

## Make A Difference With Mentoring

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National Youth Mentoring Week is being held from October 25-31, and many young people in Sydney have benefitted from being involved in mentoring programs.

Young Love Foundation Director, Vicki Condon, says "Our mentors are the heart and soul of our organisation, and I would like to offer our very sincere thanks to all of them for generously volunteering their time and making a real difference for young people in their community."

Young Love supports teenagers facing profound challenges in their lives such as mental health, substance abuse and sexual health issues through mentoring programs and personal development workshops.

The mentors from Young Love work with young people in high schools in the "School" program, which is a tried and tested formula. They also work with teenage mums in the "Bump" program which is an innovative new program. Their main role is to be a great listener while being a neutral positive role model, and providing support and encouragement.

"We can make a real difference in the lives of young people who are struggling just by listening to them and not judging them, but it is also very rewarding for us on a personal level, too. Being a mentor is something I really enjoy and get a lot from," says one of the Young Love volunteers.

Mentors complete accredited TAFE training which runs in February each year, and the Young Love Foundation is currently recruiting for volunteer mentors for next year's program in 2010. The School program runs one hour of mentoring each week in term time, followed by one hour of debrief and supervision. The Bump program runs one hour of mentoring each week in a public place like a park, and also conducts monthly workshops for all the young mums and their mentors to get together and learn valuable life skills, as well as have some time out for themselves. Both programs have a wonderful graduation celebration at the end of the year when mentoring is completed.

If you would like to make a tangible difference in the life of a young person or would like more information about volunteering as a youth mentor in 2010, check out <http://www.younglove.org.au> or contact Vicki Condon on [condon@bigpond.net.au](mailto:condon@bigpond.net.au).

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