



ROARING FORK PRECOLLEGIATE VOLUNTEER MENTOR OVERVIEW and FAQ

WHAT IS ROARING FORK PRECOLLEGIATE?

Roaring Fork PreCollegiate is a college preparatory program for highly motivated students in Basalt, Carbondale and Glenwood Springs who would be the first in their family to go to college. PreCollegiate has over **200 students currently enrolled** throughout the Re-1 School District, and we are growing fast! Demand for the program greatly outstrips our ability to meet need.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The program recruits qualified students in 7th grade and pairs them in small groups of 10-15 with a volunteer mentor. The mentor then follows the student through their high school career until they graduate. These are hard working, committed students who have tremendous potential. **Since its beginning in 2003, 100% of the seniors who have participated in the program have graduated from high school. PreCollegiate students enroll in college at almost twice the statewide average - 95% versus 57%.**

Its success is a result of a **longstanding partnership** between the Roaring Fork School District, the University of Colorado, and Colorado Mountain College, with scholarship support from the John Gold Pre-Collegiate Scholarship, housed within the Aspen Community Foundation. Both CMC and CU-Boulder host residential Summer Camps for PreCollegiate high school students. The students live in dorms, eat in the school cafeteria and take academic courses in order to more fully experience life on a college campus. Students often describe this time on campus as transformative, and it helps shape the students view of the college selection process and of themselves.

WHAT IS THE MENTOR'S ROLE?

Talented and committed mentors are the key to the PreCollegiate program. Each mentor is a role model and group leader for 10 to 15 students of the same grade level. Mentors meet with their student group during the school year during school hours at least once a month. These meetings typically are during the lunch period, last about forty-five minutes, and are scheduled through each school at a mutually convenient time for both mentors and students. Mentors are first and foremost advocates for the student, but they are also there to share life experiences, set a college-going expectation, and help the students navigate the complicated

process of selecting and applying for college. **In effect, a mentor is an academic and life coach**, who supports his or her kids to overcome obstacles and stay on a college-bound track.

WHAT DO MENTORS DO AT THE GROUP MEETINGS?

Meeting topics include: general information about and exposure to college, life skills, field trips, exposure to community members who share their success stories, community service activities, assistance with academic needs, and career option discussions. Sometimes the sessions are structured nuts-and-bolts style, and other times they can be free-ranging social discussions about topics of interest to you and the students. PreCollegiate Staff program provides a curriculum for mentors and specific guidance and resources, but the program itself relies heavily on the mentors to provide the energy and creativity to determine what works best for their group.

WHAT IS THE COMMITMENT AND WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS OF MENTORS?

1. Work with students throughout the school year, from September to May.
2. Meet with students at least once a month, and preferably twice, for approximately 45 minutes to one hour. Sessions are sometimes held weekly during the students' senior year.
3. Communicate with students to remind them of a group meeting, follow-up with them on grades or assignments.
4. Communicate with the program Staff if any problems or concerns arises with a student.
5. Attend occasional meetings and/or training sessions held with Staff.
6. Attend informational sessions scheduled with other mentors.
7. Attend an annual meeting with parents.
8. Mentors also have the option to attend other PreCollegiate activities including parent programming, summer programs, high school graduation, and college fairs.
9. Some mentors enjoy following up with students once they graduate from high school and go on to college, but there is no program requirement that you continue with your group after they graduate.

WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DOES THE STAFF PROVIDE?

1. Once you complete the application process you will attend a formal mentor training session where you will learn more about being a mentor and about our curriculum.
2. At your request, we will attend your group meetings to support and/or monitor their progress.
3. We provide practical coaching and ongoing direct support and feedback for all mentors.
4. We furnish a resource binder you can use to prepare for student sessions.
5. Via email, we make sure you stay up-to-date with the program schedule and ongoing developments both in the college application process and at their school.
6. We organize meetings where you will have a chance to share ideas and resources with other mentors.

CAN I PAIR UP WITH SOMEONE LIKE A SPOUSE OR FRIEND?

Absolutely, we have many co-mentors for groups including friends and spouses. Often the co-mentoring approach offers distinct benefits to the students and helps you with scheduling and managing the process.

WORKING WITH A GROUP FROM 7TH TO 12TH GRADE SEEMS LIKE A LONG TIME. WHAT IF I CAN'T COMMIT TO THAT?

We understand that life goes on for our volunteers as much as for the students, and that the period from 7th to 12th grade seems like a long time (although it goes by in a flash!). We like mentors to know going into it that it is ideal for them to stay with the kids their whole high school career, and the vast majority of our volunteers do. Mentors are really only meeting with their groups from 1-2 hours a month for nine months, and most of our mentors report that they wish to spend more time with their groups, not less. If something happens that impacts your ability to meet the expectations we are happy to work with you and your students to get help, meet requirements, and ensure that any transitions are smooth. It is more important for us that we start with a group in 7th grade with a mentor willing to commit for the short term than to wait to serve the students later in their high school career.

NEXT STEPS:

If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please give us a call or email us at the addresses below. We'll meet with you one-on-one to answer any questions you might have. We can also arrange for you to meet with an existing mentor. If you decide you'd like to volunteer, the school district requires a simple background check to ensure student safety.

We are confident that volunteering with PreCollegiate will be a life changing experience for you, and the impact you will have on students is immeasurable. Please feel free to contact us anytime!

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