

*Last Updated: September 10, 2025*

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The United Way of Northeastern Minnesota’s Lunch Buddies Mentoring program currently serves grade school students at several local schools who would benefit from additional support, encouragement and a positive and caring adult mentor. Youth are referred to the program by school staff and are then matched with a volunteer adult mentor. The mentors in the program commit to supporting, encouraging, and being a friend to their mentee for the school year.

**MENTOR ROLE**

* Serve as a positive role model and guide
* Focus on building a positive relationship with the young person
* Supporting the young person through an ongoing, one-to-one relationship
* Participate in school-based activities together
* Help identify and encourage mentee strengths

**Time Commitment**

* Make a school-year-long commitment (October-May)
  + One lunch break/week
    - Cherry School *Tuesdays*
    - Falls Elementary (International Falls) *Wednesdays (tentative)*
    - Floodwood School *Tuesdays (tentative)*
    - Greenhaven Elementary (Hibbing) *Tuesdays*
    - Laurentian Elementary School (Eveleth) *Tuesdays*
    - Merritt Elementary School (Mountain Iron) *Wednesdays*
    - Mesabi East School (Aurora) *Mondays*
    - Nashwauk Keewatin Schools (Elementary) *Tuesdays*
    - Northeast Range School (Babbitt) *Tuesdays (tentative)*
    - North Star Elementary School (Eveleth) *Tuesdays*
    - Parkview Elementary School (Virginia) *Wednesdays*
    - Vaughan Steffensrud Elementary School (Chisholm) *Mondays (tentative)*
    - Washington Elementary School (Ely) *Lunch Buddies Day TBA*
* Must be able to attend the **majority** of meetings. *We understand “life happens.” In the event you are unable to make your mentor/mentee visit we ask that you please notify us immediately so we can ensure your mentee is paired with a replacement for the scheduled visit.*
* Communicate monthly with the program specialist
* Attend an initial 1.5-hour training session
* Attend optional mentor/mentee group events and program recognition events

**Participation Requirements**

* Is interested in working with a young person and being a positive role model
* Be at least 18 years of age
* Have transportation to the school where you will be mentoring
* Complete the screening procedure
* Agree to attend mentor trainings as required
* Pass the criminal background check
* Be willing to disclose and/or discuss any mental, chemical, or physical health conditions which may impact ability to effectively mentor
* Access to internet and have an email account

**Desirable Qualities**

* Willing listener
* Open to learning and growing
* Nonjudgmental
* Celebrates/embraces individual differences
* Encouraging and supportive
* Patient and flexible

**Benefits**

* Personal fulfillment through contribution to an individual child and the larger community
* Satisfaction in helping a child grow and learn
* Training sessions and group activities
* Personal ongoing support and coaching to help the match succeed
* Mentee/mentor group activities and participant recognition events

**SUPERVISION**

* Mentors will be under the supervision of the Program Specialist

**Application and Screening Process**

1. Respond with your interest
2. Submit written application and references
3. Comprehensive criminal background check
4. Complete personal interview
5. Attend pre-match mentor training

