boarding school professors. Going to office hours, talking to them, going deeper than academic issues, talking about more personal things. My freshman year, I was very closed off. I started opening up to [my adviser] each year. My senior year [was] the best because I was comfortable.” From this testimony, it is interesting to note that the student’s relationship with the adviser progressed over time. The school’s infrastructure allowed for advisers to remain with the same student throughout the four years of high school. In contrast, a Doubly Disadvantaged student, speaking about her Privileged Poor peers, commented, “Midtown is an extension of high school for them. You don’t realize how much privilege that is. [They] have that sense of entitlement instilled in [them]. I didn’t know that I could complain and get something done... didn’t know the school had a duty to me. I still feel bad about seeking help.” (Midtown is the pseudonym for the private college that the students in the study attend.) Jack discusses an important difference among the Privileged Poor and the Doubly Disadvantaged, in that the Privileged Poor assume an integrationist mentality at college, while the Doubly Disadvantaged have a largely isolationist response. For the Doubly Disadvantaged, college is the first time that they are fully immersed in middle-class culture. Their Privileged Poor peers already experienced the transition to middle-class/upper-class culture at a younger age upon entry to private school around

age 14, an age where perhaps it is easier to adapt to a new environment, according to Jack. Coincidentally, Big Brother/Big Sister programs typically match students up to age 14, with most participants between ages 10 and 16. A study of working-class first-generation and non-first-generation white males at a university in the South noted that peer interaction with non-first generation students and campus support for coursework aided their transition to college.²² Although poor and working-class white students also encounter barriers in a college environment, theirs is largely related to socioeconomic class differences and a lack of cultural capital, similar to Jack's Doubly Disadvantaged without the racial overtones.

To date, a number of colleges have instituted first-generation transitioning or mentoring programs. The term, "first-generation" encompasses students who are the first in their immediate families to graduate from a four-year college. Harvard, the University of Chicago, and Smith College boast comprehensive programs that include mentoring, student groups, mentoring with alumni and funding for enrichment such as study abroad opportunities and internships. I'm First is an online community funded by the Gates Foundation, Facebook and other sponsors that supports prospective and current first-generation students through a first-generation-friendly college search tool and the sharing of real-life stories of first-generation students who persevered the transition to college.²³ A branch of this website, UStrive, includes an application for prospective online mentors, who, if accepted after a background screening, are expected to spend

²² Roseanne Moscetti and Cynthia Hudley, *Measuring Social Capital Among First-Generation and Non-First-Generation Working-Class, White Males*, *Journal of College Admission*, Winter 2008, 25-30, accessed July 23, 2017 <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ829418.pdf>.

²³ I'm First, accessed July 26, 2017, <http://www.imfirst.org/#!>

at least an hour per week assisting a first-generation high school student with the college application process.

A rapidly growing means of providing mentoring and other supports to facilitate college readiness and access for needy students is the community-based organization (CBO). CBOs may be publicly or privately funded, and they may work with students (usually in the middle and high school years) in the community, the school, or through an integrated approach by working with students in both settings. CBOs are uniquely positioned to help students in ways that schools may not because of bureaucracies, liabilities and FERPA. They offer comprehensive services, a focus on youth development through enrichment activities, flexibility in programming and, through cultural awareness and responsiveness, trusting relationships with the students and their families. Although evidence-based research is limited, a 2009 study from the American Youth Policy Forum of 23 direct service organizations found that students in CBO programs were more likely to earn good grades, attend school, enroll in advanced courses, and enroll in four-year colleges.²⁴ Anecdotally, from conversations and presentations with CBO counselors, the mentoring relationship of counselor as coach, cheerleader, and confidante, as well as the regular one-to-one meetings and follow-up, define the success of these programs.

Mentoring: Another White Privilege?

²⁴ National Access College Network, The Role of Community-Based Organizations in the College Access and Success Movement - IHEP, October 2012, 2-3, Accessed July 26, 2017, http://www.ihep.org/sites/default/files/uploads/docs/pubs/pcn_roleofcbo.pdf.

If mentoring, whether through strong teacher or adviser relationships, familial role models, neighbors, and acquaintances, consisting of explicit or tacit guidance, is part of middle-class culture, and if, historically, the dominant culture has been shaped by white, Protestant males, mentoring can be considered a privilege that is prevalent among white middle- and upper-middle class students. Mentoring fits the definition of white privilege in that it is ubiquitous in mainstream culture so that it renders invisible. Zetzer (2015) refers to white privilege as “the superglue of white supremacy, an invisible adhesive that binds even the most well-meaning white people (Wolf 1995) to the status quo.”²⁵ The very act of defining mentoring brings it into the public consciousness. Inequities exist between youth who have mentors and those who do not. There are challenges to creating a readiness and acceptance of mentoring within working-class and poor communities. Students may be more comfortable with the informal mentors that they may have through positive role models in their family or neighborhood, if they exist. Despite whatever socioemotional benefits informal mentors may provide, they may not be exemplars of the social and cultural capital needed for upward mobility. The American Dream Score quiz, featured on PBS and designed by Bob McKinnon of GALEWILL, an organization dedicated to social justice and change, calculates factors such as poverty, family functioning, neighborhood, luck, schools and impact of mentors as contributors to one’s degree of economic stability and happiness.²⁶ In the book, *The Dream Hoarders*, Richard Reeves berates the top 20% of earners in the United

²⁵ Heidi Zetzer, *White Privilege: The Luxury of Undivided Attention* in Bergo, Bettina, and Tracey Nicholls. 2015. *“I Don’t See Color” : Personal and Critical Perspectives on White Privilege*. University Park, Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press, 2015. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 24, 2017).

²⁶ Bob McKinnon, American Dream Score quiz, accessed July 25, 2017, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/chasing-the-dream/your-american-dream-score/>.

States as hoarders of opportunity. They maintain a “glass floor” for their own children and subscribe to a NIMBY (not-in-my-backyard) mentality, resisting socioeconomic integration of neighborhoods and schools.²⁷ Reeves advocates for shared resources. Perhaps this philosophy will saturate popular opinion in a generation or two out of necessity depending on the availability of economic and environmental resources. For now, it does not seem feasible given that middle-class families clamor for opportunity for themselves and their offspring, and most people do not shirk from using privilege and connections as needed. According to a 2015 report from the federal government, the achievement gap in high school completion rates has narrowed somewhat from 2012 to 2015.²⁸ However, college completion rates for whites has increased dramatically from 29 to 43 percent over the last 10 years, and has crept up slowly for blacks (6 percent) and Latinos (7 percent) in the same period. The rate of Asian American degree completion is most dramatic, with a 20 percent increase.²⁹

Looking at poverty level, in 2013, Pell grant recipients had a 51 percent six-year college graduation rate, compared to 65 percent for non-recipients.³⁰

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²⁷ Annie Lowrey, "The Hoarding of the American Dream," The Atlantic, June 16, 2017, accessed July 24, 2017,

<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/06/the-hoarding-of-the-american-dream/530481/>.

²⁸ "Achievement Gap Narrows as High School Graduation Rates for Minority Students Improve Faster than Rest of Nation," U.S. Department of Education, March 16, 2015, , accessed July 26, 2017, <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/achievement-gap-narrows-high-school-graduation-rates-minority-students-improve-faster-rest-nation>.

²⁹ "College graduation rates rise, but racial gaps persist and men still out-earn women," The Hechinger Report, May 26, 2016, accessed July 26, 2017,

<http://hechingerreport.org/college-graduation-rates-rise-racial-gaps-persist-men-still-earn-women/>

³⁰ "An unprecedented look at Pell Grant graduation rates from 1,149 schools," The Hechinger Report, September 24, 2015, , accessed July 26, 2017,

<http://hechingerreport.org/an-unprecedented-look-at-pell-grant-graduation-rates-from-1149-schools/>

A more pragmatic approach is to make the argument for universal upward mobility as part of our economic survival and global competitiveness. If the achievement gap in the United States had been closed in 1998, in 2008, the country's gross domestic product (GDP) would have been \$1.3 to \$2.3 trillion higher than the recorded \$14.9 trillion.³¹ In a report from the Brookings Institution, Philip Levine argues that the private sector and NGOs should invest in community-based mentoring programs such as Big Brother/Big Sister. Currently, Big Brother/Big Sister costs about \$1300 per child. Although Levine cites the benefits of mentoring, especially for youth with a single parent or no parent in the home (30% of U.S. children; 60% of black U.S. children), he holds that there is not sufficient evidence-based outcome data to support governmental expenditures for mentoring. Levine considers investing in mentoring an altruistic pursuit better suited to the private sector and foundations, unless altruism becomes a priority for the federal government.³²

Infrastructural Barriers that Perpetuate the Achievement Gap

Although an increase in mentoring for children who are disadvantaged would likely help to close the achievement gap, a number of barriers persist that are polemical and insidious in the United States. Housing patterns continue to enforce de facto segregation patterns, particularly in the Northeast, and achievement gap data is most

³¹ Byron G. Auguste, Bryan Hancock, and Martha Laboissière, "The economic cost of the US education gap," McKinsey & Company, , accessed July 26, 2017, <http://www.mckinsey.com/industries/social-sector/our-insights/the-economic-cost-of-the-us-education-gap>

³² Melissa S. Kearney and Benjamin H. Harris, eds., "Policies to Address Poverty in America," The Hamilton Project, June, 2014, accessed June 25, 2017 http://www.hamiltonproject.org/assets/files/policies_address_poverty_in_america_full_book.pdf
Retrieved July 25, 2017.

dramatic in this region in terms of disparities in test scores between white students and students of color. Even the most urban, “liberal” parents in New York balked at proposed socioeconomic and racial mixing at their children’s neighborhood schools.³³ Upscale communities in suburban Westchester county continue to struggle with the integration of low- and working-class housing in communities.³⁴ Nationally, the dollar cost of living in an area with high-performing schools averages increases substantially depending on the town and region, particularly in the Northeast. Access to quality health care, from mothers’ prenatal care to in utero through adolescence, highlights another disparity between students who perform well in school and those who do not. A recent study of African-American youth ages 17 to 20 with low SES from rural Georgia found that overall, students with self-control and resiliency enjoyed greater psychosocial health but demonstrated rapid immune cell aging. Although resilient youth were less likely to use drugs or to be depressed, they experienced high levels of stress and are prone to obesity, pre-diabetes, and other chronic health concerns.³⁵ Supportive social networks and mentoring perhaps could mitigate the stress and promote both sound mind and body in the Lockean tradition.

³³ Nikole Hannah-jones, "Choosing a School for My Daughter in a Segregated City," The New York Times, June 09, 2016, , accessed July 25, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/12/magazine/choosing-a-school-for-my-daughter-in-a-segregated-city.html>.

³⁴ Sarah Maslin Nir, "For Westchester, 11th Time Is Charm in Fight Over Fair Housing," The New York Times, July 21, 2017, , accessed July 25, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/21/nyregion/westchester-fair-housing-hud-trump.html>.

³⁵ Gregory E. Miller, Tianyi Yu, Edith Chen, and Gene H. Brody, "Self-control forecasts better psychosocial outcomes but faster epigenetic aging in low-SES," PNAS, August 1, 2015, vol. 112, no. 33, retrieved July 24, 2017, <http://www.pnas.org/content/112/33/10325.full.pdf?sid=b3dda7ac-de27-4c17-872f-f3c34716bf54>

Conclusion and Recommendations

Mentoring has been in existence for centuries, informally and formally, as part of a privileged upbringing. Mentoring needs to be widespread for our neediest youth in the United States. We face social and economic peril if we do not increase high school graduation rates and degree attainment for our most vulnerable youth. We have largely dormant cadres of potential mentors in college and graduate students, young professionals, and retirees. Educators in the United States have espoused the same mantra of the importance of family in a child's achievement. The role of family is to be valued and integrated as feasible into a child's education. However, educators cannot retreat to the lack of family involvement and/or student dearth of social and cultural capital to absolve the civil responsibility to ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed in school and access to a free and appropriate education. To give every child a chance, perhaps we need to change our concept of "family" to include teachers, community mentors, coaches, and any other significant adults helping youth. It is highly unlikely that we will return to a society dominated by two-parent, intact families with children, particularly if emerging patterns of generational economic stagnation and downward mobility endure. Mentoring continues to be an underutilized intervention that holds appeal for those who advocate for lean governmental spending and for those who uphold values of social justice and equality. Philanthropists have a unique opportunity to invest in mentoring programs that have measurable quantitative and qualitative results whether the mentoring takes place in the community, school or as an integrated

effort. More longitudinal studies and data are needed to support the positive results for both the youth and adult mentors involved. As a form of civic engagement, mentoring can foster further volunteer efforts and community involvement. Overall, mentoring has unlimited potential to nurture our diversity and demographics, and to transform adversity into opportunity.

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