



MENTOR HANDBOOK

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MISSION STATEMENT

“College is Real” is a program that provides education, motivation, resources and support to the students who participate in, or have participated in, the Richmond High School boys and girls soccer program. CIR also includes select students, based upon referrals, who have not been involved in the soccer program. The CIR program focuses on motivating the students to believe they can attend college, improving their academic performance, understanding of college opportunities and ultimately helping them qualify for and attend college.

PROGRAM GOALS

The goal of the program is to identify, motivate, educate and mentor the students in the program in order to have as many students as possible apply to, and attend, two and four-year colleges. Almost all of the students will be the first in their families to attend college, and in most cases graduate from high school. We want to change the lives of the students in the program so they can ultimately improve the lives of their families and change their communities.

CIR has had two graduating classes to date of which 100% were accepted to four-year colleges and 14 out of 15 CIR graduates went on to attend college.

QUALIFICATIONS TO PARTICIPATE

Students must demonstrate academic commitment and potential as evidenced by class attendance, commitment to completing homework assignments and achieving at least a 2.75 grade point average initially and a 3.0 g.p.a. within two semesters of joining the program. CIR “recruits” freshman and sophomore boys and girls, with a focus on the soccer program, to participate in CIR, typically during November to January, and admits new students primarily after the completion of the first semester in late January or early February when CIR can check the students’ grades and attendance for the first semester. Interested students are asked to submit an application to the Program Director, attend an orientation meeting and obtain their parents’ permission. Students must demonstrate a positive attitude toward school, aspire to go to college, be viewed positively by their soccer coach and/or teachers, and regularly participate in all CIR activities.

MENTORS

Mentors are in a unique position to make a difference in the lives of the CIR students and are key element to CIR’s success and in what helps differentiate CIR from other college support programs. Mentors can make a positive impact that will ultimately motivate the students to change their educational values and strive for a college education. In this handbook, you will find ways to communicate with your student(s). Rather than “policing” the students we hope that you build a positive relationship with the students

and serve as a role model for them to look up to. The reality is that there are not many positive role models in the student's lives so you are in a unique position to make a huge difference. The biggest difference you can make in your student's life is to provide encouragement, show them that you believe in them and hold them accountable for their educational performance.

Every student participating in the CIR Program will be assigned a mentor to follow their progress, provide motivation and direction, and assist in any difficulties that may arise. The mentors are people who believe in the CIR program and want to help young people succeed. They are business people, college students, graduate students, former Richmond High alumni and community members. Many of the mentors are from the San Ramon Valley area.

Mentor responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Contacting students via email or text message once a week.
- Contacting students via phone once every two weeks.
- Meeting with students once a month.
- Encouraging and motivating the students to want to attend college.
- Assisting students with academic work, if appropriate, and monitoring the college preparation and application process.
- Attending a mentor meeting with CIR Director and other mentors twice per year.
- Fill out student evaluation sheet once a quarter. (A total of 4 evaluations in the course of one school year.

Students are expected to maintain a good rapport with their mentors by communicating with them in a timely fashion, promptly returning phone calls and emails, arriving to any meeting or activities with mentors on time, and talking with them about any difficulties with academic work, college preparation, sports or any other issues or challenges that may arise to find help and an appropriate solution.

MENTOR SUGGESTIONS FOR CONTACTING STUDENTS

Suggested Ways of Communication (In Order of Most Effective)

1. In-person
2. Phone Call
3. Text Message
4. Email

Please be aware that some students do not have computers or internet connections at home. Students do have access to computers at school, but do not regularly check their email. Most students have cell phones. Most students do not have ready access to a car so transportation is difficult for them.

If by any chance you find it difficult to communicate with the student(s) please contact the program director at (831) 578-4197 or stephanie.puentes.cir@gmail.com.

Suggestions for Personal Meeting Places and activities w/ Student(s)

1. Starbucks for coffee
2. At RHS during tutoring hours (typically either Mon/Weds or Tues/Thurs depending upon the time of the year, from 3:30-5:00 p.m.)
3. At RHS during events or meetings
4. Lunch or Dinner on the weekend
5. Watching a movie
6. Bowling
7. For college students who are mentors, taking student with you to study or school
8. Sporting event
9. School event
10. Outings to interesting places in the Bay Area (like SF)
11. Hosting them for dinner at your home
12. Pairing up with another mentor and taking students out as a group.
13. And any other place you may choose.

* Please keep in mind that most students have not been exposed to many places outside of the Richmond area and it would be nice to expose them to a different environment if possible. Since they are underage permission from parents may be required. If language is a barrier for communication with the parents feel free to contact the Program Director to speak to the parents.

When Talking to the Students

1. Talk to them about your college experience and how it has affected you.
2. Talk about your job and hobbies.
3. Talk about your family and children.
4. Talk about life in your community.

5. Most love to talk about soccer.
6. Talk about movies, T.V. shows, etc.
7. Talk about current events, especially those in the Richmond community
8. They are typical teenagers so talk about what teenagers like.
9. Talk about what RHS is like, the teachers, the other students, etc.
10. What is their family's background?
11. Ask them how they feel about attending college.
12. How is their current situation at RHS coming along?
13. How is soccer going (if they are on a team)?
14. Is there anything that is bothering the student and keeping him/her from going forward?
15. How are their study habits? How often do they study?
16. Have they been keeping up to date with CIR meetings, events and activities?
17. How is their family situation?
18. Are they satisfied with their grades? If not, what can they do to improve them?
19. If there is a serious problem with student please notify program director ASAP.

Keep in mind that as a mentor your job is not to “police” the students but rather serve as a resource to them when it comes to motivating them in school and helping them prepare for college. You should hold them accountable for their academic performance, participation in CIR activities (including study hall/tutoring) and demonstrating good citizenship. Students tend to open up more to their mentors when the mentors show a genuine interest in the student and his/her well-being. Keeping in regular contact with your student, being consistent and meeting with them in person whenever possible, is the key to building a relationship. Once a relationship of friendship and trust has been established, the student will become more receptive to the message you will be trying to convey.

If you ever have an issue contacting your mentee or are interested in knowing about their performance in school feel free to contact the Program Director.

THANK YOU. WE HOPE THAT YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE CIR PROGRAM WILL ULTIMATELY ASSIST THE STUDENTS AND PROVIDE THEM WITH THE NECESSARY MOTIVATION, RESOURCES AND SKILLS TO ATTEND A FOUR-YEAR UNIVERSITY, BE A SUCCESSFUL COLLEGE STUDENT AND HELP CHANGE THEIR LIVES AND THOSE OF THEIR FAMILIES.