

# MENTORING

At Casa Chirilagua our mission is **developing relationships with families to see the Chirilagua neighborhood transformed by Christ**. Relationship building is at the heart of our Mentoring program. By investing in the life of a young child, you become the hands and feet of Christ in a tangible way.

## OUR PROGRAM GOAL:

To provide Casa Chirilagua youth with stable relationships and access to new experiences and opportunities to help them grow in confidence and reach their full potential.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who are Casa Chirilagua Mentors?

Casa Mentors are mature adults, 21 and older, who commit to maintaining a friendship with their mentee by meeting at least one hour a week for a minimum of one year.

### Who are Casa Chirilagua Mentees?

Casa Mentees are children in elementary and middle school (1st-8th grades). Casa Mentees live in the Chirilagua (Arlandria) neighborhood and participate in at least one Casa Chirilagua program (Kids Club, Teens Club, Bible Study). Most children are from immigrant families and of Central American descent.

### Do I need to speak Spanish?

Speaking Spanish is not a requirement. The majority of our mentees speak both English and Spanish. Your mentee and program staff can help you communicate with his or her family if you don't speak Spanish.

### How do I become a mentor?

Contact Adriana Gomez, Mentoring Director, to get started. Your first step will be to complete the screening process which includes a phone inquiry with Adriana, followed by an application, background check, personal interview, orientation and training.

### How long does the screening process take?

This is typically an eight week process, depending on the time in which an applicant completes all of the necessary paperwork and trainings and how long it takes for the fingerprint-based criminal background check to be completed.

### How do I get matched with a mentee?

After completing the screening process program staff will match you with a mentee based on age/gender preferences and interest/personality matches. We'll notify you of your match, notify the family, then arrange a time for everyone to meet and set a regular meeting time and location.

### When do mentoring sessions take place?

Mentors and mentees meet after-school, in the evening or on the weekends, depending on the preference of the mentor and mentee's family. It's best to set a regular time (Tuesdays at 6pm or Saturdays at

10am, for example), but schedules can be flexible as long as there is good communication between the mentor and the mentee's family and meetings are consistent.

### Where do mentoring sessions take place?

Our mentoring program is community-based, which means mentoring sessions take place in public places in the neighborhood (library, park, coffee shop, etc.). Mentoring sessions can take place in the mentee's home but during the first year, it is never okay to be alone with your mentee in his or her home or bring the mentee to your home.

### What kinds of things will my mentee and I do?

Each match is unique and how you spend your time will depend upon the interests and personality of your mentee. Some matches spend most of their time on reading and academic skills. Others enjoy doing projects together such as building a robot, learning sign-language, practicing a sport, etc. Some matches plan reward experiences like sporting events, movies, museum trips, etc.

### What kinds of trainings & support are available?

All mentors are required to complete an orientation, Child Protection Training and Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Training prior to being matched with their mentee. Additional trainings will be offered throughout the relationship of which mentors are encouraged to take advantage. Mentors will have monthly phone and email contact with program staff as a way of keeping staff informed of match progress.

### Is faith a required component of the program?

Casa Chirilagua is a faith-based organization and we openly teach biblical principles in many of our programs. However, claiming the Christian faith is not a requirement to become a mentor. We believe that as a mentor, your role is to share life with your mentee. If your faith is important to you feel free to share with your mentee, to the degree that you (and your mentee and his or her family) are comfortable.

### What are the benefits of mentoring?

The individualized interest and companionship that a child receives from a mentor makes a huge impact including reducing risky behaviors, increasing a youth's sense of well-being and improving his or her academic performance.

Contact Adriana Gomez, Mentoring Director: [adriana@casachirilagua.org](mailto:adriana@casachirilagua.org), 703-870-6258

