

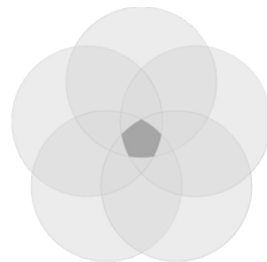
For if they fall, one will lift up the other; but woe to one who is alone and falls and does not have another to help.

**Ecclesiastes 4:10**

# MENTORS FOR LIFE

"JOINING GOD IN SERVING CHILDREN AT RISK THROUGH PROVIDING A CONSISTENT, CARING, AND POSITIVE INFLUENCE IN THEIR LIVES."

ION+missionproject.org  
prepared by MIKE CRAIG



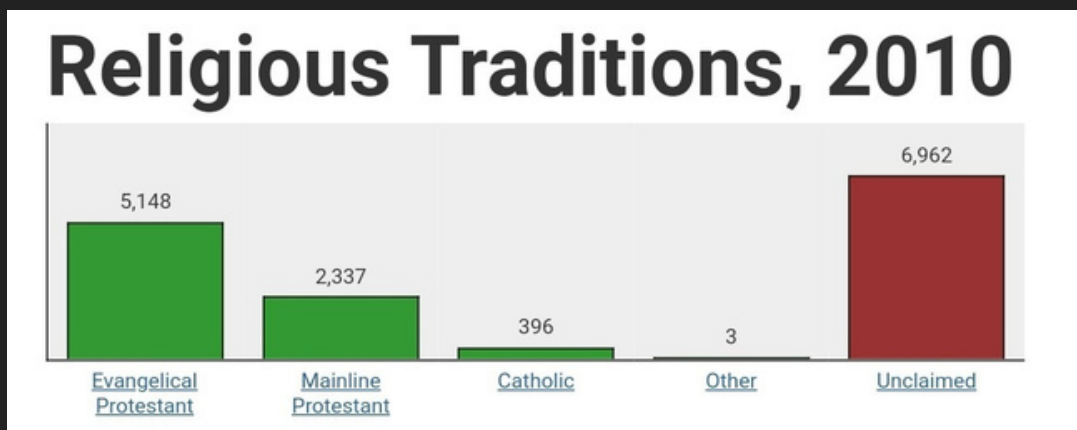
# SULLIVAN, IL



Sullivan is a rural farming community in Moultrie County, Illinois, United States. The population was 4,326 at the 2000 census, and 4,396 in 2009. Nearby Lake Shelbyville provides recreation and some tourism.

Sullivan has 23 churches listed on [sullivan.il/us](http://sullivan.il/us). Sullivan is a predominately white community.

"Sullivan Elementary School, provides educational and social emotional services to 511 students, pre-kindergarten to 4th grade. 41% of our students come from low income families, increasing every year. The high percentage of students and families in need present issues with food insecurities, high mobility rates, difficulty accessing medical care, a lack of appropriate daycare, substance abuse, domestic violence, and a host of other problems that an elementary student shouldn't have to face on a day to day basis." Mrs. Graham. Sullivan Elementary School Social Worker



# CONTEXT | STORIES



J, age 8, lost his father unexpectedly prior to the school year. He, his father, and younger brother (age 6) were living in Nashville, Tennessee at the time. J and his brother moved to Sullivan just prior to the school year to live with their grandmother. According to the school social worker- J was struggling with the transition and unresolved grief. He wore earmuffs because the noise of the other students bothered him. I became a mentor for J. When I met J, he wore the earmuffs even when we were alone. He was withdrawn. Throughout the course of the school year J and I have become close friends. J has also blossomed in his relationships at school. His grades are good. He has developed a close circle of friends. When I meet J and when I say goodbye to J- he gives me a big hug and a smile.

## **Testimony:**

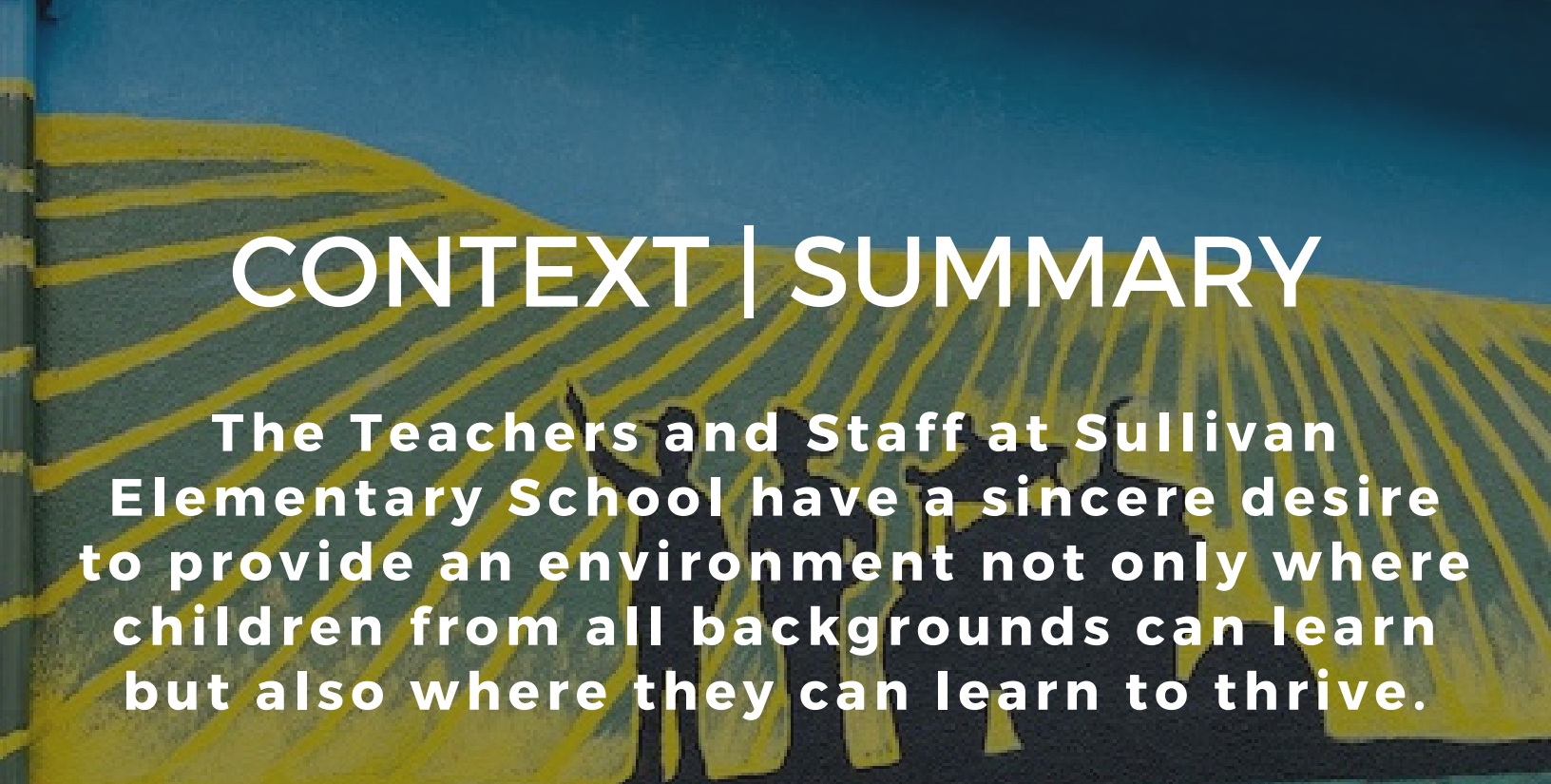
"Mentors provide a consistent, caring, and positive influence in our students' lives. Research has shown that school success comes from having a positive adult, an appropriate peer relationship, and a stable home life. Mentors often provide a positive adult role model and make up for the lack of a stable home life. Mentors are definitely valued and appreciated!"

Poppy Ann Graham, MSW  
School Social Worker- SES

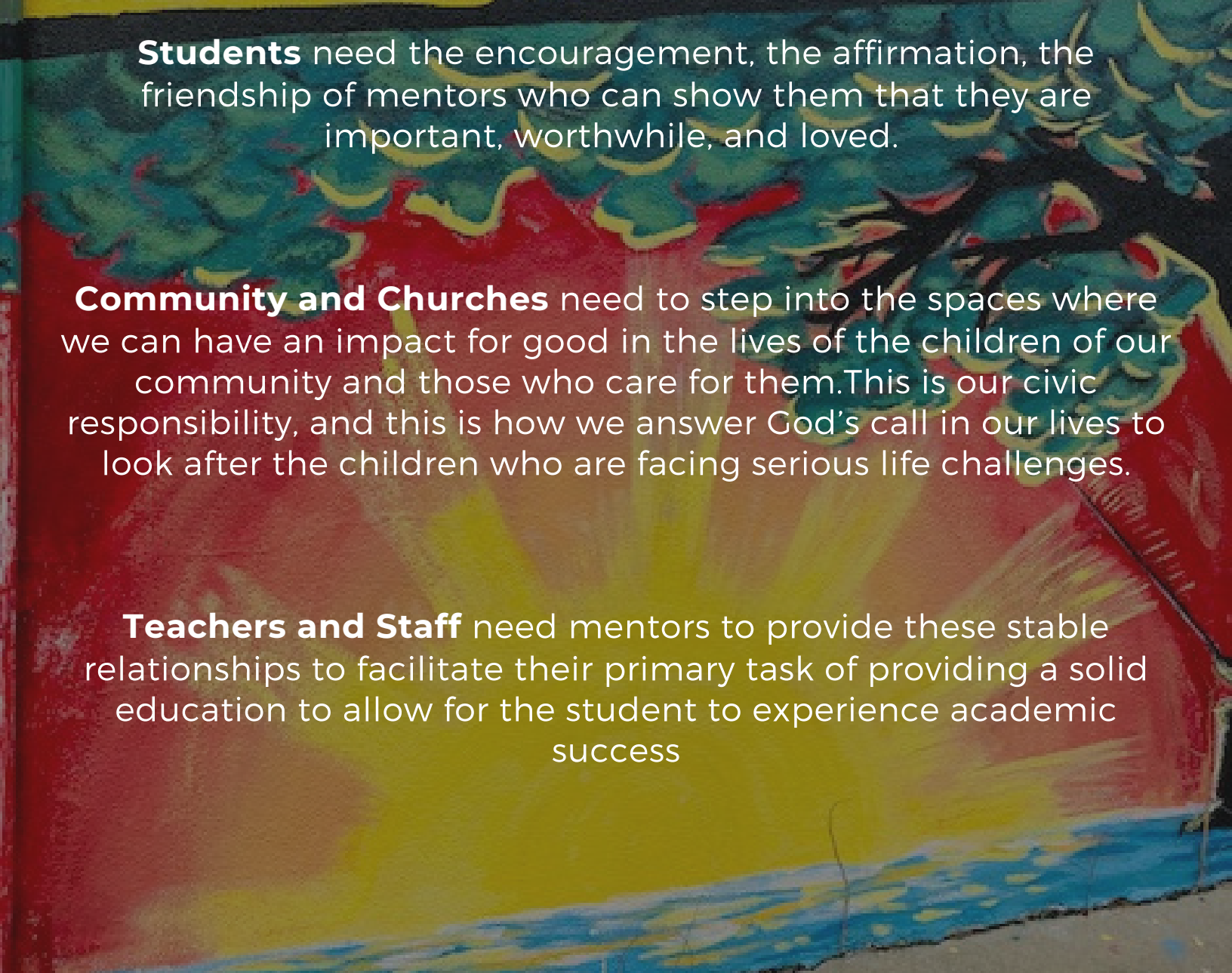
M is a 9 year old 4th grader. He is successful in school and is quite an athlete. M's parents are recently divorced. He lives with his Mom and two sisters.

His Dad is in the military, stationed in Virginia, and deployed often. M misses his Dad. His teacher and Mom felt that M was lonely and in need of a friend. M has responded wonderfully to his new mentor. Mostly they play board games and an occasional game of catch.

# CONTEXT | SUMMARY



**The Teachers and Staff at Sullivan Elementary School have a sincere desire to provide an environment not only where children from all backgrounds can learn but also where they can learn to thrive.**



**Students** need the encouragement, the affirmation, the friendship of mentors who can show them that they are important, worthwhile, and loved.

**Community and Churches** need to step into the spaces where we can have an impact for good in the lives of the children of our community and those who care for them. This is our civic responsibility, and this is how we answer God's call in our lives to look after the children who are facing serious life challenges.

**Teachers and Staff** need mentors to provide these stable relationships to facilitate their primary task of providing a solid education to allow for the student to experience academic success

# THE GOSPEL IN SULLIVAN

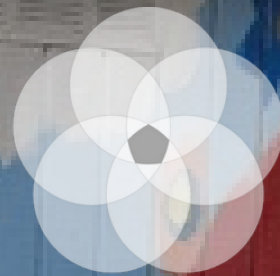
**God is calling the church to serve those on the margin of society, particularly the most vulnerable - our children.**

The children on the margin of society hold a special place in the Kingdom of God. Many children at the school are from "at risk" situations and in danger of being marginalized in our society. The school staff has a desire not only to teach the children in order that they may advance in their life but have an underlying desire to see these children develop loving and nurturing relationships. God is at work in the school through the caring of these school staff members for these children.

"When God gives you a mission heart, he starts to fill you with a desire to serve others. He taps you gently on your shoulder. As you turn to see his welcoming face, you turn away from any self-doubt or excessive self-confidence to trust in him."

(Michael Moynagh, Being Church Doing Life)

# MENTORS FOR LIFE



"Joining God in serving children at risk through providing a consistent, caring, and positive influence in their lives."

**"When witnessing communities serve people in the cavities of life, others will be less likely to see church as "that irrelevant building over there". Church will be visibly touching their lives."**

**Michael Moynagh, Being Church Doing Life**

"In Christ, we discover that God's way of mission is personally, humbly, sacrificially stepping into the middle of God's beautiful-broken-beloved world."

Christopher James, *Church Planting In Post-Christian Soil. Theology and Practice.*

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with **compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.**

**Colossians 3:12**

# MENTORS FOR LIFE VALUES

## **COMPASSION**

The Bible calls us to a shared passion, that pays attention to the deepest brokenness of our neighbors.

## **KINDNESS**

Our kindness reflects the heart of Jesus.

## **HUMILITY**

A Christ-like attitude of putting the interests of other ahead of one's own.

## **GENTLENESS**

Sensitivity and kindness of behavior founded on strength and prompted by love.

## **PATIENCE**

Waiting with grace, love, joy and peace.

Mentors for Life connects local community members with at risk SES students and one another to provide care in the way of Jesus which centers around 3 primary practices on a school-year rhythm.

## CONNECT

A meal, celebration, and fellowship in the fall of the year to introduce mentors and teachers and discuss the needs of the school staff and the students.

## RELATIONSHIPS

**Weekly** meetings at the school with the mentor and student will develop relationships and help as the teacher identifies the need.

**Monthly** opportunities for mentors to meet and share experiences with one another will allow for new friendships and supportive relationships.

## CELEBRATE

A meal of celebration will culminate the school year (at Sullivan Elementary School) with mentors, students, and teachers.



# MENTORS FOR LIFE TIMELINE

**FALL 2022** | Creation of initial 'pilot group' of 10 to 20 mentors. The program will start 2 to 4 weeks after the schoolyear begins. A kick-off dinner with speakers to provide education and background information will be hosted in the community. Weekly meetings with students will be scheduled. Monthly meetings will be scheduled at the Sullivan Library for mentors to meet for fellowship and discuss progress, ideas, hopes, successes and concerns.

**SPRING 2023** | Celebration and a meal with school staff, mentors, and students.

**FALL 2023** | Expansion of the Mentors for Life program and creation of a steering committee.



In years past the church functioned as the village hub. But nowadays the local school has filled the void left by the church.

Sam Chan, How to Talk About Jesus Without Being THAT Guy

**ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL  
PRINCIPAL**

**ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL  
COUNSELOR and  
TEACHERS**

**SULLIVAN  
PARENT/TEACHER  
ASSOCIATION**

**SULLIVAN  
RETIRED  
TEACHERS  
ASSOC.**

**SULLIVAN  
MINISTERIAL  
ASSOCIATION**

**PARTNERS**

# JOIN US

## **PARTICIPATE**

If you feel called to become a mentor, please contact Mike Craig at [mikeecraig@gmail.com](mailto:mikeecraig@gmail.com)

## **PRAY**

Please pray for Mentors for Life and the children they serve as we endeavor to bring love and hope to these at-risk students.

## **PARTNER**

Mentors for Life would graciously accept organizations and groups who wish to partner with its endeavors by hosting or serving meals.

## **PAY**

The meals, educational materials, and background checks are funded by the Ministerial Assoc, participating churches, mentors, and the Parent/Teacher Assoc. Please feel free to donate to any of those organizations.

# MENTORS FOR LIFE

[ION+missionproject.org](http://ION+missionproject.org)

