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***Soarers***

(Proposed) **Virtual Mentoring Program**

**Purpose of Project**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this project is to design and implement a new virtual mentoring program aimed to help Haven ATL graduates with their knowledge in leadership, job, skill, career and personal development. In general, we strive for a user-friendly program that provides the right amount of structure balanced with sufficient flexibility for mentors and mentees. We believe that the mentoring program as proposed can serve as the missing link to success and transformation.

**Overview of Project**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Task 1:** Program Needs Assessment. Haven ATL Program Assistant will gather input from Mentor City (database designer), potential mentors and mentees to assess program design related issues, such as intended outcomes, participation requirements, facilitation of mentoring relationships, logistics, needed resources and support, confidentiality issues, etc.

**Task 2:** Program Design. Based on the results from the needs assessment, a proposal will be presented for the structure and framework of the program, addressing logistics, resources needs, program components, and policies and procedures. Proposal will be submitted to the Program Director for review.

**Task 3:** Program Implementation. Subsequent to approval and any modifications to the mentoring program design, the Program Assistant will create any mentoring materials, policy and procedure manuals, and communication plans. Haven ATL staff will implement mentor recruitment activities, and design the mentoring program kickoff event.

**Project Goals**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Networking:** The mentoring program should provide participants with opportunities to broaden and expand their leadership skills.
2. **Knowledge and Skill Transfer:** The mentoring program should provide participants with opportunities to develop specific skills and abilities (e.g., presentation skills), increase their knowledge in leadership, pass on their experiences and lessons-learned to active Haven ATL members.
3. **Career Development:** The mentoring program should help participants gain insight into the best ways to transition to new areas of interest, pursue rich experiences to enhance their career progress, and have access to job opportunities.
4. **Personal Development:** The mentoring program should help participants gain “real world knowledge” to improve awareness and identity, develop talents and potential, build human capital and facilitate employability, enhance the quality of life and contribute to the realization of dreams and aspirations.
5. **Situational Guidance:** The mentoring program should enable participants to gain coaching, guidance, and advice on how to handle crisis, duties, dilemmas, and problems effectively.

**Program Model**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Virtual mentors will be matched with their mentee for six months. Each mentor will be assigned to one mentee. The primary focus of this virtual mentoring component is to provide ongoing support to members who have recently graduated from the Haven ATL Phase Program. Supporting graduates on their road to independence and personal growth is essential. The purpose of this program is to empower graduates to have access to individuals that possess the skills, experience and knowledge to help them achieve their personal and professional goals.

**Project Design**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

We recognize that there are logistical, financial, and personnel resource limitations that will impact the oversight and administration of a formal mentoring program, particularly one that would require formal matching of participants, frequent oversight and monitoring, and high degrees of structure (e.g., formal monitoring contracts, required development plans). Hence, we strive to design a mentoring program that minimizes required resources while still meeting the programs requested goals.

To achieve these broad goals while requiring as few committed resources as possible we propose to hire Mentor City to manage, measure and build a database to fit our unique specifications. Mentor City is an intuitive cloud-based mentoring software that engages, motivates and connects employees, members and alumni at all levels to share knowledge, skills and productive learning. This database will eliminate most logistical needs and offers us a way to effectively measure our program.

**Project Benefits**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1**. Just the facts.** When people meet face-to-face, they pay attention to visual cues, such as ethnicity, height, weight and fashion. Based on these characteristics, it is easy to make assumptions (perhaps even subconsciously) about someone’s values and goals. And, these characteristics may instantly create known differences in the relationship. Yet, research confirms that successful mentoring relationships are characterized by value similarity; demographic similarity does not enter into the equation. Put another way, when we converse over chat or email, we are not distracted by the other’s appearance, but instead are tuned in directly to what is being communicated.

2. **The whole truth.** Research on computer-mediated communication (including that between virtual mentor and protégé), shows unequivocally that because relationships are free to develop without the distractions demographic differences, trust forms more quickly than it does in face-to-face relationships. Protégés are more likely to share the whole truth, and not just “what they think their mentor wants to hear.” This is critical. What kind of advice—if any—could a mentor provide if all you tell him/her is that everything is perfect. In online communications, there is a well-documented “electronic courage.” Those who are normally shy in person are fearless when they have the time to compose the perfect (written) confrontation or complaint. The same is true in virtual mentoring. Protégés are more willing to share openly and candidly their failures as well as their successes, and therefore stand to receive more and more useful advice from their e-mentors.

3. **Balancing work and life.** While not without its challenges, telecommuting –allows mentors and mentees more flexibility in where and how they fulfill their multiple roles. The same is true for virtual mentoring. With an e-mentor, one need not spend time trying to schedule and reschedule meetings, activities and meals in order to have a conversation with one’s mentor. Virtual mentoring naturally gives freedom to the parties in deciding when, for how long, and how frequently they will connect…with little, if any, wasted time.

4. **Getting Access.** There was a time when only the elite, high potential or members of underrepresented groups were eligible for organizational mentoring programs. With 1/3 of the world’s population now online, we are no longer so digitally divided. Children have access, retirees have access, and even prisoners have access. Moreover, the boundaries of time and geography are rendered irrelevant. Mentoring via virtual methods means that anyone, at any level, and in any part of the world, can connect with and share ideas with anyone else with access to a computer.

**Budget Logistics**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Budget Items. It is anticipated that the following budgetary requirements will be necessary in order to implement the Soarers Virtual Mentoring Program.

* Cost of computer programming (Mentor City) to create database of mentors and mentees, create online forms, capture data, etc.

(Estimated at $3600 yearly)