MENTORING AS A TOOL FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
By Barbara Jax
CFRW Southern Division Leadership Development Chairman

Effective club leadership plans for succession and the smooth transfer of the reins to younger women. In the Summer 2005 issue of The Republican Woman, the NFRW Leadership Committee suggested that one way of accomplishing these goals was for clubs to develop mentoring programs that utilize the experience and insight of our Republican women members.

Federated Republican women’s clubs that have developed these programs have found them to be a very effective way to develop future leaders. Side benefits include meetings that tend to be better planned and a membership more inclined to embrace change.

 Basically, a mentoring program consists of an experienced member taking a promising newcomer under her wing, helping her to grow in the knowledge and skills needed to become an effective leader. Too often our women are left to learn the art of leadership – and it is an art – by trial and error. Mentoring allows the new member to avoid the pitfalls that might otherwise mar her development.

As the article states, mentoring doesn’t need to be a time-consuming ordeal nor one of long duration. Indeed, much of it can be accomplished by telephone or e-mail.

The benefits of mentoring are many, both to the new members and the club. The new members feel valued and as they become more knowledgeable, their self-confidence increases. This, in turn, leads to greater participation on their part in club and community activities and ultimately enables them to assume leadership roles.

Tips to consider when developing a mentoring program:

♦ Select mentors who have outstanding leadership abilities, experience and communication skills.
♦ Invite newcomers to complete a brief questionnaire in order to determine their interests and skills.
♦ Pair an experienced “friend” with each new member.
♦ Give new members a job and then work along side them.
♦ Enlist every board member and chair to select an assistant.

Tips for Mentors:

♦ Share experiences and vision for the future
♦ Provide wisdom and direction
♦ Shift from rules to suggestions
♦ Give guidance using positive messages
♦ Challenge with questions and assignments
♦ Ask for recommendations
♦ Focus on areas for improvement
♦ Reinforce accountability with consistent follow-up
♦ Praise and celebrate successful accomplishment of goals

This works! Please give it a try if you haven’t already done so. Future articles will contain additional tips to help you set up a successful mentoring program for your club.
MENTORING – PART II
By Barbara Jax
CFRW Southern Division Leadership Development Chairman

Mentoring is one of the best tools to use in developing current and future leaders. Those clubs that have employed this tool have found that mentoring:

♦ Helps educate members about the political process, the NFRW and their own clubs.
♦ Provides a solid foundation for the next generation of Republican women leaders.
♦ Allows experienced members to pass on their knowledge to newer members and
♦ Helps in planning better meetings and embracing change.

The following article is reprinted from the NFRW’s Leadership Development and Mentoring section of its web site and is offered as a plan to help you get started with a mentoring program for your own club. Any changes in wording were space-related.

1. Clubs set goals for mentoring programs.
2. An overall attitude of support for mentoring others is essential to all programs.
3. Size of the program varies based upon the goals of the club and the interest of the members. The programs may include:

♦ Executive Committee
♦ All officers and committee chairs
♦ All new members
♦ All members desiring a mentor
♦ Youth such as TAR and College Republicans
♦ Other configurations as set by the club

4. Set program goals in cooperation with the leadership/membership so there is buy-in.
5. Develop a master mentoring plan that can be customized for each mentoring relationship. This plan should include measurable goals for the program’s duration and be developed at the beginning of the relationship. A timetable is included in the process.
6. Assess needs and interests of mentees.
7. Inventory expertise of mentors.
8. Match mentees and mentors.
9. Make materials available for all to use such as:

♦ History of local club, state federation and national federation
♦ Organization of Republican Party appropriate for each state/location
♦ Notebook for all committees if that is the focus plus a job description
♦ Job descriptions should be created for those jobs not covered by one.
♦ Suggested activities
♦ Tips for mentors and mentees

10. Celebration at conclusion. Can include written assessment plus mentor/mentee testimonials regarding the mentoring experience.

Next month’s article in this series on mentoring will offer specific suggestions regarding the mentor and mentee roles.
MENTORING – PART III THE ROLE OF THE MENTOR
By Barbara Jax
CFRW Southern Division Leadership Development Chairman

Thomas Jefferson said, “Mentor those you lead. The more they know, the more successful the enterprise is likely to be.” With that in mind, it is reassuring to know that mentoring need not be lengthy or time-consuming. The size of the mentoring program may vary but it should ideally include all officers and committee chairs.

Once the club has set its annual goals and developed a Master Mentoring Program, mentoring can begin in earnest. The plan can be customized for each mentoring relationship but should include measurable goals for the program’s duration and a timetable for achieving those goals. It is also helpful to create a Mentoring Questionnaire and have a New Member Worksheet available like that on the NFRW website.

There are four (4) stages in the mentoring process: (1) Planning; (2) Building the Relationship and Negotiating the Agreement; (3) Developing the Plan and (4) Ending the Formal Part of the Relationship.

While the roles of mentor and mentee intersect frequently, the Role of the Mentor will be considered this month. The Role of Mentee will be presented next month along with Ending the Formal Relationship.

Step 1 - Planning
♦ Sell the advantages of mentoring to the membership
♦ Decide on program size/goals and create a Master Mentoring Program
♦ Create a Mentoring Questionnaire and use a New Member Worksheet like that on NFRW’s web site
♦ Match Mentors to Mentees
♦ Gather materials in packets for distribution to mentees including job descriptions. (See Part 2 for list)

Step 2 – Building the Relationship/Negotiating the Agreement
♦ Arrange to meet with mentee.
♦ Exchange contact information and decide on preferred methods of communication
♦ Provide background information and areas of expertise
♦ Exchange ideas about goals and dreams
♦ Decide on mentee’s goals and objectives. Let mentee make her own decisions.
♦ Agree on when, where and how often you’ll meet (at least 2 hours per month). Be available.
♦ Review confidentiality rules
♦ Discuss the measurement tools to be employed in measuring mentee’s progress
♦ Discuss possible ways you’ll give each other feedback.

Step 3 – Developing the Plan
♦ Explore what mentee wants to develop and brainstorm competencies needed to meet goal
♦ Keep track of each goal and development activity mentee is attempting
♦ Present suggestions and exchange feedback
♦ Introduce available resources including people who could be helpful
♦ Help mentee lead the process periodically for practice in learning sensitivity and protocol for future
♦ Encourage mentee frequently and guide in a positive manner
♦ Let each other know what you’re each getting from each other
♦ Challenge mentee with questions and assignments
♦ Reinforce mentee’s accountability using consistent follow-up
♦ Ask for recommendations
♦ Focus on areas needing improvement
MENTORING – PART IV ROLE OF MENTEE, EVALUATION & ENDING RELATIONSHIP

The previous three articles in the Mentoring Series were devoted to developing a plan for a mentoring program along with the four stages involved in the mentoring process: (1) Planning; (2) Building the Relationship and Negotiating the Agreement; (3) Developing the Plan and (4) Ending the Formal Part of the Relationship. The mentor’s role was also covered in some depth. This final article in the mentoring series will cover the role of the mentee, evaluation of the process, and ending the formal part of the relationship.

The role of the mentee interacts frequently with that of the mentor since they each have common goals. It is important to note that the mentee has much to contribute to the relationship. The mentee should:

- Follow through on promises made.
- Be honest and trustworthy at all times.
- Avoid canceling appointments without compelling reasons.
- Avoid making excuses for lack of follow-through if this occurs.
- Keep all commitments agreed upon.
- Refrain from speaking negatively about others.
- Share more of self with mentor as time passes.
- Be an effective listener and apply the positive and corrective feedback received ASAP.
- Share life goals with mentor so as to help build competencies and reach goals.
- Ask mentor if she can take the lead when feasible.
- Honor mentor’s needs and schedules.
- Thank mentor and compliment her on her skills, mentoring style, etc.

Before ending the formal relationship, take the time to evaluate the process. The Mentoring Group organization suggests that the evaluation should focus most on what happens to the mentee. Following are some suggestions you may wish to include in your evaluation:

- Program satisfaction
- Knowledge/skills acquired
- Mentee’s progress
- Mentee’s self confidence
- Contacts made and people met (if applicable)
- Risks taken
- Mistakes avoided
- Best features of program
- Program weaknesses
- Recommendations for improvement
- Evaluation of training materials
- Evaluation of mentee’s development plans
- Feedback from mentee as to how mentor could enhance skills
- Concrete ways to convey observations, appreciation, and best wishes for the future

Mentees will be tempted to hold on to strong mentors indefinitely. However, it’s important to let go and transition into a different relationship once they’ve completed their agreed-upon time together and/or when they’ve learned what they need to know. The formal mentoring relationship can ease into an informal one or perhaps develop into a close friendship.

By all means have a celebration at the conclusion. It can include a written assignment tool as well as testimonials from the mentors and other mentees regarding the mentoring experience. Perhaps this celebration could be held during a club meeting where each mentor and mentee would receive a certificate of appreciation and a small gift.

This article concludes the series on mentoring. All four articles will appear on the CFRW Southern Division website and can be downloaded from there this fall. The hope is that clubs will find them helpful in designing their own mentoring programs. Much of the material contained in these articles can be found on the NFRW web site. Click on Member Center, Leadership Development Resources and Mentoring Resources and Additional Resources. Happy Mentoring!