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Dear Prospective Mentor:

You have made the first step in making a difference in the life of a Chicago youth by inquiring about the mentor program at HFS Chicago Scholars. If you can find a few hours a month to help a scholar with a dream, you are in the right place. Since 1992, the award-winning HFS Chicago Scholars (HFS) has helped young men and women in high school achieve their educational aspirations. HFS began its concept to help a small group of economically disadvantaged and academically motivated 13-year old students and now it has grown into one of the largest scholarship organizations in the city of Chicago. For the 2011-2012 Academic School Year, we will assist close to 100 scholars attend some of Chicago's finest private high schools.

HFS provides partial high school scholarships for academically motivated yet economically disadvantaged young men and women. Each year prospective candidates (eighth graders) go through a rigorous and lengthy application and interview process to be considered as an HFS Chicago Scholar. Students are selected based on their academic performance, non-academic activities and financial need. A select few applicants meet the difficult requirements necessary to receive a scholarship.

An important part of the HFS Chicago Scholars program is providing our scholars a role model to support them through their high school years. This is where you can get involved as a mentor. The impact that a mentor makes on a scholar's life is critical as it can leave a **positive impression** that will impact that scholar's life as a young adult.

We would ask that you consider becoming a mentor—in essence, a big brother or big sister—for the coming school year. Please take a moment to fill out the attached application and join us in another year of molding a young scholar's life. You can make a difference and this is the perfect opportunity. Applications can be returned by e-mail (dpepper@hfschicagoscholars.com), via fax (312-421-4071) or postal mail.

Please see additional attached information for details on the expectations and responsibilities of an HFS Chicago Scholars mentor. You can also pass the application on to a friend or co-worker who may be interested in participating. If you have any questions, please contact me at 312-421-4070. Thank you in advance. We hope that you will consider assisting our dynamic scholars. You will find more information about our program on our website at www.hfschicagoscholars.com

Sincerely,

Desiree Pepper-Venzant
Executive Director

HFS Chicago Scholars

Working to educate Chicago's future.

Mentoring Program Overview:

The mentoring program is a critical element of HFS Chicago Scholars. Our mentors provide guidance, assistance and friendship to our scholars, all of whom are embarking on very challenging paths to achieve their educational goals. The most critical element is **regular meetings and contact between the mentor and scholar**. Mentors and Scholars meet as a group 10-12 times each year. Mentors stay connected with their scholar regularly via phone or email. One of the main requirements of becoming a mentor is your genuine desire to enter into the life of an inner-city child and share your time, guidance, and talents. As has been mentioned before, the average monthly commitment is a few hours. We also ask that you touch base with your scholar by way of a 10-15 minute phone call a few times a month. The mentor schedule is designed to be flexible in order to give young professionals with busy schedules the opportunity to get involved with Chicago's youth. During the course of the school year, attendance is required at several short program functions. Remaining meetings are set with your scholar.

We are very excited about the upcoming year. The mentor-scholar events schedule is set early each year and distributed to all mentors shortly thereafter. Most of our events are held at **Children of Peace School, 1900 W. Taylor Street** from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm (unless otherwise specified). The mentor is only one of the players on the team needed to help the scholar; teachers and parents are crucial as well. All HFS parents are earnestly looking to improve their child's life in ways not merely academic; most are also drawn to the mentoring and role-modeling component.

You will find that the parents are quite willing to accept you as a friend and helper to the scholar. Students, in general, very often improve academically because of the positive attitude derived from the individual attention and encouragement from the mentor. High school students can still be somewhat impressionable, and the attitudes they develop at this point in life will probably decide their future success. If you develop a friendship with your scholar and you are excited about both academic and non-academic components of the scholar's life, then your scholar will develop solid attitudes towards his/her overall development.

The worst enemy of a mentor is discouragement. Do not believe for a moment that you are not having an impact on the scholars if his/her grades don't improve, or if you think you are not getting through to him/her. At the very least, just by being there, you are doing him/her a tremendous good, and in some cases, you could be giving your scholar more personal attention than he/she receives all week. You are helping him/her to learn to communicate, and are giving your scholar a great deal more feeling of self worth than he/she would have had without you. Many mentors say that they've probably learned more than the scholar learned from the whole experience. Always know that you are doing much good here at HFS Chicago Scholars.