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HEADLINE: LETTER: Mentoring can change a child's life – SouthCoastToday.com

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a child's life

During the last week, all four major television networks highlighted volunteer service in their programming. The "I Participate" initiative launched by ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox highlighted the power of service in top-rated shows such as "30 Rock," "Desperate Housewives," "CSI: New York" and "Grey's Anatomy."

Right now there are over 3,000 children in Massachusetts on wait lists for mentors, and there are several quality mentoring programs in New Bedford and surrounding towns, working to find adults to match with these children; these programs also provide the training and support as a friendship is built.

We've all had mentors. We know what it means to have someone offer guidance, support and friendship. Unfortunately, there are too many kids who don't know what it means to have a mentor. Committing to just four hours a month can change this for one child.

Powerful stories of friendship, broadening horizons and transformative change are happening here in New Bedford and all over Massachusetts. Adults who mentor say it's one of the most rewarding experiences of their lives. Kids who are mentored will tell you that the consistent friendship of a caring adult brought them out of isolation and opened the world to them. Mentoring is proven in its potential to change the lives of young people and strengthen our communities.

The value of service has been recognized from the White House, where President Obama issued a national call to service -- United We Serve -- to the boardrooms of television networks and corporations. As we celebrate service on a national level this week, I encourage you to think about someone who has had an impact on your life. Think about the power of presence, friendship and consistency, and offer that to a child who is waiting. Become a mentor.

For more information on mentoring programs in the New Bedford area, visit www.massmentors.org.

David Shapiro

President and CEO

Mass Mentoring Partnership

Boston

Editor's note: Information on the New Bedford-based SMILES Mentoring program, which is a member of ***Mass Mentoring Partnership***, can be found at www.smilesmentoring.org.

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Highlights: Mass Mentoring Partnership