

Keys to success

e-Mentoring – a hit in Kansas City

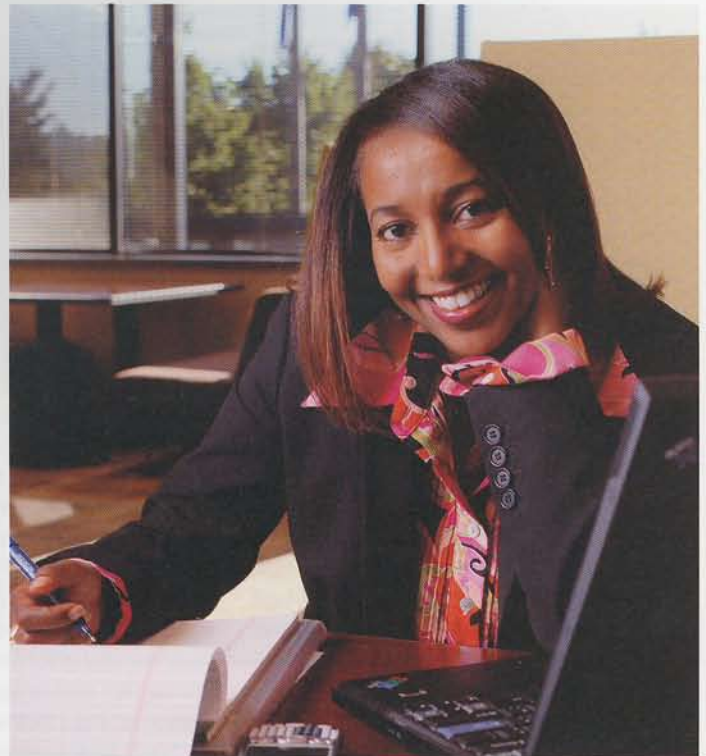
An e-mentoring programme in Kansas City has gained rapid acceptance with mentors and mentees alike.

Today's teenager will tell you instant messaging and e-mail are indispensable. Never before has the written word travelled so quickly and with such impact as in the era of wi-fi and the Internet. Perhaps that's why YouthFriends, a nonprofit organisation in Kansas City, has enlisted the support of approximately 30 Kansas City area businesses to provide e-mentors to local high school students.

Tsedenia Rabb, Project Manager, Business Solutions, Kansas City, is one of six employees from Swiss Re assigned to students at Bonner Springs High School.

"The students benefit because they can seek advice from their mentors on a variety of issues," says Tsedenia. "I've shared my perspective and experience on everything from schoolwork to career planning to social issues. Another positive aspect of the programme is the students often find they're more comfortable asking a question online rather than face-to-face," she adds.

Rabb has participated in YouthFriends' e-mentoring programme since 2002. She recently received her assigned mentee, Amy DeMato. A keen sportswoman, Amy is in her last year of High School and plans to attend Pittsburg State University to become an elementary school teacher or physical therapist. "E-mentoring is a worthwhile enhancement to our daily lives because it's often much more convenient to communicate with someone at any time from anywhere by e-mail," says Tsedenia. "What's more, there's an element of drama because at the end of the school year we get to meet our mentees. All of the mentors line up in



Tsedenia Rabb has helped a local organisation in Kansas City support high school students

the school cafeteria and wait for the mentees to walk in and greet them. Then we eat lunch together, have a nice long conversation and take photos. It's quite an experience."

Tsedenia does not believe e-mentoring is the only form of mentoring a student should receive. "Obviously this is not the only answer," she says. "A student needs many positive influences and role models in his or her life, and face-to-face encounters are extremely important." **John Novaria, Kansas City**