

Hi, my name is Nancy, I'm a community organizer and the executive director of the Logan Square Neighborhood Association. With me is Tenisha from the Auburn Gresham Community Development Corporation. **We are here to tell you about opportunities for students and families in neighborhood public schools. We want to stress that we have a lot to offer - but we need you. We need financial investment and political will to make this work grow and flourish.**

We know that neighborhood public schools are centers of our communities. We know that parents love their children and that they will do whatever it takes to help their children succeed. Parents, however, often feel intimidated and unwelcome in their child's school.

Logan Square Neighborhood Association started a Parent Mentor Program 22 years ago. Now it is successfully implemented in 76 schools in Illinois and it's growing to other schools nationally. At this time there are 607 mentors in their children's schools across Illinois. Parent Mentors attend trainings at the beginning of the school year. They serve 2 hours Monday through Thursday in a classroom (not their own child's). Friday is dedicated to workshops and discussions.

This program breaks down barriers. It brings the culture of the home into the school and the culture of the school into the home.

Parents are transformed. They become comfortable in public life and knowledgeable about education. Most further their own education and/or find employment after they complete the year-long program.

Classrooms with mentors benefit from having an additional adult that usually works with students that need extra attention. **These students start to do better.**

Parent mentor's own children see their parents grow. They see changes in their parent's lives. These children do better all the way through college graduation.

The parent mentor program opens doors for parents, students, educators and administrators to be more involved in community. **As a result, schools and communities bloom.**

Tenisha will tell you another way to strengthen schools and communities.