

PROJECT SOAR

A guiding principle of the McGaw YMCA is the transformational power of an adult mentor in a child's life. Positive, caring relationships with adults can significantly improve a range of outcomes for youth, including academic performance, educational attainment, self-esteem, self-confidence, and the ability to make good decisions.

IN THE FY15 END-OF-YEAR SURVEY PARENTS SAID PROJECT SOAR:

made a positive impact on their child's life **100%**

provided encouragement, love, and care from an adult outside the family **97%**

taught their child positive values and life lessons **95%**

exposed their child to new experiences **87%**



Project SOAR (Supporting Our Adolescents Responsibly) is one of the McGaw YMCA's longest-running and consistently successful youth programs. Project SOAR is a one-on-one mentoring program that matches youth ages 9 - 14 with adult mentors.

In order to participate, both mentees and mentors commit to meeting once a week for a minimum of one school year. However the majority of mentors and mentees participate in Project SOAR for more than one year. Mentees and their families are especially committed to the program; 100% of eligible mentees reenrolled in Project SOAR after the most recently completed school year. The retention rate for eligible mentors in 2015 was 78%.

Mentors and mentees participate in one-on-one activities and group outings. Project SOAR staff encourages matches to explore Evanston, while taking advantage of their donated McGaw YMCA memberships to access the facilities, including the Health and Wellness Center, Gym, and MetaMedia.

Project SOAR's largest source of mentors is Northwestern University (NU) students. These young adult mentors play the role of an older sibling offering advice and using their own recent experiences growing up as teachable moments. Mentees learn from these college-aged role models, who can make a significant difference in youths' lives at a critical time in their development.

Find out more:
www.mcgawymca.org/SOAR

"As a mentor, I feel like I get the chance to play big brother, parent, teacher, and most of all, friend. There just aren't very many times in life where you can wear so many hats at the same time and still have fun doing it."

