

Arizona RID Peer-to-Peer: Creating a Learning Community

As a recipient of the RID-NCIEC Mentoring Grants for 2007-2008, Arizona RID was able to provide the first cycle of a 12-week mentoring training titled “The Arizona RID Peer Mentoring Program (PMP).” Arizona RID entered into this project with two goals: that of establishing the foundation for a learning community, and to foster opportunities for ongoing mentorship locally. A team of committed people were required to bring the PMP to Arizona. Thanks to the leadership of Wendy Watson, CI and CT, Master Mentor and Director of the Southeast Mentorship Project and co-facilitator Deanna Ammon, CI and CT, a successful first cycle trained 12 interpreters as peer mentors. Local interpreters, Dawn Townsend, CI and CT and NIC; and Breeze Gammelin, CI, effectively coordinated the trainings and facilitated practice sessions. The PMP has been running in Massachusetts for the past five years and has also been provided as a joint project between the Long Island RID and Metro NYC RID chapters. Arizona RID looks forward to continued efforts to foster and support mentoring relationships, not only within the organization, but also the state of Arizona and beyond.

The Peer Mentoring Model, co-developed by Wendy W. Watson and Laurie R. Shaffer, CI and CT and NIC-Advanced (Director of Professional Education for Sign Language Associates), is a structure that allows for a wide variety of practitioners to create and receive support toward achieving individual goals. This PMP cycle was successful in establishing a learning community: a trusted network of advisors/listeners with whom work-related issues may be confidentially processed. The program also provided ongoing support for those taking on new professional challenges. Over the course of three months, participants attended six workshops, as well as week-

ly paired meetings. Participants received individual and group coaching on productive mentoring dialogue approaches, resolution of ethical dilemmas, credentialing processes, discreet skill development and establishment of effective collegial interactions. Successful completion of the program awarded participants up to 5.1 CEUs in the area of professional studies.

Participants say it best themselves, in the following quotes:

“This program has been life-altering for me. PMP is such a subtle but critical paradigm shift in how we approach talking with colleagues, family and friends. I thank you for tossing out this “pebble” of knowledge. The ripple effect you have created is immense.” - Shauna Marshall

“The Arizona RID’s Peer Mentor Program offers a fresh look at Mentor-Mentee relationships by creating a feeling of equality, whether you are a 20-year veteran interpreter or you have just graduated from an ITP. You find comfort and safety in the fact that EVERYONE has something to offer and contribute. It gives you the tools you need to get the most out of a peer mentor relationship. I LOVED it and would do it all over again!”

- Bryan von Kolen

“The Peer Mentoring Program is an awesome experience for anyone who will truly apply themselves. When it is offered in your area, step outside of your comfort zone and stretch a little; it really is good for you.”

- Dianne Riddick

“The concept of ‘Giving an A’” is one of the profound parts of the course; it really opened people’s eyes to a whole new level of living and working as an interpreter.”

- Clayton Call

Arizona RID is pleased to have hosted the running of a Peer Mentoring

Program Cycle in our region and looks forward to building upon the foundation of respectful and supportive collegial relationships that have been established. Individuals who are interested in supporting or participating in another cycle in Arizona may contact Dawn Townsend at dawnj-townsend@gmail.com.

Those interested in hosting a Peer Mentoring Program in their area may contact Wendy W. Watson at thewendys@comcast.net, or

The Southeast Mentorship Project
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