



NEWS

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MTA MENTORS TO MEET HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS NOV. 12; CAREER PROGRAMS STEERING KIDS TO HIGHER GRADES AND COLLEGE

A win-win relationship is not:

Elmer Fudd and that silly wabbit; oil and water mixing on a rainy day; Elizabeth Taylor and matrimony; a toddler and cough syrup; or Yankee owner George Steinbrenner barking directions at his latest manager from a stadium perch.

"On a brighter note, a definite example of a real win-win relationship will take place Tuesday, Nov. 12, 8:30 a.m., when mentors from a variety of professions, mainly transportation, take under their wings 56 North Hollywood High School seniors," said Joseph E. Drew, MTA chief executive officer. "It will be a moving sight when mentors and students meet for the first time in the MTA cafeteria. Not only is this occasion special because the introductions are taking place here, but also because the students are arriving by train."

The theme appropriately is: "Ask me about win-win relationships."

The purpose of MTA's Transportation Career Academy Program (TCAP), which was devised by MTA's Career Development and Training Center, in conjunction with the Los Angeles Unified School District, and separate Transportation Occupations Program (TOP), is to expose 9th through 12th graders to various transportation industry careers, to learn as

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much as they can about the mentor's job, and familiarize them with a corporate-like environment. However, greater emphasis is placed on improving grades, selecting a transportation-related occupation, and attending college. Mentors sometimes assist students with their projects, counsel them on college selection and help develop job networking skills.

"The fact that the mentors are sharing their expertise and donating their time to youth is a source for much gratification," said Program Coordinator Art Gomez, the man responsible for matching 200 trained mentors.

"As a mentor, you get a real sense that you've helped a young person," said Naomi Nightingale, Manager of CDTC. "We see student attendance and confidence rise up. Students who weren't very enthusiastic about school now have a totally different attitude."

"The "win-win" relationship numbers are hard to argue with," said Larry Zarian, MTA Board Chairman "and just goes to show what a tremendous impact the programs are having."

In 1996, for example, approximately 99% of the high school seniors who participated in TCAP and TOP, improved their grade point averages by one point or more, with an overwhelming majority entering college. College-bound students in TCAP and TOP are eligible for scholarships ranging from \$300 to \$1,500. More than \$250,000 has been awarded in the past 11 years.

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"It is quite clear that many MTA employees are having a positive influence on these young people's lives," Drew said "I have nothing but absolute admiration for their hard work and dedication."

TCAP prepares students for advanced studies in transportation subjects at the community college and university levels, or for entry placement in the transportation industry. The academy is actually part of their regular high school - a "school within a school." Students are required to take the same electives but the overall orientation is transportation-related curriculum.

TOP gives high school juniors two years of instruction and internships in drafting, computer-aided design, graphic design and other technical subjects, including engineering aide. TCAP and TOP students are not assigned a mentor until their senior year.

Following the cafeteria rendezvous, students will be given guided tours by either mentors or representatives from such departments as Marketing, Customer Service, Graphics and Human Resources.

Some 90 high school juniors and seniors, as well as college students worked in various departments at the MTA over the summer as part of either TOP or TCAP programs.

Another 100 students from Locke, Wilson and John Glenn high school will meet their mentors in the coming weeks.

"The guidance these students will be receiving is invaluable," said Los Angeles County Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke. "The programs are another indication of how effective the MTA has been in reaching out to the community."

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