

# Mentoring program makes change

## Will be known as Youth Mentoring of the Southern Tier

By Jeff Smith

jsmith@the-leader.com

CORNING - Mentors have long provided youth with a tremendous amount of guidance and that one-on-one attention kids so often crave.

Angela Button, Youth Mentoring of the Southern Tier Program Coordinator, said Family Service Society, Inc. is now affiliated with the New York State Mentoring Program, a school- and site-based mentoring model.

For that past 21 years the mentoring services were providing through Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Central Southern Tier.

“Under New York State Mentoring Programs, there is not national affiliation dues,” Button said. “So all dollars raised locally are used to support our local programs.”

The school- and site-based mentoring model is recommended by the New York State Commissioner of Education for use in state schools and communities.

Harmony Ayers-Friedlander, executive director of Family Service Society Inc., said while



Mentors and mentees have met together in Corning through the Youth Mentoring of the Southern Tier for the past 21 years. [PROVIDED/THE LEADER]

See PROGRAM, A8

# PROGRAM

From Page A1

the affiliation is changing, the program - which will now be known as Youth Mentoring of the Southern Tier - will remain the same for mentors and mentees.

Button said the mentors and mentees meet from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Mondays or Wednesday in the Corning Program and 5:30-6:30 p.m. Thursdays in the Elmira Program.

"I started volunteering as a Mentor about four years ago, and it has become my favorite hour of each week," said Sue Dunn, a Corning program mentor. "Not only is my youth fun to be with, she encourages me to explore topics I would have never thought of otherwise.

"The best part, is that being a mentor is easy. We show up once a week (except when there is no school) and the staff guides the time we are together. It amazes me that in only an hour a week that we have formed such a strong connection."

Family Service Society, Inc. made the decision to

affiliate with the New York State Mentoring Program because it offers a number of important benefits including an improved alignment with its service delivery by exclusively using school- and site-based models, thereby improving the safety of Mentees and providing greater support to Mentors.

Button said Youth Mentoring of the Southern Tier will continue to provide services to youth ages 7 to 17 in Corning, Elmira, Belmont, and Whitesville.

"Our volunteer enrollment has been made more efficient through the New York State Mentoring Program as it is now an online application," Button said. "Individuals interested in volunteering, can apply to be a mentor on the New York State Mentoring Program website."

Benefits of the State Mentoring Program

- No national affiliation dues so all dollars raised locally are used to support local programs.
- The program is exclusively focused on the needs of state students
- In person training for mentors will be delivered on



**Mentors and mentees often encourage each other to just have a great time.** [PROVIDED/THE LEADER]

site by a highly trained state Mentoring Representative.

- Technical assistance, training and support is provided for mentorship staff on best practices developed by Mentor New York, a national leader in mentorship program research.
- Improve alignment with our service delivery by exclusively using school and

site based models improving the safety of mentees and providing greater support to mentors.

- Improvements in effectiveness and efficiency through the reduction of unnecessary, duplicative documentation requirements leaving greater time to focus on meeting youth needs.