

Mentoring Group Needs Children/ Educators for Mentoring

Today's children often have limited opportunities to connect with the natural environment due to changes in family life and technology. Research shows that children's social, psychological, academic, and physical health are positively impacted with daily contact with nature. That is why a group called Kids and Mentors Outdoors (KAMO) exists. KAMO is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit youth mentoring group operating in the Coulee Region under the title "Coulee KAMO". KAMO does not charge any fees to participants.

K.A.M.O.'s mentors make an attempt to locate children who would not otherwise have the opportunity to connect with the natural world and instill in them a love for the outdoors. These mentors are all background checked and trained adults who are passionate about the outdoors and wish to pass their skills onto the next generation. Mentors come from a variety of backgrounds. These mentors aim to impact many local children and hope that the parents of these children will join them in some of their outings as well.

KAMO does activities year around including hiking, canoeing, camping, fishing, hunting, archery, orienteering, outdoor photography, wildlife viewing, and skiing. These activities are planned, coordinated, and financed by the group's volunteers who are involved because they care about today's youth. Kids participate for free. Outings in 2016 have included: a hike at Seven Bridges Road, attending Chill game, trips to archery ranges, Badger Mining hike, trap, rifle, and archery events at rod and gun clubs, fishing events at the Genoa Fish Hatchery, fishing out of boats and off the Best Dam Fishing Float, pontoon rides, pedal, paddle, and picnic event (3P), camping at Goose Island and Perrot Park.

There are times when not every activity can be done outdoors. Wisconsin's climate features days that are severely cold and short, rainy, or hot, humid and buggy. With these times in mind, mentors often have ideas for activities with kids indoors as well. Visits to a museum, theatre, nature education facility, a museum, or an outdoor oriented private enterprise such as a sports equipment manufacturing plant or sustainability operation are examples of indoors activity.

KAMO has experienced growth and has a need for both new mentors and new kids. We are hoping to intake several new mentors and a few dozen children between the ages of 9-13 from the local community. This letter is an appeal to community members to let us know if there is a kid in your life who could benefit from our program. It is simple to enroll a child - fill out two forms (parent or guardian signature required), meet publicly with someone in KAMO, and agree to maintain communication with us.

The requirements for a new mentor are pretty simple as well. Our mentors report that spending time with a mentee is rewarding and fulfilling. Some adults who join our group simply want to help at an outing, chaperone kids on a camping trip, teach kids some outdoor skill, do some leg work, cook, etc (without directly being a mentor for one child) and that is fine. We do not pressure our mentors to raise funds, come to our meetings, be at a certain time and place, etc. We leave it up to the individual to contribute what is comfortable for them.

If what you have just read appeals to you, please feel free to contact me, Michael Brown, at 608-799-5037 or brownmtjc@gmail.com. about enrolling a child or making an arrangement for someone in the KAMO group talk to an individual parent, group of parents, or school staff.

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