

Dr. Kurt Rasmussen & “College Mentor for Kids”

What does a member of the ACNP and a senior research scientist at Eli Lilly & Company and a 2nd grader from Indianapolis Public School #43 have in common?

Both are involved in College Mentors for Kids, a unique and life-changing organization located throughout the state of Indiana. College Mentors for Kids, Inc., is an innovative non-profit that exposes at-risk youth to the opportunities of higher education through weekly activities with college student mentors. Its signature Mentor Program serves 830 “Little Buddies” who do not have exposure to higher education in their home life through 900 college students. Dr. Rasmussen has been on the board of directors for five years, and was the Chair in 2006. He has been an integral part in setting the long-term strategy for the organization and championed the recent initiatives to expand the program to serve 5th- 8th graders. In addition to his high-level engagement, Dr. Rasmussen regularly participates in weekly activities on college campuses, including reading books to the children and discussing his career as a scientist with the children. He is also tireless in his efforts “spread the word” and engage new individuals in College Mentors for Kids. He has also engaged companies to donate children’s magazines to the organization, brought new members onto the Board of Directors, hosted Indianapolis Colts Coach Tony Dungy at the recent annual gala, and vastly expanded the Alumni Association. Currently College Mentors for Kids is based in Indiana, but Dr. Rasmussen has been working hard to bring this organization to campuses in other states, including his alma mater Cornell University. Dr. Rasmussen truly believes that College Mentors for Kids is nothing less than a way to improve our modern society.

The mission of College Mentors for Kids is to motivate children and communities to achieve their potential by fostering inspiration to transform lives, education to change attitudes, and connections to increase opportunities.

Child participants show an increased interest in school, improved interactions with peers, and increased self-esteem. College Mentors for Kids is an early form of workforce development as it promotes educational achievement and professional goal-setting among elementary school students. The long term effects of participation in the Mentor Program are success in high school and graduation from college. The positive outcomes of the mentor program are not limited to the elementary school students. While children are the focus, benefits reach far beyond them. College students who become mentors are more likely to finish their college careers and are also more likely to give philanthropically.

The impact on the community:

Little Buddies

90 percent of the children want to go to college

96 percent of the children believe doing well in school is important

90 percent of the children learned how to serve the community

Parents

89 percent of parents reported that their child had improved grades

95 percent of parents reported that their child is interested in going to college

94 percent of parents reported that their child's mentor has been a positive role model

Teachers

71 percent of teachers reported that children participating in College Mentors for Kids had improved literacy skills

76 percent of teachers reported that children participating in College Mentors for Kids had increased self-esteem

67 percent of teachers reported that children participating in College Mentors for Kids displayed improved school work

Mentors

86 percent of mentors gained a greater understanding of diversity

73 percent of mentors are more likely to volunteer in the future

80 percent of mentors are more involved in the campus community