



MentorStark Celebrates 5 Years in February

On February 1, MentorStark celebrated five years of serving Stark County. We'll be sharing impact results from these five years in future newsletters. But we wanted to kick off this NEW monthly newsletter by saying thank you! Whether you are a financial supporter, school district partner, mentoring or youth program collaborator, community partner, Board member, Inside Look host, or one of the people who made up the more than 17,000 site visits to mentorstark.org, your support is the reason we are still here. We are heading into 2026 with renewed commitment to driving the mentoring movement to ensure all young people in Stark County have skills, confidence, character, and connections that lead to opportunities.

New Staff To Help Us Grow

We are so excited to welcome Cassie Ausperk to the MentorStark team as our Organizational Advancement Coordinator. Cassie has strong connections in the Stark County community and brings experience and energy that is already making an impact! We are very grateful for the support of The William and Minnette Goldsmith Foundation, a supporting foundation of the Stark Community Foundation, for providing grant dollars that helped us develop this position.



Inside Look: Brewtifully

Despite the numerous snow days in January, we managed to get our MentorStark Opportunity Club members at Jackson High School out to an Inside Look at Brewtifully, an art studio and store in Plain

Township. Students heard from artist, illustrator and digital animator Tracy Dawn Brewer on the many different career pathways in art and how to begin leveraging their creative skills now to create income and grow their portfolios.



Inside Look: Wells Building

The cold temperatures also didn't keep us from holding an Inside Look at the former Wells Elementary School on McKinley Ave SW. Seniors in McKinley High School's Construction and Business Career Technical Education programs had a chance to tour the building and listen to the community

vision and construction plans of pastors Marcus Taylor and Jake Barrena, The trip was particularly interesting for construction teacher Jack Tisevich, who went to the Wells building for his athletic physicals back when he was a student at Canton City Schools. Exposing students to community initiatives that could result in future opportunities is an important part of the work our Opportunity Club does in partnership with local school districts.

Save The Date-Walk & Talk



We've got something exciting planned in April to introduce the concept of "Flash Mentoring" to our community, with a healthy twist! MentorStark is proud to host **Walk & Talk: A Mega Mentoring Event on Sunday, April 19** at the Canton City School's Bulldog Activity Center from 1pm - 6pm. More details to follow, but if connecting with area youth is on your to-do list for 2026, block off your afternoon now! We are eager to meet Stark County's young talent and help shape their perceptions of their future possibilities.

A Note From Our Executive Director

January was National Mentoring Month, but the impact of mentoring relationships are felt year round in our community. Mentoring relationships can develop through formal programs or in places young people naturally connect with trusted adults, such as schools, neighborhoods, churches, sports, arts and after-school programs. The basic qualities of good mentors are:

- A sincere desire to be involved with a young person
- Respect for young people
- Active listening skills
- Empathy
- Ability to see solutions and opportunities
- Flexibility

You can learn more about local mentoring and youth programs who are seeking volunteers, by visiting mentorstark.org



Laurie Moline
Mentor
Mentoring Advocate
MENTORSTARK Founder



MentorStark | 116 Cleveland Ave. NW Suite 625 | Canton, OH 44702 US

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