



L-R: Mary Scarborough, Patty Bacon, Sandy McFarland, Darla Biel

Biel Hired as New Mentoring Director

BCYMP transitions as Bacon retires

In July of this year, Patty Bacon will retire as Program Director from the Brookings County Youth Mentoring Program, a local non-profit that promotes one-on-one mentoring efforts to youth in Brookings County in order to empower them to reach their full potential as contributing individuals in their communities.

“My time with BCYMP has been one of the most rewarding periods of my professional career,” said Bacon, who has 30+ years of experience as a non-profit professional. “Watching young people grow and flourish with the addition of a caring adult into their circle of influence is life changing.”

Bacon's visionary leadership and boundless energy will be missed by the BCYMP Board, staff, and mentoring teams. Under Bacon's leadership, BCYMP has significantly increased their funding capacity, decreased the mentee waiting list from 80+ to 38, helped create the SDSU Jackrabbit Youth Mentoring Club and strategically developed a five-year plan to continue building coalitions and partnerships across the community.

Sandy McFarland, BCYMP Development Director, has been with the non-profit for nine years and has worked with Bacon since her tenure. "I have enjoyed every moment working with Patty," McFarland said. "Her positive energy and robust enthusiasm for BCYMP is contagious."

Mary Scarbrough, BCYMP board chair, said, "We're so thankful for Patty's guidance the last few years. She has carefully built upon BCYMP's strong foundation and has set us on a path that positions us to serve a growing number of kids in the community."

Darla Biel will be the new Executive Director. Most recently, Biel was a Lecturer in the SDSU Department of English, teaching writing classes, including one in grant proposal writing, and serving on the Great Plains Writing Conference committee. Biel is also on the South Dakota State Poetry Society board and volunteers locally at Brookings Empowerment Project, P.E.O. Chapter CA, and at Ascension Lutheran. She also serves on the Brookings Public Arts Commission and teaches private piano lessons. Biel and her husband, Marc Serrett, have five children, ages 13-22.

"I am excited about my new position," Biel said, "and feel fortunate for the opportunity to apply my skills to such important and meaningful work that benefits our community."

"Darla impressed us with her intelligence, passion for community involvement, and her enthusiasm for the position," said Scarbrough. "We're excited to have her lead BCYMP."

Biel's first priority, after transitioning into the Executive Director position, will be to recruit new mentors in the community. "Patty has done great things for BCYMP," she said, "and I'm eager to learn from her and build upon her successes. Currently, however, we have a waiting list of 38 young people who could benefit personally, academically and socially from a quality mentoring relationship. If you know me, expect me to ask!"

Bacon, too, will remain actively engaged in Brookings. She currently serves on the Brookings City Council, the Women in Leadership and Learning Advisory Board, the Chamber Government Affairs Committee and chairs the Brookings Affordable Housing Task Force.

For more information about how to support BCYMP or to ask a board member to speak at your civic group, please visit their website at brookingsyouthmentoring.com or email bcymentoring@gmail.com.