

Practical Civic and Educational Transformation

The goals of the DC Tutoring & Mentoring Initiative are simple: We are recruiting a tutor or mentor for the more than 60,000 students reading below grade level or who need extra academic or non-academic support in the District of Columbia. Add in extra classroom and after-school help or extra mentoring or support for family members and we will transform educational outcomes in the city, develop our workforce, end intergenerational poverty, and create a vibrant, welcoming and safe city for all people where we work together across divisions of class, race and ideology.

Thoreau said, “There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.” How do we strike the roots, the “habits of heart” of all of us — rich, middle class, and low-income? There are no quick policy fixes and the problems are deeper than the greed of those with wealth and power but we can begin to change hearts and minds and help people “to climb into someone’s skin and walk around in it.”

We believe this campaign can transform both education AND the civic life of the city by the practical pairing of volunteers with kids and by strengthening our “civic muscles” — building empathy, a sense of self- and collective efficacy, and a “civic mindset” that we can work together with love and wisdom to solve our shared problems — and serve as a model for the nation.

Canvass at farmers markets, in front of heavily trafficked stores and at Metro stops around the city and suburbs to sign up people to become tutors and mentors, to educate, or get them involved in other ways. We keep it **positive** but not passive. Appropriately assertive, but not aggressive.



Some of the 700 students in Mississippi Freedom Summer, 1964

We remind people that we are all in this world together. We are on the same team and we have a responsibility for our community and for our world. If we don’t do it, it won’t get done and we’ll all lose. We need to put down our smart phones and organize our lives so we have the time to work together and get to know each other face-to-face and with our hearts.

We are planting the seeds of change. Some people sign up enthusiastically on the spot. Others take flyers and promise to check out the website and think about it. Others will ignore you. Perhaps they feel too busy, too distrustful of strangers, or just plain indifferent. Remember that what you say may soak into their hearts later. If only 5% of DC residents would sign up, we’d transform education in DC.

Here’s what we say. Change it to make it work for you...



“We are looking for volunteer mentors and tutors to help kids around the city.

“Only 1 out of 4 kids are reading at grade level in DC.

“We are working with 40 partner organizations and schools around the city to find them volunteers. Any day of the week or time of day, we’ve got partners who need your help, whether its tutoring in reading or math, helping with a sports or arts program, or being a big brother or sister.”

When an individual is no longer a true participant, when he no longer feels a sense of responsibility to his society, the content of democracy is emptied. - Martin Luther King, Jr.



Canvassing Team, DC Tutoring & Mentoring Initiative, 2016

What we need in the United States is not division. What we need is not hatred... but love and wisdom, and compassion for one another, and a sense of justice ... - Robert F. Kennedy

Sign up at <http://dcTutorMentor.org>, email us at info@dcTutorMentor.org to become a tutor or mentor or to join a Civic Leadership and Outreach Team.