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**Helping Camden Youth, One Mentor at a Time**  
*Investors Bank Grants \$2,500 to Center for Family Services in Camden*

**ROBBINSVILLE, New Jersey** – In 2008, 12-year-old DaQuan Johnson of Camden was struggling in school, getting into trouble, and succumbing to peer pressure. With an incarcerated parent, Johnson needed a role model, and that’s when the Center for Family Services (CFS) of Camden stepped in.

Johnson became part of CFS’ Project Children Obtaining a Positive Environment (COPE) Program, which provides support, through a mentor, to Camden City youth ages four to 17 who have an incarcerated parent. The mentors provide support, guidance, and friendship for a period of at least one year through bi-weekly, hourly get-togethers.

Johnson was matched with Camden Fire Department Captain Tyrone Baker, and the connection was instantaneous.

“I wanted to influence him and steer him in the right direction,” said Baker. “I wanted to help him become a success story.”

Mission accomplished! After regular visits to Johnson’s home progressed to trips to the mall, movies, and sporting events, Baker’s relationship with Johnson turned into a home run. Today, Johnson, now 19, is a sophomore at Camden County College with hopes of becoming a police officer, and still keeps in touch with Baker through text messaging and daily phone calls.

Mentor/mentee relationships such as this one are possible thanks in part to a \$2,500 grant from Investors Bank to CFS.

CFS is a non-profit human services agency with 90 years of experience serving children and families in Southern New Jersey, with a vision of assisting all people in leading capable, responsible, fulfilled lives in strong families and communities. Project COPE is just one of 55 programs the organization runs.

“The chance of these youths becoming incarcerated themselves is very high, and mentoring decreases that drastically,” said Eileen Henderson, Center for Family Services Chief Operating Officer. “The gift of giving resonates in the mentors’ lives as well; some of them have been with us for seven years! Center for Family Services has been a part of the change in the neighborhood, and it’s really great that Investors Bank is looking at this community. Our neighbors rely on us, so we really can’t thank Investors Bank enough.”

The donation from Investors Bank will be used to fund various aspects of Project COPE such as background checks for the mentors and case management.

**(More)**



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CFS applied for the grant from the Investors Bank Foundation, which supports non-profit organizations that enrich the diverse communities served by Investors Bank.

“PROJECT COPE is terrific, and just what Camden City needs,” said Angela Venti, Investors Bank Assistant Vice President/Marlton Branch manager. “A mentor like the one CFS provides is a relationship a youth can take with them forever.”

CFS always is looking for more mentors, as studies show that children involved with mentoring programs are less likely to begin using illegal drugs, consume alcohol, skip school, or engage in acts of violence. To learn more or become a mentor, call 856-964-1990 x 292 or email [mentoring@centerffs.org](mailto:mentoring@centerffs.org).

#### **Photo Captions:**

**Photo 1** – Investors Bank representatives Carmine Pannullo, Senior Market Manager third from left, and Angela Venti, Assistant Vice President/Branch Manager – Marlton Office, third from right, present a check to the Center for Family Services. Accepting the check are, from left, Isaac Walker, AmeriCorps VISTA Grants Coordinator, Eileen Henderson, Chief Operating Officer, Kirstyn Crehan, Project COPE Program Director, and Jen Hammill, Director of Community Relations.

**Photo 2** – Tyrone Baker has been mentoring DaQuan Johnson through Center for Family Services for about eight years.

#### **About Investors Bank**

Investors Bank is a full-service community bank that has been serving customers since 1926. With more than \$20 billion in assets and over 135 retail branches in New Jersey, New York City and Long Island, Investors Bank delivers personalized services and products tailored to the needs of its customers. Investors’ consumer banking services include complete deposit products, online banking, home equity loans and lines of credit and a full array of mortgage loans. Serving the business community, Investors provides deposit accounts, cash management services, business loans and lines of credit, and commercial real estate financing solutions to small and middle market companies, professional services firms, municipalities and other businesses. Investors Bank. Member FDIC and Equal Housing Lender.

#### **About Center for Family Services (CFS)**

Center for Family Services is a nonprofit human services agency with more than 90 years of experience serving children and families in Southern New Jersey through a comprehensive continuum of care. The non-profit is headquartered in Camden and is dedicated to providing high quality, innovative services to meet the community’s changing needs. Through more than 55 programs, thousands of vulnerable children and families each year are served to prevent those at-risk from becoming victims of child abuse or neglect, to provide intervention services, and to break the cycle of challenges that often cause serious family problems. With in-home, after-school, school-based, and community programs, CFS provides the tools to keep children safe and help families become self-sufficient