Parent Mentor/Padres Mentores Program
Eagle County Schools and The Vail Valley Foundation's Youth Power 365
Eagle County, CO

The Parent Mentor/Padres Mentores Program at YouthPower365 (YP365) is entering its fifth year of programming across eight elementary schools in Eagle County. The Parent Mentor Program has become a leader within the school and broader community with regards to effective family engagement. The goal of the practice is to engage families in their children's education while developing parent/guardian participants into true education partners and leaders in their schools and community.

Parent Mentor participants commit to a year-long classroom volunteer experience and, in exchange, YP365 provides intensive professional development training on topics to support their classroom volunteerism, including:

- Classroom management,
- Reading, writing, math and English Language Learner (ELL) strategies, and
- Support for their own personal goals in the areas of education, health and wellness, financial security and job skills.

To grow classroom and personal skills and community leadership, YP365 provides Parent Mentors with 50 hours of training, which includes a 20 hour pre-service orientation and weekly two-hour intensive professional development. These trainings help build confidence as well as a cohesive, supportive cohort. We have noticed that because of the relationships built within the cohort, the participants are more engaged in both school and community events. Academic training topics are informed by principal and teacher input, while the personal topics are informed by the participants.

Over the years, YouthPower365 has developed and nurtured an authentic and trusting relationship with the community, especially the Hispanic community. The Parent Mentor program owes much of its success to relationship building and communication. It is essential to spend time and effort in the planning stages of this program to involve school and community leaders. This helps to 1) understand the needs and expectations of the schools and classrooms, and 2) clearly define the goals, roles and responsibilities of the Parent Mentor participants.

For more information, visit YP365's Youtube Channel and website.