



FRIENDSFIRST™

MENTORLIFE



Happy New Year!

We hope the holidays were a fun and relaxing time for you and yours. As students return to school and our program staff re-connects with their mentors, there is a lot happening at **FRIENDS FIRST**.

FRIENDS FIRST received three grants in the fall of 2016 to continue our programs with youth, their families and the communities in which we live and work. These include: a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for a three-year, multi-state mentoring opportunity that includes partners in Detroit, Atlanta, Dallas and Cullman, Ala.; a grant from the Office of Health and Human Services for Sexual Risk Avoidance - focused programming; and a grant through the Colorado Department of Education's Title V grants.



FRIENDS FIRST Staff Kickoff - Jan 5, 2017

Thanks in part to those new grants, our office looks a little different than it did a few months ago as we added several new staff members. With three new program coordinators, a new development manager, a new evaluation assistant, a new grant manager and a new communications coordinator, we're thrilled to start a new year with new voices and contributors collaborating with our veteran staff members. You can read more about our [new staff on our website](#).

To cap 2016, we had a great Colorado Gives Day, surpassing \$20,000 in donations. We're always amazed by the support of the communities we serve. We thank everyone who gave to **FRIENDS FIRST** on Dec. 6. We are grateful for our existing partnerships and can't wait to build new ones in 2017.

FRIENDS FIRST Celebrates National Mentoring Month

January is National Mentoring month, and we're celebrating with folks across the country to recognize all mentors for the work they do in the lives of others. This year, our executive director Elycia, and our program director Russel, will be speaking at the National Mentoring Conference on Feb. 1 in Washington D.C. We're very excited for this opportunity to share the mission of **FRIENDS FIRST** on a national stage.

This month is special to us as it is a chance to celebrate our work. MENTORLIFE is something that we promote as a great way to go about life, always having someone investing in us and in turn, we invest in others. FRIENDS FIRST puts in an average of 50,000 service hours per year, working with 30 public school partners. We currently have 120 mentors and 300 mentees in our programs, and 46 states have implemented our programming over our 24-year history.

To celebrate National Mentoring Month, we would love to hear your stories. If you have a mentoring story you'd like to share, please tag us on our Facebook page or send us a note at info@friendsfirst.org.

THE MENTORING EFFECT

in real life

One in three young people are growing up without a mentor.

This is the mentoring gap in America.



1 in 3

This means that **one-third** of our nation's young people are growing up without a mentor to offer real life guidance. For young people who face a variety of risk factors that could lead them to become disconnected from school and work, the mentoring effect is linked to significant positive outcomes.

WITH A MENTOR, AT-RISK YOUTH ARE:

-  **52%** less likely than their peers to skip a day of school
-  **55%** more likely to be enrolled in college
-  **46%** less likely than their peers to start using drugs
-  **81%** more likely to report participating regularly in sports or extracurricular activities
-  **78%** more likely to volunteer regularly in their communities
-  **130%** more than twice as likely to say that they held a leadership position in a club or sports team
-  **90%** Respondents who had a mentor said they are now interested in becoming mentors

 **MENTOR**

www.mentoring.org

2017 Mentor Life Summit is Jan. 28

IN YOUR ELEMENT
2017 *FUSION OF AN IDEAL MENTOR:
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MentorLife Summit
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Strength

2017
9AM-4PM
Check-in begins @8:15AM
Jan. 28, 2017
CU Denver Student Commons Building
1201 Larimer St. Denver, CO 80204

The MentorLife Summit provides ongoing leadership training for mentors and powerful tools to encourage mentors to continue making healthy, positive choices. Students receive high-energy, motivational messages from renowned youth speakers and attend practical workshops.

Learn more:

Phone: 720.981.9193
Email: awilliams@friendsfirst.org
Web: FRIENDSFIRST.org



January 28 is our annual **Mentor Life Summit**, where our mentors spend one day being encouraged to continue the course of mentoring and learning new ways to grow their relationships.

This is a valuable, impactful experience led by our program staff. This year's keynote speaker is Dr. LaMarr Shields, whose advocacy for youth and those who work with them is unparalleled. His passion and message of successful living stimulates the minds, hearts, and actions of men, women, and youth to help them cope with adversity and create success in their lives.

The event will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday the 28th at CU Denver. If a student you know is a mentor in a **FRIENDS FIRST** program, please remind them to speak with their

program coordinator as this is a required mentor event.

Please get in touch if you would like more information, or if you're interested in partnering with us or volunteering at this year's Mentor Life Summit. Give us a call at **720.981.9193**, visit us at friendsfirst.org or email **FRIENDS FIRST** educator and program coordinator **Anesha Williams** - awilliams@friendsfirst.org.

This is simply the start of many exciting announcements and events planned for 2017. We look forward to sharing them with you as they take place!

As always, we thank you for your continued support of FRIENDS FIRST.

Upcoming Events

Jan. 28, 2017 - 9 am to 4 pm

Mentor Life Summit - *In Your Element*

Make a difference!

Interested in learning more about FRIENDS FIRST or would like to support our programs by making a donation?

Please click [here](#) to visit our website.

