

BWOE – F.R.E.E.

P.O. Box 471001 – Lake Monroe, Florida 32747-1001

Phone 321-279-8784 Fax 321-256-0645

Mentor Volunteer Packet



**FOCUSING ON Respect • Excellence •
Empowerment**

“There’s No Feeling Like Being F.R.E.E!”

Dear Potential Mentor:

I would like to thank you for your interest in becoming a Mentor with BWOE F.R.E.E.

Please note that we screen all volunteers through a background check process and take our commitment to our mentees and mentor program seriously.

We ask that all volunteers make a 9 month commitment (this is how long the program runs each year) on a bi-weekly basis. You must commit to at least 1 of 2 sessions each month (one an actual session and the other a community service project or social). There is a background check required in order to become a volunteer mentor with our organization; there is also a fee associated with the background check payable at the time of application submission. You can pay via money order or PayPal; please contact me directly for assistance with such.

As you know, BWOE-F.R.E.E is a program founded by the Central Florida Chapter of Black Women of Essence, Inc. As such, when becoming a volunteer with BWOE F.R.E.E you are also joining our National Organization and becoming a member of the local, Central Florida Chapter of Black Women of Essence, Inc. As such, you will be required to pay a \$25.00 fee; which will include your background check (\$15.00) and a discounted rate of \$10.00 to join BWOE (\$25.00 per year). To finalize your application process, we ask that you visit the National Organization's website at www.bwoe.org and complete an online application.

Again, we thank you for your interest in becoming a Mentor with BWOE-F.R.E.E and hope to welcome you as a mentor soon!

Sincerely,

Briann Richardson

Briann Richardson
Volunteer Coordinator

Mission Statement

Empowering youth through positive relationships while promoting excellence in mind, body and spirit.

Vision Statement

BWOE - F.R.E.E is committed to assisting middle school aged young ladies advance into womanhood with self confidence and a positive outlook on life.

About BWOE - F.R.E.E

BWOE - F.R.E.E (F.R.E.E) stands for Focusing on Respect, Excellence and Empowerment. F.R.E.E was founded on May 1, 2005 in Orlando, Florida by the Central Florida Chapter of Black Women of Essence, Inc (BWOE*)

BWOE - F.R.E.E is a nine (9) month, bi-weekly mentor program designed to: assist young ladies in developing respect for themselves and others; promote excellence in mind, body and spirit; and empower youth through positive relationships. This program will also address issues facing middle school girls such as: self-esteem, social interaction and making conscientious life decisions through positive group and one-to-one mentoring sessions.

During the first six (6) months of the program, we will have group mentoring sessions only. After the initial six (6) month period, mentees wishing to have a personal mentor (and with parental consent) will be matched one-to-one with a mentor. At this time, one-to-one sessions will include activities that mentors and mentees decide together. Mentors and mentees will develop and focus on shared goals for their mentorship.

At the end of each nine (9) month session we will have recognition ceremonies highlighting all mentees' accomplishments and achievements during the program. Participants who are graduating from our program (9th graders) will have a formal ceremony, in which one participant will be selected for an academic scholarship.

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to empower middle school young ladies in grades 6-8 through positive relationships while promoting excellence in mind (self esteem and self worth), body (image and nutrition) and spirit (our purpose in life).

Program activities include group discussions, empowerment workshops, creative writing, crafts and guest speakers from our community, in addition to, one-to-one mentoring relationships. Mentees will learn to value the above mentioned objectives along with education, community involvement and respect for themselves and others.

The program will also include tutoring, career exploration, community projects, life and academic skills development. We will have group outings, seminars, workshops, recreational activities, and partake in cultural events. Mentees will also work on academic goals, standardized test preparation (FCAT, SAT, ACT), study skills, time management and college resources.

*BWOE is a Non-Profit 501(c) (3) women of color organization whose vision is to enhance the quality of life by providing resources, services, networking opportunities along with advocacy in the following areas: Children's Advocacy (mentoring, literacy and tutoring), HIV/AIDS awareness, Domestic Violence Prevention/Awareness and Breast Cancer Awareness.

Program Participation

To participate in the program, mentees should be middle school aged young ladies in grades 5-9. They must attend an orientation session along with their parent/guardian and submit a complete application packet.

To participate in the program, mentors must:

- Be at least 19 years old
- Be drug free
- Attend an orientation session
- Complete a volunteer application
- Consent to a background check (criminal and sex offender)

BWOE - F.R.E.E believes in the importance of parental involvement, as such, we require parents and/or guardians to attend an orientation session with their child and meet with executive board members quarterly to discuss any concerns. We also encourage parents to participate in any and all workshops, empowerment sessions and community service activities.

BWOE - F.R.E.E welcomes young ladies and volunteers regardless of racial background, spiritual beliefs or lifestyles as long as they understand and support the mission of BWOE - F.R.E.E

What is Mentoring?

The BWOE – F.R.E.E mentor program bridges the academic and social gaps among youth while offering continuous support. Mentoring is the act of community building not doing a mentee's work for them. BWOE-F.R.E.E mentoring is initially done in a group setting with the possibility of a one-on-one relationship between a caring, devoted adult and a willing youth. The mentoring relationship is two-way where both the mentor and the mentee are respectful of each other's needs. Although mentors are more knowledgeable and experienced, they view themselves as equal to those whom they mentor. They are willing and responsible for their own learning and growth. They enjoy the process and have fun growing and learning together.

The mentor should act as an advisor, friend, tutor, confidant, encourager, listener, motivator, and coach, not as a therapist, foster parent, bank, law enforcer, or savior. Mentoring involves learning and developing over a pre-determined period of time with continuous program support. Mentors should be warm, accepting, friendly, empathetic, compassionate, patient, and generous with their time, honest, genuine whether in praise or correction, and willing to share and learn from many sources. Mentors should teach by example and encourage mentees to persevere and excel. They expose their mentees to new ideas, perspectives, standards, and to the values and norms of society.

The most effective mentors offer support, challenge, patience, and enthusiasm while they guide others to new levels of achievement. A mentor is willing to guide youth with a non-reciprocating attitude and show high interest and involvement with the mentee's growth, success, and experiences. They provide opportunities and resources to guide mentees beyond their current limitations and constraints.

A mentor is willing to guide youth with a non-reciprocating attitude. She must be highly interested and involved with the mentee's growth, success, and experiences. Mentors should have extensive life and career experience that they are willing to share with mentees. They should be supporters, giving emotional and moral encouragement. While acting as a tutor, mentors should provide specific feedback on a mentee's performance. While acting as a sponsor, mentors should provide information about and assistance in obtaining resources and opportunities. Moreover, mentors should act as role models, exemplifying the kind of person one should be morally and ethically. Lastly, the goal of the BWOE-F.R.E.E. mentor program is to assist middle school aged young ladies advance into womanhood with self confidence and a positive outlook on life.

Benefits to Mentoring

1. Mentors gain personal and professional satisfaction in helping a youth
2. Mentors gain recognition from their peers
3. Mentors gain improved interpersonal skills
4. Mentoring promotes deeper understanding of teen and societal problems
5. Exposes youth to a positive role model
6. Helps to focus youth on their future and on setting academic and career goals
7. Exposes youth to new experiences and people from diverse cultural, socio-economic and professional backgrounds
8. Provides youth with attention and a concerned friend
9. Encourages emotional and social growth
10. Fosters increased confidence and self-esteem

Mentor Qualifications

1. Mentors must have either a high school diploma or GED
2. Mentors must be female and at least 19 years or older
3. Attend an orientation session
4. Complete a volunteer application
5. Must be able to commit to ATLEAST 1 OF 2 bi-weekly sessions
6. Must be able to commit to at least NINE (9) MONTHS of mentoring
7. Must NOT be a convicted felon or a sex offender and must be Drug Free
8. Must consent to a background check (criminal and sex offender) - \$15.00 fee

Roles and Responsibilities of a Mentor (Basic Guidelines)

1. Support and serve as a source of motivation for all mentees
2. Invest time in the mentee relationship
3. Share your knowledge and insights and provide mentees with honest, constructive criticism and informal feedback
4. Support mentees interests and value mentees as they are
5. Believe in mentees abilities and support positive endeavors
6. Help mentees gain a sense of purpose and direction
7. Help mentees gain problem solving skills and social competencies
8. Serve as a facilitator, advocate and supporter
9. Serve as a professional and personal role model
10. Help mentees problem-solve but do not take on mentee's problems as your own; Empathize, but allow them to resolve their own conflicts
11. Be interested in mentees life
12. Tell mentee when she is doing well or trying hard; always encourages mentees to do better
13. Listen! Listen without judgment, become aware of the needs, feelings and thoughts of mentees and treat them with respect

What a Mentor DOES NOT Do

1. Mentor's role is NOT to replace a parent/guardian
2. Mentor's DO NOT date their mentees not engage in sexual activities or inappropriate touching
3. Mentor's DO NOT engage in illegal activities (ex. Buying alcohol for mentee)
4. Mentor's DO NOT use any type of profanity towards their mentee
5. Most importantly, mentor's are not expected to know all the answers

B.W.O.E. - F.R.E.E.

FOCUSING on RESPECT, EXCELLENCE and EMPOWERMENT

P.O. BOX 471001 – Lake Monroe, Florida 32747

Mentor Program Application Packet

Your completed BWOE-F.R.E.E. Mentor Program Application Packet should contain the following materials:

- o Initialed and Signed Mentor Consent Form
- o Completed and Signed Mentor Volunteer Application
- o Completed and Signed Criminal Background Check with copy of valid driver's license

When submitting an application for program consideration, please ensure that each of the above forms is filled out completely and signed where appropriate.

Submit the entire packet with this form on top.

For Program Use Only:

Completed Application Received: _____

Date Received

Received by: _____

F.R.E.E. Inc. Representative

Mentor Program Consent Form
P.O. BOX 471001 – Lake Monroe, Florida 32747

Please read this carefully before signing:

BWOE - F.R.E.E Mentoring Program appreciates your interest in becoming a mentor. We are honored that you are willing to step forward and assist the young ladies within our communities. If approved, we assure a meaningful volunteer experience!

Please initial each of the following:

_____ I have read the information given to me regarding the BWOE - F.R.E.E Mentor Program and understand the mission and purpose of such program.

_____ I give my consent and agree to voluntarily participate in the BWOE - F.R.E.E Mentor Program and its related activities.

_____ I agree to all mentor program guidelines and understand that any violation on my part may result in suspension and/or termination of the mentoring relationship.

_____ I give my consent and agree to a criminal background check provided through a third party company at the rate of \$15.00.

_____ I will attend at least 1 of 2 biweekly mentoring sessions

_____ I will make an honest effort to attend all events and I agree to communicate with the Executive Director (Renee G. Ellis) regarding any concerns I may have about my participation in the Mentor Program.

_____ I release the BWOE - F.R.E.E Mentor Program of all liability of injury, death, or other damages to me that may result from my participation in the program and hold harmless any BWOE - F.R.E.E mentor, program staff, or other representatives, both collectively and individually, of any injury, physical or emotional, other than where gross negligence has been determined.

_____ (optional) I agree to BWOE - F.R.E.E to use any photographic image of me taken while participating in the mentor program. These images may be used in promotions or other related marketing materials.

Our program appreciates your interest in becoming a mentor to a child. By signing below, you attest to the truthfulness of all information listed on the below application and agree to all the above terms and conditions. You agree to let our program confirm all information listed and to background criminal records check. If any information is found to be untrue, this organization shall have the right to terminate the applicant's contract.

I have read and understood the program's rules, regulations, and responsibilities for becoming a mentor. If selected I will follow the rules of the program and be a dedicated mentor.

Signature Date_____