



Dear Jo-Ann,

A transition

I was lost...

When Arlene and I started my transition from "second-banana" to CEO in 2013, I had no idea what my vision for MENTOR Rhode Island (then RI Mentoring Partnership) was.... I knew that we needed to reach more kids. That's obvious. Just look at the news on any given day. I knew that we needed to be invested in creating quality mentor-mentee relationships for our kids and our amazing volunteer mentors. I knew there was SO much work to do but we simply didn't have the resources to do it.

Scarcity.

I was afraid that we couldn't make payroll. I was afraid that the agency would fail. I was afraid that I would fail. I looked around and saw what was needed but felt empty and helpless to make it happen.

Enter Jeffrey Deckman from Capability Accelerators. (Insert superhero music here...) Jeff does amazing work with corporations and I tapped into his energy and idealism as a resource for us. Some intensive professional development for me as a leader and follow up with staff led to a change of mind.... A change of heart.

Instead of looking at the deficits, we looked at our strengths. The staff members sitting around the table. Their enthusiasm and passion for our work was palpable. The corporate and foundation community that embraced our work. The schools and network of mentoring programs who counted on us. Our mentors. Our donors. Our Board of Directors. Our village.

A different view

Once that lens changed from scarcity to abundance, over time, something magical happened. Our staff size nearly doubled. Our programs and technical assistance are reaching more kids who need us. Our "attitude of gratitude" has helped us navigate multiple challenges and build on our strengths. Wait! Isn't

that the same thing we do for our kids? We build on their strengths. Embrace the positive and show up consistently. We don't give up.

So as the holidays approach, we cannot help but to be grateful. Grateful for the village that has provided so much, to lead us to this space where we are today.

Even with a tumultuous political climate and social unrest, we see our path. We cannot continue this journey without you coming along for the ride. We need you to help change the climate... to embrace everyone as equals. To be sure that our kids have what they need to be successful. No one aspires to be poor. No one wants to feel unloved. But together, we can make a difference. Make a difference for our young people and by doing so, make a difference for ourselves. For none of us get anywhere alone. We always need the help of road signs along the way.

Gratitude

Our wish for you this Thanksgiving is to take the time to celebrate all that you are, all that you have, all that you do. Know that together, we can make a difference one young person at a time.

Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much....

May your days be filled with joy and abundance!



Thank you for making a difference!

Sincerely,



Jo-Ann Schofield
President & CEO

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