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**GrandMentor: Pioneering intergenerational literacy program over free online videoconferencing**

**Our Dual Mission:**

To improve reading level/literacy (vocabulary, passage comprehension, story sense, love of reading) for underprivileged students grades K to 3rd through one-on-one reading and mentoring.

To promote healthy aging and senior integration in the community through socially-responsible volunteering.

**Summary:**

GrandMentor connects American seniors and elementary school children in a mutually beneficial relationship to promote successful aging and education. Our venture pairs disadvantaged children who have Internet access at school and/or home with at-home or at-day center volunteer senior citizens by using free videoconferencing (i.e. Skype) tools and proprietary teaching guides specific to high quality children's literature. The social impact is two-fold: (1) Children improve academic achievement with free personalized literacy tutoring. (2) Senior volunteers prevent cognitive decline/isolation by giving back.

### **The Need:**

Literacy is a predictor of academic success. One in two Latino and African American 4th graders read below grade level (34% of U.S. 4th graders) (NAEP 2009). Many children lack access to crucial one-to-one reading at home or even at school (Moody et al. 1997).

Aging: By 2030 about 1 in every 5 Americans will be 65 years or older and about a third of their life will be spent in retirement. Seniors need to engage in meaningful activities for successful aging and avoidance of isolation/depression.

### **Solution:**

GrandMentor provides a free online education platform that allows seniors who remain at home or at their day center to become literacy mentors for children in need. The platform provides proprietary educator-developed guides specific to each book, mentor ratings, safety monitoring, and matches the demand for mentors from schools, afterschool programs, and families with a supply of senior volunteers. All sessions are conducted under school and/or parental oversight. The use of the Internet/Skype as a communication channel allows for rapid adoption and massive scaling.

### **Growth Strategy:**

We will initially target schools and after school networks nationwide that have a strong presence in grades K to 3rd. We will also target seniors in assisted living facilities and

grandparents who wish to read to their grandchildren from home, through referrals from partner schools. Our initial geographic focus is domestic (U.S.), with current pilots underway in New York City.

# grandMentor **Senior volunteers needed**

- 1 Intergenerational literacy program where seniors read to disadvantaged kids using Skype



### **Requirements:**

- Age 55+
- Fluent English
- Computer with Internet access
- Web camera (for video)

### **Commitment:**

45 minutes once a week

### **Training provided:**

Takes just 1 hour per week  
call!

- 2 **Watch** our video: [www.vimeo.com/grandmentor/inaction](http://www.vimeo.com/grandmentor/inaction)

- 3 **Enroll:** [SeniorNet.GrandMentor@hq.seniornet.org](mailto:SeniorNet.GrandMentor@hq.seniornet.org)

