

Mentors Matter FAQ:

1. What is involved?

Central Synagogue is now partnering with HSAD to fill the gap on mentorship for these seniors — committing to helping at least 2-3 classes next year. We hope you'll considering being one of these mentors. You would be part of a team of 4-5 Central members per class — assigned to help the kids during their lunchtime art class. (You can put your own team of volunteers together if you want to do this with friends.) You yourself would be assigned six students whom you personally would be mentoring in that class. Each of the 4-5 Central volunteers would be assigned 5-6 students.

You would be expected to come to the school once a week for minimum 90 minutes (or you can stay till their class ends — the full 1 hr. 45 min.) Each week you would sit with each of your students, checking where they are in the application process, what hurdles they're facing academically or personally...you would be their sounding board and cheerleader, not their tutor or therapist.

The busiest time period for your mentorship would be Sept-March as your students prepare college applications. After March, we'd hope you'd still make semi-regular visits to advise your students about college choices and other issues that come up in completing high school successfully.

HSAD will give us all the information we need to be able to help guide on deadlines and list schools which have welcomed HSAD graduates in the past. You won't be flying solo.

2. Is this volunteer opportunity only open to Members of Central Synagogue?

Yes. This volunteer opportunity is open to members of Central Synagogue and those on the waitlist.

3. Where does the program take place and what is the time commitment?

Location: High School of Art & Design - 245 East 56th between 2nd & 3rd avenues.

Time commitment: Once a week starting after Labor Day through the school year.

Day of the week: Wednesdays 12:15-2pm. (You can stay less time if necessary, or come on another weekday if necessary, but regularity and reliability are important here.)

4. What if I have to miss a week?

That's why we plan to have four mentors per class — so we can spell each other if one of us has to miss a week.

5. How many students would I be mentoring?

Six.

6. Are there non-Central mentors currently helping HSAD kids?

Three.

7. Would we interact with non-Central mentors?

No — we'd be assigned our own classes, separate from the other mentors.

8. What about eating lunch?

We should eat before or after the class, not during.

9. What would be expected of me?

- Get to know your students initially in private conversation.
- Take notes on who they are and what they care about, worry about.
- Help them think about what story they have to tell in a college essay.
- Encourage them to meet the deadlines the school sets for college lists, applications, financial aid. (The college advisor will give us a list of deadlines.)
- Be a sounding board and advisor generally.
- Help them stay on track academically to graduate.

10. When I sit talking with one student, what are the other students doing?

During the Wednesday 12:15pm-2pm art class, the kids will be working on their art projects while the mentoring is going on simultaneously. You will be in charge of how you want to structure your time with each student. It's a relaxed setting and the art teachers are thrilled to have their kids pausing individually at various times to talk to the mentor.

11. What do we do after applications are submitted in December?

Check in with your kids to help with college choices, financial aid, making sure they graduate.

12. Do I need to be expert in financial aid forms?

No. The school will guide the students and we will learn the basics to support.

13. Do I need to be expert in college essay writing?

No. HSAD has emphasized that ANY assistance at all in thinking about the college essay is already a game-changer. These kids will be going from zero to something. They have had no help in the past. You all know how to draw a story out of someone. It's about helping them see they have a story to tell and making sure it gets written down.

14. Will there be a training session for mentors at the start of the academic year?

Yes, at Central. Not long, but helpful. We will send you the date as soon as we have it. If you can't make it, Emily or Abby will bring you up to speed at a separate time.

15. What will the training session address?

- Some of what these students are facing at home.
- The sensitivity of entering these students' lives.
- The basic elements of mentorship and pointers on supporting the college essay.

16. Will the mentors meet together off-site to compare best-practices and share experiences?

Yes — twice during the year. Time and place TBD.

If you are a Central Synagogue member or on the waitlist, and have questions, would like to get involved, or know of someone in particular whom you think might be a good fit for this program, please contact us at mentorsmatter@censyn.org.