Opportunity Youth Thriving

THE CHALLENGE
There are 5.5 million young people age 16 to 24 who are not in school or working. Access to quality relationships—much like access to food, healthcare and education—is critical to their ability to thrive. But too many young people growing up in our most under-resourced communities lack the kind of relationships that can help them envision and navigate toward a positive future.

“We believe in the power of mentoring. Having an experienced, caring and supportive person in your life can tip the balance toward success.”
Daniel Pitasky, executive director
Schultz Family Foundation

While there are programs offering structured, tactical supports to opportunity youth seeking employment, we also know how important it is that these young people receive dedicated support in building a network of quality relationships. Lacking this network or web of support, far too many young people fall off the path to adult success.

THE INITIATIVE
Opportunity Youth Thriving—led by America's Promise Alliance, MENTOR, and the Schultz Family Foundation—will work to develop innovative and scalable mentoring models that tap into caring relationships that help young people in or entering the workforce to succeed.

Activities. The initiative will:
• In year one, select two pilot communities.
• Work with the pilot sites to supplement, improve and expand existing efforts to help low-income young people transition to the workforce.
• Encourage new approaches and innovation.
• Use research, best practices and learnings to create a new model for other communities interested in enhancing opportunities for young people by focusing on the centrality of relationships. This new model will include how-to tools to help other nonprofits, employers and caring individuals create strong one-on-one relationships, build a network of supportive relationships, and leverage that network to transition to the workplace and a successful career path.
• Build on lessons learned to partner with additional sites eager to use the new model to enhance their work with and for opportunity youth.

Long-term goals. The initiative aims to:
• Improve reengagement among opportunity youth.
• Increase the number of low-income young adults able to secure and retain a job.

Expected impact. As the work progresses, we expect to see:
• Relationship-building approaches embedded into more existing programs designed to increase youth employment.
• New mentoring models and approaches that purposefully activate relationships and webs of support for young people seeking employment.
• Increase people, organization, and employers, intentionally using relationship webs to increase job entry, experience and retention.
• An increase in the number and capacity of caring adults supporting young people.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEND A NOTE TO info@AmericasPromise.org.
“Relationship poverty is not a lack of love or family, but a lack of access to additional sources of support than can lead to a more promising future.”

John Gomperts, president and CEO
America’s Promise Alliance

“As the mentoring field evolves and innovates, the models and tools for providing relationships that can buoy a young person so they can strive and thrive are expanding. When we invest in these relationships with rigor and combine them with opportunities, we uphold our covenant to young people to stand by them, open doors, and help them navigate as they struggle, succeed and, ultimately, flourish.”

David Shapiro, president and CEO
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership

ABOUT THE PARTNERS
America’s Promise Alliance is the nation’s largest network dedicated to improving the lives of children and youth.

MENTOR works across sectors to fuel the quantity and quality of mentoring relationships for America’s young people and to close the mentoring gap.

The Schultz Family Foundation partners with and invests in organizations that unlock potential in populations facing temporary barriers to success.