

Match of the Month

Meet Molly and Ellie!

Molly and Ellie have been matched since September 2019. They have had so much fun doing a variety of activities together including going to movies, swimming, decorating for every holiday, and running around at Chester Park. Molly's favorite activity is ice skating! The match faced some challenges due to COVID-19, but they stayed in touch with letters and phone calls. Molly celebrated her birthday in April, and although they couldn't celebrate in-person, Ellie made it a special day by surprising Molly with a huge "Happy Birthday, Molly" sign in her front yard. A few months ago Molly had surgery and even though the match was not able to go out and have fun, Ellie stopped over with snacks and crafts to keep Molly busy while she recovered. The last time they hung out they had so much fun making gingerbread houses together and driving through Bentleyville!



Matchiversaries

Mentee	Mentor	Match Date	Mentee	Mentor	Match Date
Vivica	Sydney Bartz	1/02/2020	Amelia	Claire Musech	1/20/2020
Brynn	Jamie Jago	1/04/2020	Lilliana	Rebecca Haavik	1/21/2020
Calliope	Leanne LeNeau	1/06/2019	Gabriel	Jerry Madsen	1/30/2020
Journie	Meghan Lozinski	1/15/2018			
Damion	Todd White	1/19/2016			

Setting Roots into 2021

By Sonja Wildwood, MA, LPCC clinical therapist
with The Hills Youth & Family Services

Happy New Year! I hope this finds you all doing well and feeling healthy. After busy holidays and in settling into a new year, many people take some time early in the year to reflect, recharge, and to set goals (or intentions). It has been an active and for most, a stressful several months to year across the globe. Whether you are engaging in any of these traditions or not, I wanted to share some of my favorite tips and skills for grounding to help slow down and sink into the year ahead. Many of these skills I use with kids of all ages, so you can share them with the youth in your life too.



1. **Belly breath** – I've talked about this one before, but it's breathing from your diaphragm. As you breathe in, breathe into the area below your rib cage, aiming to expand your belly with your in breath. As you breathe out, your stomach should fall back to its normal position. There are several great YouTube videos for this skill for all ages.
2. **Mountain Pose** – Tadasana from yoga practice – there are variations to this pose but most typically it is standing straight up and down, spine and pelvis aligned with both feet flat on the floor, hands just out from your sides, palms forward, eyes closed or gently resting. This pose is powerful helping us to take a break from our usual hunch and help your body realign. We can picture ourselves rooting into the earth. Take several breaths here and pair with a positive affirmation.
3. **5 Things** – This is a sensory skill (a skill that uses our senses). Take a moment, name 5 things that you can see (name the objects), 4 things that you can hear, 3 things that you can feel (reach out to touch these), 2 things that you can smell, and 1 thing that you can taste. For younger kids, I will adapt to 1 thing for each sense.
4. **Journaling** – One of my favorite exercises to do with a journal is to follow a prompt or question and then write everything that comes through (this takes writing quickly and without censoring my thoughts) either for a set time or until there is nothing left to write. Another idea is a daily prompt or a simply a daily reflection. You can adapt the prompts and journals to fit the age of youth. For some youth, an art/drawing journal may be a better fit. I like asking a child to draw how they are feeling or express a specific feeling through art.
5. **Move** – A big reason that we become disconnected and checked out is because our bodies are in a stress response and are not always sensing an end to the stress. This can cause our bodies to continue to respond as though in crisis. Moving after a stressful day or moment can help our bodies return to baseline. Movement of any kind (from stretching to dancing to a song on the radio to hiking in the park) is also a protective factor for managing stress and for emotional and physical health.



However you decide to enter in the new year, I hope you do so with both feet on the ground helping to support and ground you for the year ahead.

Do you have questions or want to share an experience? Contact Sonja at 218-623-6476 or at swildwood@thehillsyfs.org

Mentor North partners with Cambia Hills, a program of The Hills Youth and Family Services, to offer mental health consultation, education, and support. Check out their website at www.thehillsyfs.org

Upcoming Activities

JANUARY is
National
Mentoring
Month

National Mentoring Month is celebrated throughout the month of January with the aim of expanding quality mentoring opportunities to connect more of our community's young people with caring adults. As part of this campaign, Mentor North is observing I Am a Mentor Day on Thursday, January 7th and Thank Your Mentor Day on Friday, January 29th. I Am a Mentor Day is a day for volunteer mentors to celebrate their role and spend time reflecting on the ways that their mentees have enhanced their world, while Thank Your Mentor Day is a day to pause and acknowledge with gratitude the mentors in our

lives. From all of us here at Mentor North, THANK YOU MENTORS! Everyone is invited to celebrate National Mentoring Month with us throughout the month of January. Visit our social media to learn more!



? Trivia Night ?

Do you have Mentor North Trivia on your calendar? Trivia happens the first Tuesday of each month at 5:00pm LIVE on Facebook! Mark your calendar today so you don't miss out, and be sure to watch social media for reminders and any updates!

Fundraising Updates

Thank you for your support of Mentor North during Give to the Max Day and our recent silent auction!



In January, Mentor North will be partnering with Riverside Soy Candles for a candle selling fundraiser. More information to come on social media, our website, and via email.



For the latest events and updates, be sure to check us out on social media. Find us @mentornorth on Instagram and Twitter and @mentorduluth and @mentorsuperior on Facebook.



206 W 4th St.
Suite 202
Duluth, MN 55806

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Contact Us



Erin Moldowski
Mentor North Executive Director
218-606-2772
emoldowski@mentorduluth.org

Karen Valdez
Mentor Duluth Program Advocate
218-606-2285
kvaldez@mentorduluth.org

Rebecca Alsum
Mentor North Director of Programs
218-606-2568
ralsum@mentorduluth.org

Porsha Cline
Mentor Duluth Program Advocate
218-606-2558
pcline@mentorduluth.org

Brooke Joyce
Office Administrator and Mentor
Duluth Program Advocate
218-606-2536
bjoyce@mentorduluth.org

Becka Tuinei-Williams
Mentor Superior Program Advocate
218-606-2789
rtuinei-williams@mentorsuperior.org