



# Hemet News

## Mentor program getting past growing pains



[Download story podcast](#)

**10:00 PM PST on Wednesday, February 13, 2008**

**By ERICA SHEN**  
**The Press-Enterprise**

Brian Bovee, 37, founder of Christian Mentors, still remembers the organization's first event when no one showed up.

Four years have passed since that first event and the program that had only eight mentors now has about 40.

Christian Mentors is a program that provides spiritual and moral support for orphans and children from single-parent families.

[Story continues below](#)



**Special to The Press-Enterprise**

Jessica Prado, 9, caught her first fish with her mentor, Cathy Bates, at Diamond Valley Lake.

The organization provides training, fingerprinting and background checks for all potential mentors. It matches mentors with children in Riverside County, according to their geographical location, interests and schedules.

Thanks to a grant from the Department of Education, the volunteer-based organization was able to hire its first paid employee.

"You spend a few years finding out who you are and working out the kinks, but we are ready to take it to the next level," said Robert Manno, 37, director of Christian Mentors.

Dedicated mentors are at the core of the program, Bovee said. The organization is always looking for Christians who are interested in becoming a positive role model for a child.

Cathy Bates, 47, of Hemet, has been a mentor for a little more than a year.

"My two sons are grown and have left the house and it's just neat to have a young child in my life and do something for her," Bates said.

She and Jessica Prado, the 9-year-old child she was matched with, did everything during their weekly meetings. They flew kites, read books at the library, played soccer and went fishing, Bates said.

Prado caught her first fish with Bates.

"I think I give her some stability and I think the most important thing is that she can feel God's love through my life," Bates said.

Although mentors are only required to spend one year with the child, most of them extend their relationship beyond that commitment, Bovee said.

Eric Mascho, 14, and his mentor Joe Tretter, 31, are an example.

The two started their mentorship about four years ago and instantly became friends. They worked on school assignments, played sports and went fishing. Tretter included Eric as a junior groomsman in his wedding.

"I have seen him grow so much and look forward to watching him grow even more," Tretter said. "The possibilities are endless with him and if he continues to make good choices, there is no telling how great of a person he will become."

Mascho's mother, Kimberly Glass, 45, said she is thrilled to have Tretter as a positive figure in her son's life.

"Talk about two peas in a pod," Glass said. "My son glows and he smiles when he is going to see Joe."

Eric struggles with his school work, but his grades would go up every time after he sees Tretter, Glass said.

"He (Tretter) tutors me but he never gives me the answers," Eric said. "He just gives me the tips and shows me the steps and lets me find the answers myself. Plus we have a lot in common. We just share a good vibe together."

The next step for Christian Mentors is to revamp its Web site, update its phone system, work with other organizations to reach more children and bring the organization that started in Hemet to the national level, Bovee said.

"There isn't a nationwide Christian mentor program and we think there should be," he said. "We believe Christians should be mentors who can positively influence kids in need."

For information about upcoming mentor orientation, call 951-926-0856.

Reach Erica Shen at [eshen@PE.com](mailto:eshen@PE.com), or 951-763-4350.