

This program will provide added benefit by:

- Generating valuable demographic data for the Cherokee Nation
- Providing positive systems enhancement within the Nation, including:
  - ◊ increased interdepartmental cooperation
  - ◊ enhanced multidisciplinary team approach
  - ◊ expansion of a consumer-driven approach
  - ◊ improved transportation linkages
- Providing evaluation and analysis of various data for the Cherokee Nation
- Providing the Cherokee Nation available linkages and increased access to The University of Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center

From the standpoint of the Cherokee Nation, this is a program of self-discovery for adults and young people with significant disabilities. The program's *relationship-enhancement* and *skills-training* modules provide strategies designed to empower participants to initiate, develop, and maintain an active mentoring alliance with students with disabilities. This can change individual lives and provide added strength to increase important human connections that may have been overlooked in the recent past.

This model will help to promote one of the Cherokee Old Ways; that is, significant elders will mentor youths in the skills, beliefs, and traditions of the Cherokee people. This will benefit many: the young people; the elders; the Cherokee Nation; and Cherokee relationships with the mainstream culture. Ultimately, I would hope that, in some small way, this program could add to the balance of things, promote the Cherokee Way, and demonstrate to the mainstream culture the potential superiority of a particular way of education and life.

From the standpoint of my doctoral dissertation, I propose to demonstrate that adults with significant disabilities who engage in an active mentoring alliance with students with significant disabilities will:

- Increase prosocial behavior
- Show improvement on self-efficacy measures
- Increase scores on a semantic differential measure of positive self-perceptions.

This is, to my knowledge, the first systematic study of the effect of mentoring on the mentor (The Mentor Effect). As a doctoral candidate, my main priority has been to design and implement an effective study that meets the highest standards of scholarship and the scientific method. As a doctoral candidate engaging in dissertation research, I have both a personal interest and an obligation to my university to effect a timely beginning, middle, and end to this dissertation project. In this regard I