

An Inside Look at MHS's Peer Mentor Program

-Grace Perry, Headlight Reporter

Summer, a month of beautiful weather and memories, eventually comes to a depressing end. Marblehead High School students are then forced to return to the very halls in which they left in late June. That is, unless you were a senior, of course. Eager freshman arrive at MHS ready to fully submit themselves into the school and all that it has to offer. Beside these eager freshman lies an older and wiser peer mentor ready to guide them through their obstacle course of a freshman year.

Judy Luise, a clinical social worker at MHS, enters her seventeenth year of working within Marblehead High School. Luise brought and developed Marblehead High School's very own peer mentor program. When asked about her long and successful career at MHS she notes: "I have worked here for seventeen years, seventeen wonderful years!"

The Peer Mentor program is an orientation system that puts together ninth grade students with an upperclassman from grades eleven and twelve. The upperclassmen chosen to assist the freshman will provide a tour throughout the school, support them throughout their difficult year and or develop a friendly relationship with them.

The Peer Mentor program has been popular year after year. Inside this year's program there are about 260 incoming freshman that will arrive in September. All in freshman have been placed with a peer mentor. Luise notes: "My favorite part of the program is watching students take leadership and feel pride in being a positive role model inside the school environment." Luise has high hopes for this year's program. Luise notes: "This year the program has been brought up several notches. I hope that our mentors are trained better and that the new trainings will guide them with their own mentoring experiences."

Luise works towards extending her program's training into late October 2012. She has also started to make positive changes within Step-Up Day and other fun activities that will better the program overall. Luise has already accepted over 200 upperclassmen mentors for next year's freshman and hopes that these new mentors will go above and beyond. She notes: "I hope that the new mentors will not just talk the talk and walk the walk." When asked what types of characteristics she looks for in mentors she notes: "integrity, determination, commitment and compassion."

Luise notes: "Part of being a mentor is reflecting on life experiences that you have had and reflecting back on those experiences to guide others."

For more information on the Peer Mentor Program please contact Judy Luise.

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