

Mentoring: From The 'Mentee's' Perspective

by *Melissa Johnson*

As an interpreter who recently graduated from a two-year program (a year and a half ago), I always thought it would be a privilege to be involved with a mentorship program. At the time, I was in a small town and the opportunities to be in such a program were almost nonexistent. The plans to move to California were already in progress to further my education, and I had high hopes to be involved with a mentor.

My hopes came true this last fall. I got to be involved with my first mentorship experience at California State University, Northridge. It was so neat to have someone just like me who had been through everything I had, someone who understood my anxieties, fear, joys and successes. My mentor was someone I came to trust and appreciate, someone who encouraged me when I was down and reminded me that I was human when I made mistakes. My list could go on and on with high recommendations of becoming involved with a mentorship of your own. The value of things we can all learn from each other, whether you are a novice or highly experienced interpreter, together with an open mind and heart, is priceless beyond compare. I know I will take my experience with me wherever I go.

(Melissa Johnson is a recent transplant from Charlotte, North Carolina, where she studied Sign Language Interpreting at Central Piedmont Community College. In California one year, she is pursuing her Bachelor's Degree Studies at California State University, Northridge, where she is also employed as an interpreter.) □
