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**MENTORING YOUTH TRAINING WORKSHOP A SUCCESS**  
*Roanoke Electric Cooperative and CISNE partner to help youth*



Rosetta Smith (standing, right) Program Coordinator for CISNE shares mentoring techniques with participants in the last mentoring youth training workshop at The Roanoke Center in Rich Square. Sitting (L-R) Janice Weaver, Gail Goddard Standing (L-R) Kathy Carter, Mabel Taylor & Rosetta Smith.

RICH SQUARE, N.C. - Rosetta Smith, a former art teacher from Niagara Falls, New York, knows the tragedy of kids dropping out of school. She's seen it first hand. Before becoming program administrator for CISNE (Communities In Schools of the Northeast) Smith volunteered many hours to work with kids in the Roanoke Chowan area at risk for such a fate and now she wants to equip others to do the same.

That was the drive behind a recent Mentoring Youth Training Workshop at The Roanoke Center in Rich Square. CISNE, an affiliate of REC (Roanoke Electric Cooperative), and focuses on supporting, strengthening and participating in public education so all students can reach their optimum potential.

“Young people have a world of opportunity before them,” said CISNE Program Coordinator Rosetta Smith. “Mentoring is a great way for us to reach out to the next generation of leaders and help them realize the incredible potential they have within them.”

CISNE volunteers agree that the workshop makes a difference. “The more equipped you are, the better job you can do for the children,” said workshop attendee Kathy Carter. The mother of a six year old child, Carter said the workshop has helped her on a more personal level. “I believe the skills I’ve learned at the workshop will help me be a more effective parent,” she said and she hopes others will get involved in what CISNE is doing.

With participants attending from schools and community organizations throughout Bertie, Halifax, and Hertford counties, the Mentoring Workshops are meant to do two things: 1) to give participants insight on how to be an effective mentor and 2) to connect schools with the community to improve education for area students.

“CISNE is always looking for caring people to volunteer as tutors, mentors, lunch and reading buddies, or for parenting workshops, career days, and community service projects,” said Smith.

Last year, the CISNC (Communities in Schools in North Carolina) board of directors appointed REC’s CEO Curtis Wynn to serve on the state board. “This is a tremendous honor for me to have the chance to contribute to efforts to improve education in North Carolina,” said Wynn. “Our Co-op’s future hinges on the success of our local schools producing a well-prepared workforce. This workforce, with the right training, will have the skills to meet the needs of local employers,” he

said. “Having statewide involvement with CISNC allows us to take our commitment to education to a whole new level.”

The Mentoring Training also provides participants with news updates, information on changes in state law, tips on how to create a successful mentoring partnership, and motivational methods to help youth aspire to reach their highest aptitude.

Work like this however, does not come without a price tag and volunteers are only part of the equation. The other part requires funds to support training and educational materials to keep CISNE’s programs running smoothly. To supplement its budget, CISNE has decided to host a fundraising GALA this spring.

“We’re really excited about planning this event,” said Smith, who along with CISNE’s Advisory Board is still in the process of plotting out the details. “We hope this event will motivate people in the community to consider mentoring a young person in their community. Even if it’s only for a couple of hours a month, there’s no question that the return is worth the investment of their time.”

If you are looking for an opportunity to give back to the community, gain work or life experience, participate in a mentoring or tutoring workshop, or assist with organizing CISNE’s Spring GALA, contact Rosetta Smith at (252) 539-2236 ext. 280 or email her at [rsmith@roanokeelectric.com](mailto:rsmith@roanokeelectric.com). CISNE also accepts in-kind services, equipment, supplies, books, and monetary donations.