



Mentors Matter

By Shawnta S. Barnes – January 31, 2019

January is National Mentoring Month. I have benefited from mentors throughout childhood and in adulthood. You are never too old to have a mentor, and you don't have to be perfect to mentor someone else.

January is the perfect time for National Mentoring Month. When the new year rolls around, many people think of ways to improve themselves. What about supporting someone else and helping him or her improve? The beginning of a new year should not only be about helping yourself, but it should also be about helping others.

As a person who is in my 13th year as an educator, I have seen the impact mentors have on students. As much as teachers try to fill that gap and support students, there are way more students than teachers. It can be easier in the elementary setting, but as an educator that has mostly worked in the secondary setting, it can be hard to make those connections like a mentor can do one-on-one.

I encourage you to consider mentoring one child. Even if the child comes from a stable two-parent home as I did, a mentor can be helpful. Kids don't always want their parents to know they are struggling. They don't want to disappoint them. A mentor can be a safe place for a child to share his or her struggles and to gain strategies or at minimum a listening ear.

If you want to mentor a child, contact a school by your home and ask how you can get involved or connect with a local mentoring organization. When we support children through mentoring, we are supporting our communities and improving the life of a child.