This book is about a series of encounters which had an immediate impact and left a lasting impression. For over a period of ten years, Nightingale has facilitated nine hundred such meetings between individual children and students. These are meetings where the differences between both sides have been an advantage, as the whole idea was to get to see the "other" person as an individual and not as a spokesperson for a particular group, religion or ethnic identity. Moreover, these meetings, or encounters, have represented a "helping hand", as a former Nightingale child has put it. Now, ten years on, that child himself is going to act as a mentor to one of a new generation of Nightingale children, so that they too might have a “Song In Their Hearts”.

This book can be seen as a record of Nightingale’s achievements to date in the context of celebrations surrounding its 10 year anniversary. It seeks to convey the philosophy, aims and practical targets which inform the whole project, whilst at the same time giving a voice to the children, mentors and parents involved. The book has been written for those who have heard about Nightingale and wish to find out more, as well as for those who may be inspired to give a hand and perhaps start similar mentor schemes in their own areas.
The Nightingale scheme
– A song for the heart

Carina Sild Lönroth
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Foreword
This book is about a series of encounters which had an immediate impact and left a lasting impression. For over a period of ten years, Nightingale has facilitated nine hundred such meetings between individual children and students. These are meetings where the differences between both sides have been an advantage, as the whole idea was to get to see the “other” person as an individual and not as a spokesperson for a particular group, religion or ethnic identity.

For me, these meetings represent the first necessary steps in an attempt to change society for the better. I feel deeply and believe very strongly that changing the bigger picture can only come about by looking at the fine detail. I know for a fact that when a bond of friendship is sealed, prejudices will normally fall away, and I also know that these types of encounters can help to change attitudes far more quickly than the distribution of fact sheets, or the like, could ever do. As the executive officer for Nightingale, it is always a great thrill to get the chance, every year, to meet large numbers of children and their mentors on their first day together, and then some weeks later to meet the same pair again and witness how a bond has evolved between them.

I love the fact that so many students at Malmö university are happy to take on the role of mentor and sacrifice some of their free time for a child whom they don’t know from Adam! I am also happy and very grateful that Malmö university is willing to give its students the opportunity to participate in these kinds of meetings, which can help to strengthen the student’s understanding of the different environments in which children grow up and also gives them a range of skills and special insights into other peoples living conditions. At the same time, they are better prepared for life and work in a multicultural society.

Similarly, it gives me great pleasure and a feeling of gratitude that children in the Malmö area get a chance to have a mentor, an adult role model from outside their own families; someone who can open new doors, give new them new points of view and who can also provide an insight into student life at university. The cheerful stories which the children themselves have written “I want a menta too” show that
Nightingale is also able to capture a child’s imagination. The aim of this book is to share my own experiences, and that of others, during the years that I have worked with Nightingale. I started out in 1998 as a project manager after being a member of the focus group for a year. Then, in 2005, I became Nightingale’s executive officer.

What I wish to do here is to convey the philosophy, aims and practical targets which inform the whole project. This book can be seen as a record of Nightingale’s achievements to date in the context of celebrations surrounding its 10 year anniversary. The book has been written for those who have heard about Nightingale and wish to find out more; as well as for those who may be inspired to give a hand and perhaps start similar mentor schemes in their own areas. I am afraid, however, that those who were hoping for a more technically oriented report on the Nightingale project must wait a little longer.

This book places emphasis on the experiences and reflections of the children and mentors who have taken part in the project over the years, and I also reveal what various youths (ten years after having a mentor) feel, think and choose to emphasise about the experience. For every year of the project’s existence, I have documented and collated everything which the children, the parents, the contact person in the schools and the management team’s coordinators have said and written. I have also, on an annual basis, collated and filed our supervision notes, mentor evaluations and annual reports. All these records form the basis for the content of this book.

Those who have a particular interest in statistics (records of mentor applications, the number of women/men involved, which areas of Malmö university have been most responsive etc.) are asked to consult the appendices at the back of the book.
Many thanks to

I would like to express my gratitude to the Knut and Alice – Wallenberg Foundation for its financial support, which made the initial phase of Nightingale possible, and a special thanks also to Håkan Westling who threw himself into the pilot project with such great enthusiasm. Many thanks also to Lars Haikola, the former principle in the teacher training department who acted as the chairman on the focus group during the first three years of the pilot project and who always had lots of good ideas.

Thanks are also due to Perach in Israel, which was the original source for the mentor scheme philosophy. A special thanks to Amos Carmeli for all his support and enthusiasm. Many thanks also to senior lecturer at Malmö university, Lena Rubinstein Reich, who has been with us from the start and who provided assessment reports in the first three years of the project.

I extend my gratitude also to the former vice chancellor of Malmö university, Per-Olof Glantz, who believed wholeheartedly in the Nightingale philosophy and gave us great support in his time as chancellor. Special thanks also to the present vice chancellor at Malmö university, Lennart Olausson, who had the vision to support Nightingale in its passage from initial project to ongoing scheme at Malmö university.

Speaking personally, it has also been a privilege to work in a city with a generous spirit and which has given financial support towards the expansion of Nightingale, a special thanks to Bertil Nilsson.

To all the children, mentors, coordinators, contact persons and to everybody in the focus group – without your hard work and enthusiasm, the Nightingale could never have sung so clearly and happily, thank you so much! A word of thanks should also be given to all the young people who were willing to share their experiences so openly.

Thanks to my boss Bim Riddersporre for all the encouragement.
Thanks to Karin Müntzing for your cheerful boisterousness, your support and constructive criticism. In you, I have had my own mentor in the written arts, a master and connoisseur of words and their value.
Carina Sild Lönroth

Carina Sild Lönroth, is a Msc. in pedagogy/ psychology and sociology. Since 1990, she has been a lecturer in the teacher training department at Malmö university, teaching pedagogy and psychology during this period.

In 1998, and following a year working with the Nightingale focus group, she was appointed as project manager for the Nightingale mentor scheme. From 2005 onwards, she has been the executive officer for Nightingale’s mentor scheme, which at that time became a permanent venture under the auspices of Malmö university.

Between the years 2001–2004, she was the deputy unit manager for the “Play, Leisure, Health” unit in the teacher training department at Malmö university.

She is the project manager for the Nightingale pilot projects in Kristianstad and Helsingborg.

She is also project coordinator for the EU’s “Mentor Migration” project and over the next three years will be coordinating efforts to implement key components of the Nightingale model in seven European cities.

In the autumn of 2007, she will also begin work as project leader on an annual pilot project – “Nightingale Seniors”.

This particular Nightingale is the name of a mentor scheme based at Malmö university, which facilitates meetings between Malmö children and students at the university, so that they can interact, get to know each other and gain insights into the world of their counterpart. Students apply to become mentors, the children apply for a mentor. Nightingale’s management team makes arrangements for them to meet and then follows and supports them during the eight months that student and child interact within the Nightingale scheme. Each year, between ninety and a hundred mentors, and just as many children, are involved in the scheme. Since the start of 1997, nine hundred mentors and children have become acquainted via Nightingale.

The philosophy which underpins the Nightingale concept is the promotion of integration by encouraging social and ethnic diversity. By integration, first and foremost, I mean daring to meet not just at bus stops, in shops, or communal stairways, but also by socialising together and getting to know each other. Integration is a two way process, which Nightingale initiates via a preliminary meeting and then gradually develops into a friendship. That friendship can then lead to an increased understanding and tolerance of different social and ethnic backgrounds and, more long term, lead to increased integration, understanding and cooperation between people.

Social and ethnic diversity depends, not just on tolerance and mutual respect, but also on being open to cultural enrichment. This is exactly what Nightingale mentors and children are. Together, they turn the principle of equality, regardless of ethnic, cultural or religious background, into a concrete reality. Their hope is that every child, regardless of gender, ethnic background, their parents’ educational experience, or the area in which they live, will be given equal access to opportunities and resources in order that their dreams of the future can come true.
The government white paper – “The Open University” – highlights the need for increased diversity within higher education. Many of the Nightingale kids come from backgrounds which have no tradition of being involved in higher education. They do not know what a university is, nor have any members of their family ever attended a college of further education or university. But following involvement with Nightingale and the selected mentor – who is a student – the child is likely to say that he/she may also one day become a student at Malmö university. Via their activities as mentors, the students contribute to social progress by challenging the surreptitious recruitment process which goes on at colleges and universities, whilst the children gain the kind of insight they may never otherwise have had. Doors are opened!

There is great interest in the Nightingale concept amongst other universities and colleges, both on a national and international basis. Nightingale has made contributions at several national and international conferences, and we have facilitated a number of fact finding tours over the past few years by representatives of local authorities, colleges and universities.

In the year 2000, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education referred to the Nightingale scheme as “setting a good example” (the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education report series – 2000:9 R), and in the year 2002, Nightingale was awarded the city of Malmö’s prize for the promotion of integration. The European URBACT urban regeneration network has also cited Nightingale as “a good example”, “from exclusion to inclusion” (www.urbact.org).

Nightingale also has two pilot projects running in Skåne – Nightingale at Kristianstad university and Nightingale at the university of Lund, Helsingborg Campus. Both the above are three year pilot projects, which began in March 2005 with support from the respective civic, college and “Region Skåne” agencies and using the Nightingale scheme at Malmö university as a role model.

An EU funding application (Comenius 2.1) for resources to be made available for the implementation of key elements of the Nightingale
model in seven European countries was approved in 2006. This led to Nightingale being introduced in Ljubljana in Slovenia, Girona in Spain, Linz in Austria, Zug in Switzerland, Berlin and Freiburg in Germany and Stavanger in Norway. (www.mentormigration.eu)

In the autumn of 2007, a pilot project, “Nightingale Seniors” will get underway, running in conjunction with Malmö university and the South Inner City’s SDF project, as well as Fosie SDF (local council services). Nightingale Seniors will facilitate the coming together of students and senior citizens so that they can exchange views and describe their different life experiences. A recruitment initiative will be commenced involving students from Malmö university’s area based “Health and Society” course (in particular students doing the Pedagogic Social Work With The Elderly course, as well as the Social Work And Public Administration course) and senior citizens in the seventy plus bracket from the South Inner City and the Fosie area. In this pilot project, both sets of participants will act as mentor for their counterparts.
The background to the Nightingale mentor scheme
A pilot project using Perach as a role model

The Nightingale mentor scheme began in the year 1996, when what was then the teacher training college received a grant from the Wallenberg Foundation for the initiation of a pilot project in Malmö using the Israeli mentor scheme “Perach” as a role model. The aim of the pilot project was to establish a mentor scheme at a Swedish university which had the same content and organisational structure as that of Perach.

Perach, the Hebrew word for flower, started in 1974 and is now an integrated feature of Israel’s university system. The overall aim of Perach is both to contribute to the levelling of social disparities amongst children and to give society’s future leaders an insight into, and understanding of, other peoples living conditions. (http://www.perach.org.il/)

Following a six month planning period, the pilot project got underway in 1997, running in conjunction with Malmö teacher training college, the municipal Council for Immigrant Welfare and two schools in Malmö. The name “Nightingale” stems partly from the Malmö poet Hjalmar Gullberg’s poetry on the the nightingale and partly from the motif which the bird has come to represent: “The little Nightingale bird, which sings so beautifully when it feels safe and secure”.

The pilot project ran until June of 2000, and by then a total of 204 children and 204 students had taken part.

Assessment of the pilot project
After the pilot project had been running for three years, Lena Rubinstein Reich carried out an assessment in 2001 – “The Nightingale Mentor Scheme. Encounters between schoolchildren and university students”.

This showed, amongst other things, that Nightingale had a high completion rate of 97 % with regards to mentors completing their tasks as mentors. Her assessment showed that the mentors learned most from the insight they gained into a world which was so different to their own background,
and how this was often reflected in traditions, norms and relationships within the family. Many asserted that no book could ever teach them the things they had learned simply by being mentors. When the children described what it was like to have a mentor, their oft repeated phrases were: “really brilliant” and “my mentor was like a mate/big mate”.

The students also gave many examples of the kind of progress made by their mentor children; shy children, for ex., who gained more confidence and children whose language skills were improved.

**Malmö university**

In 1996, the government decided to allocate a new university to Malmö. This initiative formed part of a national expansion in the number of university campuses in Sweden and represented a vision for a new Malmö, a city which until then had been dominated by traditional industries. The hope was that a new university in Malmö would encourage more youth from Malmö to progress from secondary education to university. At the same time, it was hoped that students matriculating from the planned university would opt to remain in the Malmö area when putting their newly acquired areas of competence into practice. The location of a university in Malmö was also intended to raise the training levels for the city’s population and thereby increase the pulling power which would result from a more intensively trained and skilled business community. (Government white paper 1996/97: 1 expenditure area 16)

Malmö university was inaugurated in July 1998. Now, in 2007, Malmö university has more than 20,000 students and is the eighth largest university in Sweden. The students are spread across six multidisciplinary course areas: Health and Society (HS), International Migration and Ethnic Relations (IMER), Art, Culture and Communication (A3), Teacher Training (TT), the Deontological faculty (OD) and Technology and Society (TS). (For more information, please go to www.mah.se) Malmö university has adopted an *ethnicity and migration policy*, which is meant to permeate all facets of life in the university so that both personnel and students work towards achieving, and gain benefit from, the ethnic and social diversity which is to be found not only in wider society but also at the university itself. (Malmö university, 2004)
The city of Malmö
In the year 2002, more than one in ten children in Sweden was living in poverty. The situation was worse for children coming from a “foreign background”; of these, every third child was living in economically deprived circumstances. (Save The Children 2004).
The year 2004 sees Malmö, with 32%, at the top of the list amongst those local authorities with the greatest number of poor children. (Rädda barnen 2004).

Malmö is Sweden’s most multicultural area. In the year 2007, Malmö’s population consisted of approximately 276,000 inhabitants, including many immigrants who have come from 171 different countries, and 52% of Malmo’s children and young people have a background that is non Swedish (either they, or both their parents, were born abroad). Despite the fact that several events/decisions taken during the 1990s were positive for Malmö, amongst other things the construction of the Öresund bridge and the establishment of Malmö university, segregation has become more entrenched. (www.malmo.se “Strategisk utveckling, Malmö stad”)

The suburb of Fosie, where five of the six schools involved in Nightingale are located, illustrates the significant geographical differences which exist where living conditions are concerned. Living conditions for children in the home, at school and during free time show a considerable difference here to those which pertain in other parts of Malmö. The work involved in breaking down the negative effects of segregation requires a range of coordinated initiatives from many different social agencies. The school is the one area where all children and youths spend a great deal of their time together in one place and the role of the school in effecting wide ranging changes in attitudes is central. Reversing this downward spiral requires several different types of initiatives and Nightingale can prove to be an effective instrument as part of that overall effort.

“The major conurbations initiative”
In 1999, parliament approved a special set of initiatives which had the joint aim of supporting the major conurbations as the country’s engines of growth, whilst at the same time seeking to stem the continued rise of
socially, economically and ethnically segregated residential areas. The passing of this legislation saw Malmö and the state agree on a programme of measures relating to four Malmö suburbs which were seen as being vulnerable – Fosie being one of them. Nightingale, which was already collaborating with schools in Fosie, was granted resources enabling it to continue the scheme, with a requirement that it should add a new school to its complement every year.

Nightingale then expanded so that it no longer just involved students training to be teachers but also began recruiting students from all areas of Malmö university. For example, prospective dentists, engineers, social workers and students studying international relations, including former trainee teachers.

**Nightingale – a permanent scheme**

As and from the 1st of July 2005, the scheme became known as *The Nightingale mentor scheme* (registered with the Swedish Patent and Registration Office, see appendix 1) and is a permanent scheme at Malmö university. Nightingale is unique in Sweden. There is no other venture which involves students acting as mentors for schoolchildren.

From hereon in, my references to “Nightingale” will refer to a single entity which embraces both the scheme and the overall enterprise.

**The basic philosophy**

The basic philosophy underpinning Nightingale is partly that the scheme is of mutual benefit for all those involved and also that an organic network is created between the children, their families and schools and then the students and the university. For both the children and mentors, involvement with Nightingale means new friendships, new skills and new experiences. The interaction between mentor and child may be viewed as a first step in the creation of an increased understanding of, and tolerance for, each other’s differing social and cultural backgrounds, which in the long-term can help to strengthen integration in society.
Our goals

*The child:*
- Must be given increased scope to develop his/her self esteem.
- Must gain an adult role model in the form of a student from Malmö university.
- Must have new experiences and learn new skills via the relationship with a university student.

*The mentors:*
- Must get the chance to represent an adult role model in a close relationship with a child.
- Must gain insights into the life of the child and thereby an increased skills base, understanding and empathy for people having widely different living standards to their own.
- Must gain an additional proficiency that will complement their university education – “skills that no book could ever teach you”.

Goals
- The goal is that the friendship between mentor and child will lead to an increased understanding of, and tolerance for, each other’s differing social and cultural backgrounds.
- The goal is that the children will do better, both inside and outside of school, and that a greater number of them will consider applying for higher education courses.
- The goal is that on a long-term basis the mentors will, via their mentoring role, come to challenge the surreptitious recruitment process which goes on at colleges and universities, and thereby contribute to the eradication of social and educational inequalities.

Nightingale’s organisational structure
Nightingale’s structure is built up in the same way the bird builds its nest, with all the elements woven together in close coordination between the university, participating schools and the local authority. Nightingale has a linear organisational structure consisting of coordinators and executive officers. Our office is located within the “Schools development and management” unit of the teacher training department.
Coordinators
The coordinators are involved in the day to day running of the scheme and work closely with the executive officer. Work duties include the recruitment of students – the prospective mentors – to the scheme, the provision of information to various student groups, interviewing students and then carrying out assessments of the students interviewed. Recruitment work also includes interviewing children and then pairing children with mentors.

Each coordinator handles approximately 40 mentors, both individually and as a group, and takes responsibility for the joint activities which are devised for the children and their mentors. The provision of information also forms part of the work, both for the scheme’s website and beyond the confines of the university.

Executive officers
The executive officer is ultimately responsible for all planning matters, task completion and assessments, and also has responsibility for controlling budgets. The executive officer has overall responsibility in ensuring not only that the scheme's basic framework, goals and philosophies are maintained but also that these are developed further. Planning, organisation and follow up are the cornerstones of our work. Our work is based on an “open door” policy and we look to disseminate as much information as possible, by conferences for example, both on a national and international scale.

A lot of time and effort has been put into turning the initiative into a permanent scheme, and also in getting information across, both inside and outside the university. The executive officer acts as the staff supervisor for the coordinators but is also a fellow worker.

Participating senior primary and junior secondary schools.
The Nightingale scheme focuses on multicultural schools which have a mixed socio economic local environment. The pupil profile at the school must come from course years 2 – 6 (that is to say, course years 1 – 5 during the recruitment period) and at least 20 % of those pupils must have registered an interest in being assigned to a mentor.
As of 2006/2007, five senior primary and junior secondary schools were involved in Nightingale, as well as a so called reception unit, which is attached to one of the schools. Children attending the reception unit are relatively new arrivals in Sweden. They attend the school at the reception unit for approximately a year beginning with the prep. class. Then they are processed onwards to a normal class. Of the six schools involved, including the reception unit, five of the schools are in the Fosie area and one school is located in the centre of Malmö. Approximately 15 – 20 children from each school would normally be involved.

Nightingale is a supplementary subject, which has to be implemented and then developed in participating schools. For this reason, it is important that committed staff members are made available for the scheme – staff who can inspire, inform and encourage parents and children to apply for inclusion in the Nightingale scheme. What is required from the school is a genuine interest and awareness of what involvement with Nightingale implies for both child and mentor alike.

The tendency in schools is for the classes to get bigger and bigger and the teacher’s time for individual pupils less and less. In this situation, a mentor can be a very special person in the life of a child – a person who can indirectly influence the child in an educationally positive way. It is, therefore, extremely important that the school appreciates the many and varied ways that a mentor’s efforts can be of benefit. This is important for both the individual child and for the class group as a whole, as several children in the same class can have their own individual mentor. The teamwork which evolves between participating schools and Nightingale is always seen by everybody as a really positive thing – teamwork which exists purely for the benefit of the child. It is the school’s responsibility to inform parents and children about the scheme, which happens in the conversation during the development phase and then at the meetings with parents.

The school takes responsibility for mentor training unit 2 (see page 41).

**Scheme liaison group**
Besides the coordinators and the executive officer, the scheme liaison group consists of a contact person from each participating school. The
executive officer chairs the group, whose main task is to maintain contact between the management team and the participating schools. The scheme liaison group acts as a link between the mentors, children, parents and the school. The liaison group also contributes to the planning of Nightingale’s yearly work schedule and gets together approximately once every seven weeks.

Contact person
A contact person from each school is included in the scheme liaison group. The contact person looks after the distribution of information brochures, letters and forms, and also has the main responsibility for prioritising particular applicants amongst the child applicants. The contact person also handles the liaison work with the children and their families and any problems that may arise in the mentor/child relationship. They also give general help when required. The contact person must be the kind of person who knows the schoolchildren very well and has a wide range of useful contacts where the children are concerned. Amongst the participating schools, this has often been the school nurse or the welfare officer.

Focus group
During the pilot phase of the scheme, the role of the focus group was to take care of follow up and assessments and also to contribute to discussion sessions. Now, the group acts as a consultative element within the management team. The group participates both in current activities and is also involved in ongoing documentation and evaluation work. The group consists of Malmö university’s vice chancellor, who acts as chair, and then representatives from the local authority and the university. The executive officer acts as the group’s rapporteur. The group meets approx. 2 – 3 times per term.
NIGHTINGALE’S WORKING YEAR – AN OVERVIEW

March
• The school receives information brochures prior to exploratory conversations with children/parents.
• Contact is initiated with schedule planners, teachers, unit heads, student ambassadors and information officers etc, prior to the recruitment of students.

March – May
• Recruitment of students.

May
• Parents and children fill in an application form expressing interest in the scheme, the school draws up a short list.
• Recruitment of students, interviews with students, reference/referee checking
• Consultations with the school’s contact person to analyse the children who applied and make selections.
June
- Continued interviews of students, checking references.
- Letters are sent to all student applicants, preliminary acceptance as mentors.

August
- New recruitment of students.

September
- Information meeting for parents.
- Interviews with the children.
- Pairing children with mentors.
- Mentor training unit 1.
- Mentor training unit 2, fact finding visit to the child’s school.

October
- Start day – first meeting between child/parents and mentor.
- Mentors review mentor training and start day.

November
- First individual supervision for mentors.
- Group activities for children and mentors arranged by coordinators.

December/January
- Group review/guidance, payments sent out to mentors.
- Group activities for children and mentors arranged by coordinators.

January – (May.)
- Mentor activities for children and mentors arranged by mentors.
February
• Voluntary supervision.

March
• Mentor training unit 3, lecture on the parting of the ways.
• Recruitment of new mentors.

April
• Individual supervision.
• Continued recruitment of new mentors.

May
• Final day for children/parents/siblings and mentors.
• Continued recruitment and interviews of new mentors.
• Mentors complete their assessment, write up their account of the year, payment and work certificate.
• Circular to provisionally accepted mentors.

Recruitment of students

One day I was standing looking at a poster on a wall in one of the corridors in Malmö university. I notice that the poster shows a teenage girl about my age and then a young girl who’s hiding behind a sculpture. Under the poster it says: “Interested in becoming a mentor? Contact the Nightingale mentor scheme”. A couple of days later, I get a mail from Nightingale saying that they are looking for students to get involved in the scheme. I log on to their website and read more about it. As I sit there reading about it, I realise that I could be tempted. I wouldn’t mind doing something for someone else, give support and just be there for someone. That has to be a good feeling! I also miss that contact I used to have with my younger brothers and sisters. I am going to see a lot less of them now that I have moved to Malmö. But do I have time for this?
All students at Malmö university can apply for places on the Nightingale scheme. However, student applicants must be studying at Malmö university, in both the autumn and spring terms, during the actual year that mentoring takes place. Recruitment of students takes place during the spring term – February/March – May. Information brochures are distributed and posters are put up in all areas of the university. More information and application forms, in PDF format, can be obtained from Nightingale’s website and also from Malmö university’s own website. Group mail shots are sent to all students. Brochures, which also contain an application form expressing interest in the scheme, are distributed at group/society information events, they are also available at manned information tables and are placed in the student’s post-boxes at student halls of residence.

Active mentors are normally also involved in recruitment for the coming year. Amongst other things, they are encouraged to talk about Nightingale in their own student group. On a voluntary basis, the mentors will often take part in recruitment work, take a turn at the information table or give information to groups.

After thinking about it for a couple of days, I made the decision – yes, I was going to apply! The application got me wondering whether I myself had ever had a mentor, or a positive role model when I was a kid. The one person that came immediately to mind was my gymnastics teacher, who encouraged me to keep training for her right throughout my childhood and beyond. I thought about her leadership skills, her positive attitude to us kids and how she could arouse the interest of a whole group of children with her enthusiasm. About the fact that she was a great listener and how she often managed to get me to see something from a completely different perspective. But would I ever be able to play a similarly positive role for a child?
Application form expressing interest in the scheme

Students let us know that they are interested in the scheme by filling in an application form. Here, students give their personal details, qualifications awarded, the names of two referees and the reasons why they want to be a mentor. They are also asked to write something about themselves, their interests and experiences, and to mention other issues which they feel may be an advantage whilst working as a mentor. The end of May is the deadline for applications. All applications expressing an interest in the scheme are archived.

I have been thinking about my childhood, how I was brought up and the reasons why I now want to become a mentor. I have also tried to assess what kind of experiences I have had, and how they might be put to use and be of benefit, whilst I’m working as a mentor. Working as a locum in the hospital during the summer, for example, where I had to solve problems and deal with different dilemmas. One thing I definitely learned there was to have more patience. I also got the chance to talk to the patients with their stories and descriptions of their lives. Some of these stories were very moving and I felt a great feeling of compassion for them. But does that mean that I have enough experience? I have to admit that I have never worked with kids.

Student interviews

Once the deadline for applications has passed, the interviews begin and referees cited by the applicants are contacted. All student applicants are called for interviews, which are carried out by the coordinators. Students are obliged to bring along a recently taken photo of themselves to the interview. This acts as visual memo for the coordinator in the subsequent pairing process. Students must also bring along a completed – “Extract from the Criminal Record Register” form. Anybody in the the city of Malmö who works with children must provide an extract from the Criminal Record Register and the mentors must do the same thing before they can begin working as mentors.
The idea behind the interviews is to home in on what kind of interests, experiences and qualifications the student has. These details form the basis of subsequent decisions relating to which child will be paired with which student. Students are invited to tell us about themselves, their free time activities, work background and other experiences.

Typical questions might be
- Why do you want to be a mentor?
- Which aspects of your background/previous experience can be put to good use in your role as a mentor?
- What kind of joint activities would appeal to you when you go on outings with the child?
- Which would you prefer: that you and the child have similar interests, or different interests?

The coordinator also explores the kind of expectations the student has and explains what the management team expects from a mentor. Sometimes case histories will be used as a basis for the interview.

I got a mail from Nightingale today to say that I was welcome to come for an interview. I felt a bit nervous when I was cycling over to do the interview, but it was also a bit of an occasion, because I felt that I had taken an important decision; one that I was determined to go ahead with.

One of the questions in the interview really got me thinking. – What do you think the child will like best about you? I had to ponder my brain a bit about that one! But then I said that I think he or she will like my sense of fun and ability to listen. I wonder did they like that answer?

I also said that I hoped I was paired with a child with a different background to my own.

New recruitment phase
As the number of student applicants in the spring term often falls below requirements, a new recruitment phase is commenced as students begin returning to college in September. The aim here is both to attract more students and then to assess whether more male applicants can be found.
Given the fact that the main office is located in the teacher training department, new recruitment takes place for practical reasons amongst trainee teachers in the first instance. Circulars are also distributed amongst all new students in the form of “flyers”, which are included in the information packs sent to student homes before the start of their respective courses.

Accepted mentors and the reserve list
At the first stage, all students who have sent in an inquiry form and have then been interviewed will receive “preliminary acceptance”. The decision, in the final instance, as to whether or not a student actually becomes a mentor is based on the interviews with the applicant, the
references provided and whether there is a suitable child with whom the student can be paired. Those students who are not taken on are placed on a reserve list. It sometimes happens that mentors have to break off from mentoring during the relevant year. In which case, an attempt is made to pair the child concerned with a new mentor from the reserve list. Of course, this only happens with the agreement of the child and family.

**Recruitment of children**

Miss told us today that you could get your own mentor. She said that a lot of kids at the school had had mentors and they all said that it was really cool. Ahmed talked about when him and his mentor cooked food and when they went to the theatre together. It sounded brilliant.

When I went home, I showed my mam and dad the brochure and the note with the translation.

My mam said that if I got a mentor, I could practise my Swedish and get even better at it. And dad said that maybe my mentor would show me round Malmö a bit.

Then we filled in the note and I put it right down into my bag so it was safe.

That night when I was going to sleep, I thought – Just think if I get a mentor, how cool is that!

During the spring term, the children in years 1–5 at participating schools are offered the chance, after obtaining permission from their parents, to apply for a place on the the Nightingale scheme. On average, the number of child applicants is double the number of places available. In some years, Malmö university and the city of Malmö administration (the major conurbations initiative) shared financing responsibilities for the scheme and it was then possible to get more children involved. The number of children Nightingale is able to accommodate depends on how our financing is arranged.
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“Children’s brochure”
During the spring term, all children in years 1–5 at participating schools receive a “Child Brochure”. The Child Brochures are translated into a number of languages in order to reach out to as many children and parents as possible. Here, we provide some basic information about Nightingale – what it means to have a mentor, how often children and mentors meet etc. The Child Brochure also contains an inquiry form where children and parents can express an interest in having a mentor and also provide some details as regards the child’s age and gender, as well as details of any prearranged activities in the week, or parts of the week, as well as details as to whether the child ever had a mentor before.

The child hands the reply stub to the class teacher who can also insert some short comments in a panel on the inquiry form as to why the child should be chosen, or on other topics which the management team may need to be aware of – during the pairing process for example. The class teacher then hands the reply stub to the contact person in the school.
Short listing

My teacher said that she didn’t know whether I would get a mentor. She said that a lot of kids had applied and that we would get a letter sent to us after the summer break. That is a really long time to wait, I think. Why does it take so long to get me a mentor? I should have a mentor now and one that I could be with over the summer. Cos it’s so boring just being stuck at home the whole summer, just being with your brothers and sisters.

The contact person puts all the inquiry forms together and then draws up a short list from all the children who have applied. The intimate knowledge that the teachers and school management have in relation to each child is important when making a decision on suitability. The aim is not to gather information about the child but rather to decide which child should be invited to the autumn information meeting and then be included in the pairing process.

A special list of priorities has been drawn up to help the decision making process. Priority cases can be children who are relatively new to Sweden, children who have an urgent need to acquire more skill in the Swedish language, children who come from large families, isolated children, children who may need a female or male role model, or children who need to broaden their experiences by meeting new adult friends.

It is also important that the child can put time aside to meet his/her mentor and does not, therefore, have too many prearranged activities during the week. At the same time, children coming from families which have too broad a range of difficulties are not regarded as being suitable for selection. The child must have no foreseeable problems in both establishing a new relationship and then being able to maintain that relationship. The children that make the short list will be those who are deemed to be able to get most benefit and development from participation in the scheme. One other aspect of the shortlist is the need to find a balance, with regards to age and gender, amongst the participating children.
During the summer break, I couldn’t stop thinking about that mentor and what we could do together if I got one. I’d show her where me and my friends play and my hiding place under the balcony. I keep my secret stones there. My dad told me that my name Faizah means success. He said that that is exactly what I am and that’s why he thinks I will get a mentor. I hope he is right and that is what happens. Then I’d be mega happy!

During the summer I have thought a lot about how I will get on as a mentor. I’ve also often wondered about what kind of child I’d get. A few times I’ve said to myself – Oh, I’ll have to do that with the mentor kid. If I get one! At the same time, I know I have to watch my enthusiasm because the child has to have a say as well. Then I wondered what would happen if we didn’t have the same interests, what would we do then?

Information meeting with the parents
Short listed children and their parents are invited to an information meeting in the month of September. The meeting is always held at the child’s school, a factor which has proven to be decisive in getting the families to attend. Experience has shown that no more than two thirds of those invited will actually attend, usually it is only half of those invited who come along. We have also found that it helps if, prior to the meeting, the contact person reminds the children and parents about the meeting. The target is for 90 – 100 children from the six participating schools to attend. In order to achieve this figure (with the assumed drop out rate), some 150 children from the six participating schools need to be invited.

At the meeting, parents are given information about Nightingale by the executive officer, and they in turn get the chance to ask questions. Experience has also shown the importance of giving the parents clear information about the aims of the scheme and its background, and also what their role will be in conjunction with the mentor in order that the child/mentor relationship functions in the best way possible. The school’s contact person and school management also take part in the meeting.
In those instances where short listed children do not attend the information meeting, attempts are sometimes made to find another way forward. For example, the coordinator can be asked to meet the child in the school and carry out the interview there, and the responsibility for giving the information to the parents has also been handed over to the schools contact person. Sometimes the relevant information is posted out to the parents. These solutions, however, are only temporary arrangements. In those instances where the child’s parents have not received sufficient information because of language problems, or because an interpreter was not available, misunderstandings and other problems have subsequently arisen between the mentor and the family.

In tandem with the executive officer’s presentation, the coordinators speak to the children in group settings and carry out interviews with them so as to create a basis for the pairing process.

Almost as soon as school started again, we got a letter from Nightingale. The letter said that me and my parents were invited to a meeting at my school.

A lady spoke at the meeting and then I was asked to go into another room along with some other kids from my school. A nice man asked us about the things we would like to do if we had a mentor and what we normally did after school and all that. I said that I would do loads of mega cool stuff with my mentor. Wonder if he thought that was a good answer?

Then the man said that because not so many kids had turned up tonight we all might get a mentor. Way cool or what?!

Mam and dad had to fill in a form and they wrote: We want Faizah to have a Swedish mentor.
Parent authorisation
At the information meeting, the parents sign a release form, allowing their child’s participation in the Nightingale scheme. This form also contains authorisation stating that the child may travel in a car with the mentor, that the child may be photographed at various activities during the mentoring year and that the photo may be used on Nightingale’s website and be used for informational purposes. The child’s name is never used in any publicity. Parents must also state on the form whether the child has any allergies – which may be an important factor in the pairing process – or whether any other family member has any allergies, which might, for ex., imply that the child cannot be paired with a mentor who has a dog, cat or horse. They must also state whether the child is tied in to other activities during the week.

Parents may also sometimes want to state their own aspirations, either verbally, or in writing on the permission form. This, for example, might mean a desire that the child has a male mentor, or specifically a Swedish mentor who can teach the child more of the language and provide insights into Swedish customs, or a mentor who has a car so that the child can see something of the area outside Malmö.

The children are interviewed
The children are interviewed by the coordinators in a group setting. The interviews take the form of a conversation. The composition of the groups is carefully weighted so as to ensure the correct gender and age balance. Each coordinator interviews five to six children at a time. The coordinator makes a note of the child’s interests and aspirations by asking the children what they do in their free time, after school and the reasons why he/she wants to have a mentor and what they think the mentor should be like. The answers to these questions give important information in the lead up to the pairing process. It also becomes clear at this stage whether it is the child him/herself who wants to have a mentor, or whether it is actually somebody close to the child who is perhaps exerting pressure on the child to get involved, against the child’s will.
The children also get the chance to say what they might like to do on outings with their mentor. The commonest answer to the question “Why do you want a mentor?”, is that the child wants to do something entertaining with his/her mentor, or perhaps do something they otherwise would never have done, or quite simply he/she is looking for something to do after school.

“I want a mentor so we can do stuff together and go to the pictures because I’ve never been there.”

Some children also have unrealistic hopes about what they will come to do on outings with their mentor – activities, for example, which might be too expensive, like going to Aq-va-kul (a swimming pool), to the pictures, to Laserdome (a shooting range), to go-cart racing or having a day out to Copenhagen. Presumably, the children have heard other children talking about what they have done with their mentors and perhaps believe that they will get “mega” outings each and every time.
Often, the children will express specific wishes as to what their mentor should be like.

“My mentor should be nice, nicer than Miss anyway!”
“He has to have a car.”

Quite a number of children say that they just want someone to talk to, want some company, or to get doing something in their free time.

“When mam and dad are working in the restaurant, I am left on my own.”
“I want to go around with a big person, because whenever I go out with mam, the whole family has to come along.”

Towards the end of the interview conversation, the coordinator will usually tell the children about things they might do with a mentor, and then also give some more concrete everyday examples of various activities from previous mentor/child activities, such as making food or baking together, meeting each other’s families, hanging out together, cycling, sports, going out for walks and/or taking the dog for a walk, or visits to the university.

At the end of the interviews, the coordinator takes a group photo of the children and takes some notes, both things are subsequently used in the pairing process.

The pairing process
Once both the child and student have been interviewed, the pairing process can begin. The pairing process is carried out in the month of September, following the recruitment of new students and after the interviews with the children.

The pairing process is a decisive phase in the scheme’s yearly cycle, as it lays the basis for a healthy relationship between child and mentor. The coordinators try to make good matches, not just on the basis of interests and aspirations, but also on the student’s previous experience. It is important that the student has the necessary prerequisites
so as to be able to cater for the child’s needs, interests and personality. In this regard, it is good policy to find as wide a spread of suitable students as possible in terms of age, gender, educational interests and background.

One good strategy is to find a common denominator between the child and student, which may, for example, be a mutual passion for a particular thing. However, that common denominator could also be the fact that the student complements some aspect of the child’s nature. A child who tends to have a sedentary lifestyle, and who mostly does things at home, may want/need a mentor who is outgoing, likes trips to the forest, or cycling. Sometimes it is the differences in a matched pair which make the match work. A shy child should not be paired with a taciturn mentor. Nor is it, perhaps, always a good idea to pair a child who is interested in sport with a mentor who is mental about sport! It can sometimes be beneficial, for both child and mentor, if they are encouraged to think outside of their own private box. The whole point of the pairing process is to create the best environment possible for each and every child and his/her mentor, and to ensure that the relationship between them has every chance of thriving. Many mentors have subsequently commented on how well the pairing system worked for their supervision duties.

It is a golden rule that girls are always paired with female mentors. Boys between the ages of 11 – 12 are paired with male mentors as far as possible. Amongst the children, the number of girls and boys tends to be fairly even but with a slight tendency towards more girls. The reason for this may be that there is an awareness that boys who make their presence felt are not the only ones who should be selected, and perhaps well behaved or even shy girls need to prioritised.
Accepted mentors and children

At the end of August, I finally got the news I had been waiting for. I had been accepted as a mentor and was invited to the first training session. I was really delighted at the news. They have paired me with a child and now I’m wondering who this new “mate” will be. In my mind’s eye, I see a little girl from another country. Just imagine if I get a young Swedish lad instead!

When the pairing process has been completed, a letter is sent to the mentors telling them that they have been accepted (paired with a child, in other words) and inviting them to a mentor training session. At this stage, they are not allowed any information regarding the child to whom they have been assigned. This information is provided in mentor training unit 1.

Following the first mentor training session, letters are also sent to the relevant child’s home and the parent/parents advising all concerned that a mentor has been allocated and inviting them to the start day. The letter gives the name of the mentor, but no other information.

Mentor training
The mentors take part in three obligatory training sessions during their mentor year. These are arranged to take place in the afternoon/evening time. Two of the training sessions are held before start up commences and one further session is held at the end of the mentor year. The idea behind mentor training is both to ensure that the mentors bring a common approach to their mentoring tasks, and also so that the wider context of the whole scheme is understood. The objective behind the training is also to give the mentors an insight into the background framework, philosophy and goals which underpin the role of a Nightingale mentor. All students, regardless of attitudes or educational background, must participate in the same mentor training sessions with the same content.
The first two mentor training sessions are held at the end of September. The third and last training session is held just before the mentoring process comes to an end in the month of March. The Nightingale management team is responsible for training sessions one and three. The participating schools organise, and are responsible for, mentor training unit 2, which takes the form of a fact finding visit to the relevant school. (see more at Mentor Training unit 2)

**Mentor training unit 1.**

When I look through the folder I got and read what is expected of me I get a bit nervous. What if I mess up on a couple of things? I have to make notes about my work, make assessments, join a mentor group, and then meet my mentor child once a week. How am I going to do all that and yet still do my studies?

After the coffee break, we were shown a slide show which showed loads of kids and then the scheme leader told us that the children we had just been watching were the ones we had been paired with. Now that really got the butterflies going. – Wonder which one? And then when I was told that I had been paired with a mentor child called Faizah, who is 9 years old, it felt just brilliant. When I get home, I have to write a postcard to Faizah, introducing myself and saying that I am really looking forward to meeting her in Folkets Park in a fortnight!

The first mentor training session is held just before the mentors start their mentor duties. The scheme leader gives a lecture about the background to Nightingale, its overall philosophy and goals, about the importance of establishing a good rapport with the child and his/her family at that first meeting, and then the best way to do this. The idea behind the lecture is to prepare the mentor for the first meeting with the child and his/her family. The ability to get on well with the child is stressed here, partly by identifying the positive and strong aspects of the child’s character and to always make this your starting point. The basic idea with Nightingale is to give children a chance to raise their self esteem and feel good factor. In order to be able to achieve this, it
is important that (right from the get go) the mentor starts from what the child wants to do, or what they are good at. The importance of establishing a good rapport with the child is also stressed to prospective mentors and that the mentor can prove to be a very important person in the child’s development, a role model which the child may emulate in subsequent encounters with other people. Then it is emphasised that the mentor must always try to work in harmony with the child’s parents, bearing in mind what is best for the child, and also to avoid generalising on rights and wrongs, what is “normal” or “strange” as different cultures begin to interact.

A student, and former mentor, also takes part and passes on the experiences he/she has had as a mentor. At this first mentor training session, the mentors also find out the name of the child with whom they have been paired.

The mentor folder and guide
At mentor training unit 1, all mentors receive a folder containing:

- An agreement form
- A form for any possible tax deductions that might apply
- Monthly report sheets which have to be filled for every week that the mentor meets the child.
- The mentor guide

The mentor folder also contains information about the city of Malmö, including a map of the city, which will come in useful for the mentor as the year progresses. There is information about the different activities that are on offer in Malmö, like cultural or sporting activities. There is also a guide for mentors in the folder.
The mentor guide
The mentor guide contains information about Nightingale’s mentor scheme, its background, overall philosophy and goals, the implications of becoming a mentor, some short information regarding training and the supervision sessions with the child and then the kind of assessment values the mentor has to use during the mentor year. The guide also gives information on Nightingale’s overall range of activities, a pass card, discount offers and a list of the material which is available for lending.

Furthermore, and importantly, the mentor guide carries information as to whom the mentor should contact in the event of an accident, or similar incident as well as important telephone numbers. There is also a little note section that’s small enough so that you can cut it out and keep it in your wallet (or whatever you carry with you at all times) where the mentor can write in telephone numbers for parents or other relatives just in case some kind of accident happened.

An agreement form
The mentors signs an agreement form in which he/she accepts the stipulated conditions for their work as mentors. The original copy is handed back to the mentor at the first supervision session and a copy is retained by the management team.

Monthly report
Here, the mentor fills in a weekly update regarding the meetings with the child. The monthly report is filled in and submitted to the management team once a month. (see page 55)
Today, the letter came. The one I had been waiting ages for. It said that I had been given a mentor called Tove. I jumped up and down like a yo-yo when my mam read out the letter! It’s, like, unbelievable!
That got me thinking about Tove and I think she has long blonde curly hair and I really hope she is nice. My brothers and sisters said that they wanted a mentor too but I told them it was only me that could have a mentor.
Also, the letter said that we had to go to Folkets Park and that I would meet Tove there. My own mentor... I can’t wait till Sunday!

Mentor training unit 2, fact finding visit to the child’s school.
This information session is held in the same week as the start day, in each of the participating schools. Those mentors whose child is attending the school concerned are invited to this session. The aim is that the mentors gain an insight into the school environment which pertains for their child, as well as getting general information about the school and its surrounding area. They also find out what the children would normally do in their free time, what the child’s residential area is like and sometimes get information from various voluntary bodies/associations. The mentor also gets the chance to meet other mentors who have also been paired with a child from that particular school. Moreover, they will meet the school’s contact person and often get to chat with the school principle. From the school’s point of view, this information session presents a chance to meet those mentors who will be attached to the children in the school who have been accepted onto the scheme.

The first day together
All mentors, children and parents are invited to an open start day – the first Sunday of October. The venue for this is Malmö’s “Folkets Park”, a place which is ideal for encouraging happy first gatherings. The management team and the school’s contact persons will have already arrived. The mentors are asked to arrive half an hour before the children and parents. This ensures that none of the children are standing around waiting for their mentor to arrive.
First the mentors, and then the children, are each handed a number ID at the entrance to the park, and their first mutual task (with the help of the ID number) is to seek each other out. This all happens with a great air of curiosity and eagerness. Then, both of them are invited to play “Give Us A Clue”. Here, there are several questions which are directed at the child. The Give Us A Clue game has proven itself to be a useful device in getting the conversation going; the ice is broken, any nerves quickly disappear and the two sides get to know more about each other in a relaxed, cheerful and indeed humourous way.

Sunday at last. I'm a bit nervous but really happy. At the entrance to the park, I get a number ID with the number 26 written on it. That feels like a lucky number somehow! I have thought a lot about Faizah in the last few days and wonder what kind of person she is. I feel a bit tense, I must admit, before this first meeting. Imagine if Faizah decides she doesn’t like me, and then what if myself and Faizah’s parents don’t get on?

Well here I am now leaning against a tree and trying to make my number obvious when all of a sudden I see a girl walking towards me. Her mother and father are laughing away and she is in between them. That has to be Faizah! Then I notice that she has a number 26 in her hand. I walked forward and say hello. I also notice that Faizah steals little glances at me whilst I am speaking to her mother and father. You would nearly get the impression that she’s saying: – Right, so you’re the one I am supposed to go out with every week and have fun with!

Then Faizah hands me a flower and my eyes fill up!
When we get to Folkets Park, I see Lena from my school standing just at the entrance. She ticks off all the kids from a list and then she gives us each a number sign. I get a sign with the number 26 on it.  
I see that there are some kids from my school but there are so many other kids that I have never ever seen before. The whole park is jammed full with people! There’s no way I’m going to find my mentor here!  
Then dad gives me a nudge and tells me to look over at the big tree because there is a girl there with a number in her hand. She looks tall and she’s laughing at something and then she looks at me. My dad tells me to run over and see which number she has. But all of a sudden that’s the last thing I want to do, only dad takes me by the hand and we go over to her. It was Tove, my mentor. I think she looks like a really nice person.  

Parents receive a small “Guide for Parents”, which partly contains a short description of the Nightingale scheme and partly a section where the parents themselves can write in the mentor’s name and telephone number. Even more important is the fact that the parents get to meet their child’s mentor on this start day, and thereby gain an idea of what kind of person it is to whom they will be entrusting their child. The start day usually ends with a picnic, in which the Nightingale management team, the schools contact people, the parents, mentors and children are all involved. And with this fascinating mix of people, a picnic soon becomes a party!  

The press release is sent out the day before, which often means that the start day attracts journalists and the local version of the “Paparazzi”. Thus, in the days immediately following the start day, the children and parents can enjoy at least one moment of fame in their lives when they see the positive coverage of their Nightingale day in the newspapers.
The interaction between mentor and child
In the Nightingale scheme, it is the mentor who does most of the work. The mentor’s basic tasks are to develop a personal relationship with the child, to offer support and to be a positive role model. Mentors must give the children in their care time and attention and do things with them which they have never done before; they must expand their horizons and give them a new sense of being in the world.
Our first meeting took place by way of my receiving an invitation to the home of Faizah and her family. When I arrived, all her brothers and sisters just stood and stared at me and then they followed us around when Faizah showed me the flat where she lives. I was asked to stay for dinner and dinner turned out to be chicken and rice cooked in saffron and garnished with barberry berries and pistachio nuts. It was absolutely delicious and best of all was the rice down at the bottom of the saucepan, which had a kind of crunchy crust. Faizah’s father was the one who asked most of the questions and I took it that he had been in Sweden longer than either Faizah, her mum or any of the other siblings. Faizah seemed a bit shy but answered all my questions and she nodded and laughed enthusiastically when I suggested that I could come and collect her after school the following Tuesday.

Nightingale recommends that the mentors make the first meeting after the start day in the child’s home, as the child will feel more confident and secure. Once this has been successfully accomplished, it is a question of expanding mutual horizons. The next meeting might be a tour around the area in which the child lives, allowing the child to show play areas, football fields, or a visit to the school. Following on from that, the next meeting might be a visit to the mentor’s home. The meetings are usually planned around the child’s wishes and interests. Most of them will involve quite normal everyday things like cooking together, baking, playing games, or going into town for cake and a coffee. Sometimes, trips are taken to libraries, museums, art exhibitions or the university. Many of the children are good at sports and enjoy playing badminton, or going bowling, skating and swimming. Many also take part in the organised “group activities” (see page 51).

All children and their mentors are insured during their meetings and also on the way to and from those meetings.

From the child’s point of view, contact with a mentor means interaction with an adult whose only reason for being there is the child him/herself, a relationship with an adult free of any necessary reference to brothers and sisters or, indeed, schoolmates. Mentors place the
children in their care at the centre of things, giving them full visual attention, listening, showing them new things and cheering them up if needs be. Language, one of the most important tools in facilitating social integration, is practised in a natural way in this kind of human interaction. The best way for a child to learn Swedish as a new language is to be in close and regular contact with someone who is interested in that child’s view of the world and who is also happy and able to share his/her own. For those children who are relative newcomers to the country, being able to meet with a mentor means an opportunity to immerse themselves in the Swedish language, in a natural environment, for two to three hours of every week – effectively, private lessons in Swedish. This process has made an excellent contribution to the development of language proficiency amongst these children.

We went to the big library and lent some books. Tove helped me get books in Swedish that I can read. We got some brilliant books. I’d love to go back there, to that big library again. We are keeping a diary together. We got a mega cool book that we both can write in. Tove said to me that I’ve got really good at spelling. Sometimes, I look in the book just for fun, coz it reminds me of what we did. We stuck in photos of each other and then put little notes in about who we are and what we like. We stuck in tickets we got at the pictures as well. Next time I see Tove, were going to play some game at my house. Tove says that it’s called a party game and that she has loads of other games at hers. She’s going to bring them next time.

The mentor as a bridge into a new world
The isolation, which can affect certain children if they are normally restricted to staying in their own residential area, can often be broken when they begin interacting with a mentor. Some of the children involved in the scheme have rarely been to Malmö city centre, except perhaps to special events like the Malmö Festival. Some of these children also spend the whole summer in the area where they live, without any prospect of escaping to the seaside, forests or country areas. On the one hand, the mentor scheme can mean that both child and mentor are able to discover new things, new possibilities, in the
area in which the child lives. But on the other hand, it can be an opportunity to expand horizons by setting off to discover what lies on the other side of the child’s immediate physical world.

For some children, the meetings with the mentor offer the first chance to try new activities, or go to places they would never otherwise have visited. Getting the chance to go to the pictures for the first time, learning to skate, visiting art exhibitions, theatres and libraries, are all things that will expand any child’s world. The mentors, too, get the chance to see a wider perspective. Many of them are newly arrived students and, for them too, mentoring offers a great chance to get to know Malmö better and explore its possibilities.

We have done loads of things that I have never done before. What’s really cool is that we always work out together what we want to do. We went swimming at Aq-va-kul, visited the museum and then, on one of the days, we went to a big gym where Tove has done gymnastics before. She showed me how to do a cartwheel and then she did a big vault through the air. Cool or what! I’d love to do gymnastics and do vaults and stuff.

It’s usually me who says what we should do together. As both myself and Faizah are quite new to Malmö, we have both had fun discovering new things and trying different activities. I am absolutely bowled over at how much fun I’m having knocking around with a nine year old! I have discovered a side to Malmö, which I never would have seen just hanging around with my friends. And also, I think that it’s brought out the child in me again.

The mentor as a female/male role model
One of the most important roles for any mentor is that of being a female or male role model for the children, which for example entails always setting a good example in both word and deed. This is especially the case when questions arise regarding norms, morals, ethics and common values shared by everybody. There are usually lot of
occasions when different views about how girls and boys should behave are raised. It is often the case that the children, perhaps for the first time, will attempt to formulate (perhaps even raise doubts about) – some of their basic opinions.

I feel that it is a great privilege to be allowed to share a part of a young girl’s everyday life at such close quarters. I have tried my best not to just dump my own views on to her where clothes, music or lifestyle is concerned. Instead, I have talked about different things in order to get a feel of how she sees things. At the same time, I’ve been honest about my own opinions.

Faizah thinks that it’s weird that I am not married. It was like dropping a bomb into the conversation when I first told her family that I live in an apartment on my own. At the same time, I couldn’t stop wondering about the blind faith that leads a family to arrange a marriage for their daughter when she reaches 17. I have thought a lot about the two different philosophies, even different lifestyles, Faizah now has to deal with because she has met me.

I have been to Tove’s place a couple of times. It’s all so quiet where she is because she has no children. One of the times, we baked a cake, and then we coloured the whipping cream green and then we pretended that we were frogs eating frog cake. That was mad.

I feel sorry for Tove because she doesn’t have a man at home waiting for her after our meetings. Tove lives all on her own and doesn’t have a man, even though she is really nice. She has a great big flat with loads of books. Her biggest room is like being in a library. When I grow up, I want to have as many books as that.
The mentor – a student role model
The mentor meets the child once a week for two to three hours and a personal relationship usually evolves; one in which the mentor becomes a positive role model, both in a general sense, and as a young adult studying at university. The mentors are in a position to explain why they wanted to become students, how they became so interested in their subject and exactly how they gained a place at university. Many mentors choose to occasionally bring the child along with them when they go university. It is very common for the children to talk about this university that they have been allowed to visit, and also to express a desire to become students themselves when they get bigger.

There is nobody in Faizah’s family, or indeed in her extended network of family connections, who has been to university; so for her, the idea that adults would happily go back to school is completely new and strange. Once, she asked me whether I was unemployed, given that I was still going to school. I see one of my big tasks as giving Faizah an idea of the kind of careers for which you can study at university. I have told her what I am reading myself. Faizah has great difficulty understanding what exactly it is I am studying for – “what does IMER mean?”, she says, as she goes round the campus with me. A question that actually gets me thinking and then I try to explain, in an understandable way, what exactly it is I am studying and what IMER is all about.

Once, when we were in the “games room” at Malmö university, we found a catalogue that me and some other kids started to read. It was all about the different things you could study there. Then we asked Tove and another mentor what job you could get if you had been to Malmö university. Then Tove and the other mentor told us about all these brilliant things that you could do if you read a lot about them first. Before I wanted to be a hairdresser, or make cars like my dad, but now I think I’d like to study at IMER, cos that has to be way cooler. Then I could be a mentor one day when I’m big!
The mentor parent relationship

I think that Faizah’s parents are always very friendly and that they really want the best for their daughter. I am almost ashamed over the kind of preconceptions I had at the start. I thought that they had banned Faizah from playing with her friends because she was spending so much time looking after her younger siblings. I also thought it was a bit strange that Faizah had to share a room with three of her brothers and sisters, and that she didn’t even have her own little desk or place to write and draw. Now I accept that Faizah’s parents really do want the best for her, in just the same way that my parents wanted things to go well for me. It’s just that this comes out in two totally different ways. At the beginning I assumed that Faizah’s family were completely different to mine. Now I believe that the similarities outweigh the differences. There is no doubt in my mind that I now have a much better understanding of what it is like to come from another country and not speak the language of the host country. One of the ways I gained an insight into this was because it was very often me who was struggling to make myself understood.

Cooperation and contact with parents is usually problem free for most mentors. After all, it is the parents themselves who have made the application on behalf of their child and, thus, will usually be well disposed to the mentor. Many of the parents look upon the mentor as “one of the family”, and will almost always offer things like coffee and give invitations to dinner. Some regard the mentor as a new adult friend; someone with whom they can share life’s ups and downs. Some of the parents also see the mentor as someone who can provide new ways of thinking and ideas about things to do with their children in Malmö.

Sometimes both parents want (in fact – “need”) to keep the mentor as a friend – as someone to talk to and receive support from. In which case, it is important that the mentor keeps a slight distance in order to avoid becoming a mentor for the parents instead of the child. Moreover, in order to protect the designated role which the mentor has within the scheme, Nightingale always advises the mentor against accepting any requests
from the family to babysit. The mentor child must have a one on one relationship with his/her mentor. Mentor children must not be placed in a position where they are competing for their mentor, and their mentor’s attention, with either other siblings or their parents. On the other hand, it is important that mentors embrace the world in which the parents live and seek to understand the things they do and say. This essentially comes from respecting their integrity and dignity. The mentor must, at all times, have the child’s and his/her family’s interests at heart.

**Group activities**

We went to Malmö university today and played there. It was brilliant! We played in a gymnastics hall. There was quite a few other kids and mentors there too. Tove’s mate was there with another mentor kid. She’s 10 and goes to a different school. We might meet again and do something together some other time.

At the start of the mentor year, both the children and their mentors are full of ideas about what they should do together but, after a while, a kind of lull usually sets in. This phenomenon has been a feature of both the Perach (see above) and Nightingale schemes. This kind of ideas torpor usually sets in after the first three “honeymoon” months have rushed by. In other words, in or around the Christmas holiday period. For this reason, Nightingale arranges a series of group activities during November and December, to which several mentors and their children are invited. These activities are usually some form of controlled games which have the aim of encouraging child and mentor to get to know each other better, often in a “games hall” type setting, where they have space to run around together, dress up, paint faces or just generally mess about together, rummaging through things and chatting.

These group activities are also a great opportunity for the mentors to get to know each other and for the children to meet other children; to get a chance to measure themselves against new acquaintances and establish new friendships. The interaction that takes place in these group activities (involving as it does student recruits from widely varying backgrounds) can also help to generate wider interaction between the students on other
levels and at other times. Another important aspect of these activities is that, for some of the children, it may be their first visit to the university.

Most of the activities are pre-planned and referred to in the mentor guide. They can also be viewed on the Nightingale website – http://www.mah.se/templates/Page____10002.aspx. Some of the activities are arranged as the year progresses. Activities such as visits to the fire brigade, the theatre and skateboarding are also always firm favourites. The trick is to find a broad enough variety of activities so that all tastes can be accommodated.

Some mentors say they are grateful for the fact that the group activity option is there for them. This applies in particular to mentors supervising shy children, or children who prefer to be with other children whilst being supervised by a mentor. Even in the case of children who are very shy, the group activities (which mean that the children get to try new things) can encourage them to have more confidence in their own abilities and thereby become more outward going.

Material which can be loaned from Nightingale
Nightingale keeps a range of films and computer games, which mentors can take out on loan for 1 – 2 weeks. The Nightingale website gives a list of the different materials which are available on a loan and return basis.
Mentor group activities
All mentors are divided into separate mentor groups, which consist of six – seven mentors and their designated children. These mentor groups arrange a sequence of activities in the period between January and May. Each group is assigned a specific week for their activities and then must itself decide the day of the week, the location and the types of activity that will take place. The group is also obliged to decide whether the group itself will pay for the activity, whether there will be a limit on participation, whether the mentors and children need to bring certain things with them etc. Participation in these activities can involve just the pairing who initially arranged the outing, or up to twenty additional child and mentor pairings. There needs to be a great variety of things to do in these activities, for ex. showing videos, trying different and new sporting activities, trips to the forest and other confidence building pursuits. The mentor group activities take place during weeks four to sixteen, which implies that in these weeks there will always be some kind of activity in which child and mentor can become involved if they so wish.

The basic aim of the mentor groups is to facilitate contact with a wider circle of people within the scheme. The resulting group activities also help Nightingale to run smoothly and thereby contribute to reducing costs.

Sports college
Nightingale has a special arrangement with students at the teacher training department who are doing the “Sport and Physical Education” course. This arrangement means that Nightingale children are offered the chance to receive sports instruction during the spring term. The “Nightingale children” are not supervised by their mentors when participating in this course. The sports students introduce the children to various sports activities for one afternoon a week during the spring term. This sports course was first tried in 2004 and the results were so positive that it has continued ever since. Approximately ten children would normally be involved.
Interaction with different venues/locations in the city of Malmö

We went to Malmö today. We were at the big museum. I was only ever there once before and that was with my class. I think Tove is really nice and kindly. Once we were going to the art museum, we got there too early and then we played some games in the park just outside. Even though Tove is an adult, she went on the big slide. Now that is cool, I think! We were laughing our heads off and it was much more fun than going in looking at all them things on the walls. We are going to the theatre for our next outing. I think that’s going to be fun because I’ve never been to anything like that.

Apart from offering courses for education and research, it is also incumbent upon all universities to engage with the society that surrounds them. Where Malmö university is concerned, this is a responsibility which has been at the centre of the university’s ethos ever since it was founded. Indeed, the Nightingale scheme is a good example of how the university interacts with surrounding society. A number of links have been established with the city’s leisure, sports and cultural sectors. Some examples of this include the Malmö Museum, which offers free admission for all Nightingale children and their mentors during the relevant mentor year, Aq-va-kul (a swimming pool in Malmö) offers a discount price on junior tickets and then there is Folkets Park which makes the “Far i hatten” Café available for Nightingale start days. Meanwhile, the Rescue Services South Division (Malmö fire brigade) offers each child and mentor a fact finding tour during the mentor year with the aim of highlighting the various duties of the fire service, and also of challenging the idea that the rescue services are some kind of arm of the police force.
Malmö’s drama theatre offers free admission to certain performances for all Nightingale children and their mentors, plus a fact finding visit where they get a chance to go behind the scenes.

These kinds of organic social links to various cultural and leisure venues in the city help the scheme when it comes to controlling costs and, at the same time, they represent a mutual benefit to both parties. The children get the opportunity to do things which they have never done before and, in the longer term, this could mean that they acquire new interests which continue and develop way beyond the mentor year itself. The same applies, of course, to the mentors. What this also means is that Malmö and its various social and cultural venues becomes a more open place; thus creating a far more meaningful range of leisure and free time opportunities for the city’s children.

Monthly report

The activities in which the mentor and child engage are all logged by the mentor in a monthly report form, which also leaves room for broader reflections by the mentor (there are four activities per sheet).

Example of completed monthly report:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>am/pm</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>14/11</td>
<td>15.30 – 18.00</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We went to the Cog Museum. Then we went to Zelko’s house and talked for a while.

Reflections/Comments?

We’ve got to the stage now where we can joke and mess around with each other (wrestling, tickling etc.) Cool or what! Zelko had previously held a little back from things and was really shy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>am/pm</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>23/11</td>
<td>15.00 – 17.30</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We played tennis at Bellevue stadium

Reflections/Comments?

I have a brutal serve!!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>am/pm</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>29/11</td>
<td>14.30 – 18.00</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Got the bus to Aq-va-kul and splashed around until we got tired.
Reflections/Comments?
He was a bit scared of the water at first but after a while he started to splash around like a little hippo. He would not move until he was sure I was there to lift him, either from the slide, or anywhere where the water was deep.

Financial support for mentors
Mentor’s receive SEK 5000 (from October to May) for the tasks they perform. The first tranche of SEK 2000 is paid out in the month of December and the remaining SEK 3000 is paid out at the end of June, once the mentor scheme has drawn to a close. (Read more page. 148)

Guidelines and training for mentors
I think it is a great thing that we have some pre-planned supervision sessions. I don’t have any major problems with my mentor child but it does you good to be able to share your thoughts with others; for example where the child’s social and domestic conditions are concerned. I can’t help but make a lot of comparisons with my own childhood. As a case in point, I would never have thought that anybody in the year 2007 would have to live in the kind of cramped conditions that Faizah and her family have to put up with.

The family’s economic trials and tribulations basically mean that I am constantly on the lookout for freebie activities and sometimes I just run out of steam. That’s why things like the free bus tickets that I got, as well as the free activities which Nightingale arranges, are so great to have in your back pocket.

I think that the mentors give each other great support during the group sessions. I have been given some great tips and ideas from other mentors about things me and Faizah can do together. Myself and another mentor have also agreed to meet up together at future events along with our mentor kids. I think it’s also a good thing to get to hear how other mentors have been getting on. You suddenly get a new perspective and don’t feel so isolated with regards to your own “problems”.
Participation in the training/review sessions is obligatory for all mentors. The aim of the review sessions is partly to give the Nightingale management a chance to monitor everybody’s progress with regards to the mentor/child and family relationship and that the projected development schedule is being kept, and partly so that the mentor can receive any necessary backup and support.

**Training/review session 1**
The first session is held on a one to one basis and takes place in November/December, once the mentor has met the designated child over a period of one or two months. The idea behind the first session is to help the coordinator and mentor assess how the mentoring process is coming along, how the periods of contact between the child (the parents) and mentor is working, and how the mentor is settling into the role. Even the question of the pairing process itself, and whether the mentor’s own aspirations have been realised is taken up for discussion. Where relationship problems have emerged, the mentor receives support and guidance in the review session. It is normal in this first session that mentors express the view that meeting the child and family has introduced to them to a completely different world (Read more page. 60)

**The group training/review sessions**
Every mentor group attends the second training/review session in January, where they review the progress made with the coordinator. The aim of the group review sessions is to facilitate a mutual support forum for the mentors, a place where they can swap tips and ideas, as well as sharing their thoughts and experiences. It is usually a positive experience for the mentors when they hear other mentors speak of their own experiences. It can also prove a great relief to some mentors and a confirmation of their own feelings when they hear that other mentors have undergone similar experiences to their own.

Another aim is to give the mentors a chance to meet and get to know each other as a group, amongst other things so that they can more easily plan the coming group activities together.
Voluntary individual guidance sessions
In the month of February, there are voluntary individual guidance sessions for those mentors who feel they need the extra support. However, most coordinators only see a handful of their mentor group at these sessions.

Mentor training unit 3.
A “parting of the ways lecture” is held in the first week of March and is given by the executive officer. The idea behind this is to prepare the mentors for the fact that their period as a child mentor is drawing to a close, and to advise them about the need for a safe “breaking distance”, as they begin to talk to the child and his/her family about the final parting of the ways. The lecture stresses the need for the mentor period to be brought to a decisive conclusion. The mentors are told that it is just as important to end a mentor relationship properly as it is to commence one; that bonding and separation are two equally important sides of the same mentor coin. They are given the means by which they can appreciate and facilitate the various possible reactions on the part of the child, but also an explanation as to why it is vital that the child is not made promises that will never be fulfilled. It is also often the case that the mentors need to address and resolve their feelings with regards to the imminent loss of their role as mentors.

Individual cessation guidance
In the closing review in March/April, the coordinator and mentor look back over the mentor year and the mentor gets feedback regarding his/her performance and commitment to the scheme. The coordinator also refers to previous reviews and the parting of the ways lecture, whilst the mentor is encouraged to express in concrete terms how he/she intends to initiate the cessation of mentor activities.

The role of the coordinator in the review sessions
The coordinator’s role is to listen to, and support, the mentors as they seek to answer questions and compose their thoughts and if necessary encourage the mentor to try different scenarios when seeking to resolve certain issues or problems. As a supervisor, the coordinator seeks to facilitate the mentor in taking a wider view of certain problems and perhaps using different perspectives.
The coordinator listens, does not rush questions (or answers to questions) asks new questions when points need to be clarified, and also seeks to affirm and support the views and thoughts expressed by the mentors. Part of the coordinator’s job is also to ensure that the mentors are carrying out the duties assigned to them.

**Thoughts and questions posed by mentors**

It is both a pleasure and a privilege to be given the chance to see the world through the eyes of a nine year old, which also gives an insight into the world view of today’s children as a whole. At the same time, I have tried to open Faizah’s eyes to the wider possibilities that are open to her in a place like Malmö. I think the first time that we went to the pictures together left Faizah in a bit of a daze and certainly left an impression! She is just incredibly kind and thoughtful. Most of the goodies we got just had to be saved and brought home to share with her mum and dad and her brothers and sisters. For me, the meetings with Faizah very often proved to be a brilliant way of disengaging from all the stress of studying and swotting and we really did become great friends, myself and Faizah.

For the vast majority of mentors, the time spent with their designated child usually went very well. They got on well together and enjoyed each other’s company. Moreover, some mentors were pleasantly surprised by the fact that going around with a previously unknown child could be so rewarding. Most mentors were enriched by the experience and found the child’s eye view of things fascinating, even to the extent that they rediscovered their own childhood ways.

**Why was this particular child chosen?**

It is quite natural for a mentor to sometimes wonder why a child was included in the scheme. If and when this question comes up, it is not something which the coordinator can answer. This is perfectly in keeping with the Nightingale philosophy of allowing child and mentor to come together without any preconceived ideas about each other. The coordinator’s role is to ensure that the mentor does not spend time speculating as to why that particular child is involved. The mentor’s
role in the few months that they are together, is to ensure that they get on well with their mentor child and to bolster the child’s self belief, not to dwell on any possible problems and difficulties the child may or may not have.

Reactions when confronted with a completely different world to your own
It is normal for some mentors to take on board the problems which they experience in the family situation, which can arouse feelings of powerlessness and frustration. They often express a feeling of having entered a completely different world; one which they never knew existed. This may refer to the cramped conditions, different lifestyles, different customs; or all of these things. It is important that the mentor is helped to understand that, as a mentor, he/she can do nothing to change the child’s living conditions. Mentoring has nothing to do with changing the views of parents, or how the child is being reared. However, what the mentors are in a position to change is their own attitudes and approach to the family by keeping an open mind and respecting its lifestyle, its likes and dislikes and its way of thinking. Where the situation appears to be so serious that there seems to be a risk to the child’s health and wellbeing, the contact person at the child’s school should be contacted and any relevant information passed on. However, this is an extremely rare occurrence.

Money worries
Some mentors take the family’s economic problems onboard, which can lead to concerns on the part of the mentor with regards to money for buses, or different activities. In this scenario, the free activities arranged by Nightingale become even more important. There are also prepaid bus tickets, which the mentor can use for those children/families which are most in need of help.

Language difficulties
A large proportion of the children involved in the Nightingale scheme come from outside Sweden and the length of time they have been in the country varies just as much their proficiency in the Swedish language. A good number of children must also act as interpreters for
their parents, which can easily lead to misunderstandings with regard to rendezvous times, or activities which have been prearranged by the mentor. Certain parents are illiterate and, therefore, gain no benefit from being handed printed literature.

Some mentors have described a situation where they became a kind of mouthpiece for the family, and how they were prevailed upon to ring the doctor, explain a letter, etc. Some parents appear unsure about, or have not understood, the idea behind the mentor scheme. For example, there are those who just want the mentor to help their child with school lessons/homework, to the exclusion of all else; or fetch and carry the child to and from the various activities, or to bring the other brothers and sisters along to the mentoring sessions. It is, of course, fine that the mentor provides an extra pair of hands but it is extremely important that the mentor sets very clear boundaries so as to make clear to all concerned that mentor time with the mentor child alone is a sacred and inviolable space.
The final parting of the ways
The procedure
The child and his/her mentor and the child’s brothers and sisters and parents are all invited to a Nightingale occasion where the final parting of the ways is formally recognised. This happens in the second Sunday of May just as we all begin to believe that summer may not be too far away. The Nightingale management team, and all the contact people from the schools, also take part in this special occasion. This final and mutual parting of the ways not only marks the end of a special journey but also makes the point that it is not just the child, the family and the mentor concerned that is affected by the termination of the mentor sessions. On this day, the whole set of relationships which emerged over the year for each child and mentor is brought to an end. It is important that the child’s parents are present at the parting of the ways to offer support, not just for their own child, but also for the mentor, as this kind of situation can be difficult enough for any adult without having to deal with it on their own.

It has sometimes happened that a mentor has had to take his/her child home after the final parting session and leave the child in an empty flat and this is good for neither child nor mentor. Those children and their mentors who, for whatever reason, cannot make it to the parting of the ways session must make their own arrangements for “closure”.

The parting of the ways day usually takes place outdoors at Ribbersborg beach in Malmö and various games are arranged as well as face painting and, as a finale, there is usually a magician. The mentors are always advised to bring something with them, which they can give to the child as a memento of their time together. Some feel it is a nice gesture to make a present of the journal, or scrapbook, which they have compiled together as the meetings have progressed with its assortment of pictures, tickets and jokes. Then, perhaps, a personal message written in the diary or notepad which was used to record and keep track of the meetings.
The whole beach was full of kids and their mentors. Tove painted a clown face on me and then on my brothers and sisters. Then we went paddling and afterwards had a picnic. The best bit was the magician who magicked my 500 note away. He set it on fire at first but then he pulled it out from behind my ear! That was a brilliant trick! My mam and dad said that we are going to come back to the beach in the summer.
Subsequent reactions from mentors and children
Most mentors express a sense of relief when their mentor duties come to an end. At the same time, they usually acknowledge that the experience had enriched them and had been good fun, and also that they would miss not seeing their mentor child. However, some mentors have concerns about the future welfare of their former mentor child once the mentor outings have come to a close. Some mentors feel “torn” following the final goodbye and that they have somehow betrayed the child by leaving it “abandoned”. The child’s quite natural question as to why they can no longer meet can also be a source of anxiety for both parties. To remain friends, to like each other, to get on well and yet suddenly have to stop seeing each other can be hard for both parties. However, in all the time that Nightingale has been in existence, no child, parent or mentor has ever needed to contact the management team because the separation was just too much for them to handle. Nor have we ever needed to call in professional help for any individual because the difficulties have been so great.

I have to admit that I’m a bit worried about Faizah now that our meetings have stopped. I think that I meant a lot to her and gave her a chance to start building her “own life”. I feel that Faizah really opened up with me and that we had some great chats together.
Faizah has asked me why we can’t just keep meeting each other and that is a hard one. I have tried to come to terms with this unease I have, and it could be that my anxiety about talking to Faizah and her family about the parting of the ways is greater than Faizah’s anxiety about the whole thing. At the same time, I feel a great sense of relief that it’s going to be over, as the whole thing has proved to be far more time consuming than I ever imagined was possible.

I feel sad because me and Tove can’t meet anymore. Tove is going home to her mam and dad and big sister and then she is going all the way to London. But she said she will send me a postcard from London, addressed to me. And I am going to write her a letter and send it with a photo of me on my birthday. We’re going to have the party in Folkets Park and we are going to go on the carousel ride and stuff. I cant wait for the 23rd of July. Coz then I’ll be 10!

The parting of the ways day on the beach was a really nice occasion. It was a sunny day and Faizah was in really good form the whole time. I gave her the joint diary that we had been keeping as a present. We spent a long time just sat together looking through it and remembering different occasions. I had also inserted a photo in a nice frame, which was taken on the very first day. It shows me and Faizah standing there with the number 26 sheets in our hands.
Of course, as I was about to leave it was big hugs all round. First, and the biggest, with Faizah, then with her brothers and sisters and lastly her parents. Then Faizah just runs off with a football that she then throws it to her brothers and sisters. As I am cycling away from the scene, I hear Faizah laughing out loud and look back to see that the whole family has joined in the match!

Review of the year, mentor assessment and work certificate
All mentors have to write a review (usually on one A4 sheet of paper) at the end of the mentor year, which describes their year as they saw it. They must also write about what they feel the child has gained from the mentor process. The mentors are also obliged to fill in a mentor assessment form which consists of approximately ten questions relating, amongst other things, to the mentor’s relationship with the child and what being a mentor has meant for them. The form also asks their views on how the scheme functions.

I feel that it has really brought me on a lot and, for my part, I regard it as a privilege that I was able to be so intimately involved with someone like that and share their experiences. No amount of class based course work can give you that. There is no doubt that it took up far more of my time than I had expected but it was a very rewarding year. I have found myself laughing, playing games, being mischievous; tried sledging and skating, lots of things only a child can get you to do. I found that I forgot my own preoccupations by immersing myself in somebody else’s.

Thinking of Faizah now and the way she has developed fills me with pleasure and pride; how her proficiency in the Swedish language has come on in leaps and bounds, how she has become more open and confident. As an example, she says she now knows what bus to take to get out to Malmö university, where she says she will be reading and swatting just like me one day.
My initial intention was to help make her free time more meaningful and then to widen her horizons and give her new experiences. At the same time, I wanted to be a positive female role model for her. I also think that Faizah perceived our outings as a kind of “free zone”; not forgetting that she had to look after her smaller brothers and sisters for most of the time.

At the start of our relationship, I imagined that I was just there for her, but that is only half the truth. For the fact is that she gave an awful lot back to me. There was a real interaction between us. Yes, I gained an insight into her world but she also got a chance to peek into mine. So thanks “Nightingale”; not only because you open a door for us into the world in which these children live, but also because this world then proves to be a way back to ourselves.

When all the monthly and annual reviews, along with the mentor evaluations, are in the hands of the management team, a work certificate and a pay cheque is sent to the mentor.
DID THE NIGHTINGALE SING THE RIGHT SONG?

What the children had to say.
During the spring term of 2006, seven follow up questions were put to a total of thirty five children, who had been involved in Nightingale Kristianstad and Malmö, and who had just completed their year with a mentor. The questions were put either in interview situations, or in questionnaires which had to be filled in.

In answer to the question, “What did you and your mentor do together?”, the most frequent answer was that they did everyday activities, which took place either in their own home or that of the mentor.
– We baked, grilled, drank coffee, drew, messed around.
– We went for walks.
They have a clear memory of these normal, everyday activities and that they enjoyed themselves; perhaps because these kind of activities gave space for conversation and getting to know one and other.

The other activities took place outside the home and required a bus or train journey.
– We went into town and had coffee.
– We went to Helsingborg.
Some of the answers show that special activities were also arranged, which related to something in which either the mentor, or the child, was particular interested.
– The mentor brought us to see her horse.
– She came to see me when I was dancing in the show.

Many of them also got involved in the group activities which were arranged by Nightingale.
– We went to a Halloween party, a games night, sports activities.

And several mention the fact they had visited the university – “my mentor’s school”.
– My mentor goes to school too. We’ve been there a few times.

In answer to the question – “Who decided what you were going to do?”, all the children gave the answer that the decision was always a joint one. The children usually answered that the mentor would make suggestions but that they always decided together. Some children went on to say that they were often allowed to choose or suggest what they would like to do on their mentor outings.

In answer to the question – “What was the best thing about the mentor?”, all the children gave the answer that everything had been great, and they all said that it was really cool and/or brilliant to have a mentor. Some children answered that the best thing about it was having someone to talk to, have some company, and have something to do.
– The best thing was just going round with her.

Some of the children said that the best thing about having a mentor was that you had someone to meet every week and then being able to do different things together. Other children said – or wrote – more clearly that the best thing about having a mentor was that they had been able to do things with the mentor which they would not otherwise have done.
– You can do nearly what you like with a mentor, things you wouldn’t normally do.

Quite a lot of children expressed delight at having had a mentor. Quite apart from everything else, it made them smile! There were quite a few children who were really proud of being chosen to have a mentor.
– Going around with him.
– Being allowed to go around with her and all that.

Some children believe themselves that they had developed a lot; that they had learned things by having a mentor. Certain children have told their mentors that they have calmed down a lot in school after being assigned a mentor. Other children have said that they are much better at doing their lessons and homework now. Other children have said that their Swedish was much better, or that they had become better at trying new things.
– I have got better…better at talking.
– I can skate now, and I couldn’t do that before.

In answer to the question – “What was the worst thing about it?”, the children replied that nothing had been that bad. Everything had been good and enjoyable. One child did say that the worst thing was when they could not meet up. Other children said that the worst thing was when somebody got sick and the meetings had to be cancelled.
Another one gave the answer:
– The worst thing is that I never had a mentor before.

Unfortunately, there was one child who had been left highly disappointed. This particular child had a mentor who failed to honour his responsibilities and this comes across quite clearly in the child’s responses:
– That he never came at the time we agreed. He said that everything was too dear. He was always saying, we are not allowed do this, we are not allowed do that. There wasn’t enough time.

The last question asked was – “Is there any other point you want to make that has not been covered by our questions?” No, came the answer from all the children, except two.

These two replied:
– I would have liked to have spent more time with the mentor every time, the time goes so quick I would have liked to have done more things with everybody all together.
– No, that’s it. I’m too tired to answer any more questions, please kind person!!
These kind of replies given by the children can be seen as a sign, not of only of a rising self confidence, but also of their expanding horizons.
What the parents had to say
During the parent information meeting in the month of September, the parents are informed that a telephone interview will be conducted with them at the end of the Nightingale year, and that all these interviews are voluntary. These are carried out by the coordinators between January and March, when the children and their mentors have been meeting for four to six months.

The idea behind the telephone interviews is to provide the management team with an idea of how parents view the child/mentor relationship. These interviews are not held to check whether mentors are up to scratch, or performing their duties properly. The interviews have been carried out in every Nightingale year, except 2005/2006 and 2006/2007. The reason for this tail off is that a review of all the assessments showed that conducting the interviews was an extra burden on the coordinators’ already very busy work schedule, and also the fact that the answers were, by and large, very similar and positive. There have been discussions as to whether a sample set of random telephone interviews could be carried out instead.

The coordinator’s previous notes from the mentor review were used as a basis to prepare for the interview. Each interview lasted between 5 – 10 minutes.
Three questions (and a follow up question) were used as a format:
– We are around halfway through the mentor year, how do you feel things have been going?
– Is there anything you wanted to ask, or anything that surprised you, or you wondered about?
– Is there anything you think we could have done better, or in a different way?
– Other/follow up...

Over the years, the frequency rate for replies has been 67– 87 %. The shortfall is made up of parents who were not contactable at the times the coordinator was making his/her calls, families who did not own a telephone, or families that had moved to another address without providing the new contact details. In some cases, language problems
have led to difficulties in conducting the interview, or occasionally made it impossible.

The majority of the parents involved in the scheme do not have Swedish as their first language. Thus, the language issue has sometimes proved to be a barrier. The most frequent answer we received was “very good” or “fine, fine”. Occasionally, the mentor child has had to act as an interpreter for his/her parents but then, of course, there was the difficulty of deciding whether the reply to the question was coming from the child or the parent. In such instances, the reply has not been included in the survey. Language difficulties can also lead to a situation where parents refrain from asking questions and/or to make complaints. Language difficulties have also, on certain occasions, even led to worry and alarm, when parents have assumed that they were being contacted because their child had misbehaved or pulled a stunt.

**Happiness and gratitude**

The majority of the successfully conducted telephone interviews show that the parents were happy and positive where the Nightingale scheme was concerned. Some parents even made a point of ringing (or otherwise contacting) the executive officer on the final day of the scheme to pass on their thanks in person.

– *My child happy – me happy!*
The above quote basically sums up the views of one parent in a telephone interview. If the daughter or son is comfortable and happy when she/he meets the mentor, there is a great likelihood that the parents will also be pleased, and thus feel confidence in the person to whom they hand over their child.

– *Its working very well. It’s working brilliantly.* We are really pleased. That is how most of the replies sounded. Many parents also gave the strong impression that they were really pleased about having secured a mentor for their child:

– *They do so many nice things together. It just could not have worked out any better!*
– *The child needed a male role model – it really is going so well!*
Generally enriching experience for the child

It is very common for the parents – in different ways – to give the reply that it was a generally enriching experience for the child to have a mentor. The children have been given the chance to get involved in exciting activities, expand their horizons, seen and done things on their activities which they would not otherwise have done:

– They have done loads of things... I could never have dreamed up all those things myself.
– On of the best things is that the mentors show the children what life is like in Sweden, what Swedish children do and they also got a chance to meet other Swedish children and adults. We could never have arranged all that ourselves.
– It has been incredibly important for our son to get the chance to develop a friendship with a young adult.

Our child is far more mature now

It is also very common for the parents to give examples in their answers of how their child has developed, or become more mature; to say that a big change has occurred in the child’s life.

– Our child was attending a psychologist for a while before this – but she has been lifted enormously by this! Bullseye.
– The mentor has really got my child to come out of her shell.
– My daughter is going to go to her little brother’s parents meeting, because she has asked to, and because she wants to tell everyone how good it is. And she is going to write in to Kamratposten to share her experiences with other readers. She has really come on in leaps and bounds since her involvement in the scheme.

In this context, it should also be noted that the various contact persons in the schools have, of their own volition, commented on the development and general progress they have witnessed on the part of Nightingale children. Their comments describe children who have become more positive, children who have become more open and confident, children who will now far more readily voice their opinions, and children who seem happier and more content with their lives.
Pairing process worked very well
Some parents have expressed their delight at the fact that the pairing process worked so well; that the mentor and their child got on so well together, that they built up a real relationship and enjoyed each other’s company.
– It worked so well with just that particular person as the mentor. Was that some kind of matching process, was it?
– There were really well matched. They went well together as a pair. They are actually so like each other!

With regards to the end of the scheme
Given that the telephone interviews had all been conducted by January, no one was asked directly how they felt about the approaching closure of the scheme for that year. The parents themselves did not raise the eventual parting of ways in the telephone interviews. All the parents seemed to be aware that contact with the mentor only lasted from October to May and many of them actually made reference to this fact.
– They have planned a whole load of things to do in the remaining months.
– Sure, its going to be strange when these meetings are no longer a feature of the week; now that they have sort of got use to each other ... on the other hand, the summer holidays kick in soon afterwards.

Some parents have even brought a bit of humour into their analysis, such as:
– Then when it’s all over, of course, we are all going to her miss her not being around and I don’t know who is going to miss her the most! (laughs)

Problems and less positive experiences
None of the interviews carry a specific theme denoting a general problem area in the scheme but individual points are raised in this context, such as:
– It would have been nice if the mentor had visited the child’s school.
– It would have been nice if the mentor had been a bit more proactive and organised more activities.
– Maybe the mentor could have played a bit more of a supervisory role with the child (helping with lessons and homework etc.)

If a mentor is not carrying out the duties assigned to him/her, this always becomes clear to the scheme organisers:
– I don’t think the mentor is meeting my child as she is supposed to.

One the aims of the review sessions is to assure ourselves that a mentor is fulfilling his/her duties properly, the monthly reports are the other means of checking that this is the case. Despite these precautions, there has, in every year of the scheme’s existence, always been a small number of individuals who failed to fulfil the obligations assigned to them. For this reason, this kind of input from the parents is invaluable. In certain instances, the parents themselves have taken the initiative and contacted the management team to complain that the mentor was not complying with arrangements that had been made. In these instances, the management team has contacted the mentor to investigate what had happened and why he or she had not been meeting the relevant child as arranged.

In some cases, a misunderstanding had arisen as to how often the mentor was meant to meet the child. There are some parents who wanted mentors to meet their child more often. And then there are mentors who become so engaged with the process at the start that they themselves failed to keep to agreed structures. These mentors find that they enjoy being a mentor so much that they spend more hours with the child than was agreed for that session, or have “extra” meetings with the child in the run of a week. And then when they cut back to “normal times”, both the child and his/her parent(s) look upon this as a decline in interest or commitment. Sticking to Nightingale structures and the set pattern for meetings is, therefore, extremely important.

There have also been mentors who have begun to question whether they want to continue their studies and have, thereby, wavered in their role as mentors. There have also been mentors who have quite simply abandoned their studies and, consequently, their role as mentors as well (see statistics in appendix 4).
Other points
As a rule, parents have not expressed a desire for more contact with Nightingale management staff. On the other hand, a common theme has emerged from a certain number of parents who wanted earlier contact with Nightingale, and these were parents whose relationship with the mentor was not entirely without friction (see above). However, most parents expressed gratitude or, in some cases, extreme gratitude for the Nightingale scheme and it is clear that they see it as an excellent idea. Some are at pains to stress that it is a good, or very good, project but that they would have liked to keep the mentor for longer, or get the same mentor for another period.
– A great initiative on the part of the university, kids need contact with adults who are suitable role models.
– Every child should have a mentor!
A number of parents have also tried to “put a word in” for their child, or a brother or sister of the child, for the next Nightingale scheme.
– As our mentor has been sick an awful lot, we were wondering could we apply again for another one?
What kind of students are recruited?
The students – the prospective mentors
The typical Malmö student would be female. Around two thirds of all Malmö university’s student are women. This not just a phenomenon which applies to Malmö university, but rather a phenomenon that is global in nature. In all the years that Nightingale has existed, more women have applied to become mentors than men. The figures have varied between 72 – 84 % for female mentors and between 16 – 28 % for male mentors. However the share of male mentors has risen by almost every year apart from the fourth year when there was a certain slippage. This reduction may be due to the fact that recruitment policy at that point was changed to take in all students at Malmö university – no longer just the teacher training department – and that the focus in Nightingale recruitment work was changed to try and bring in students from all areas of Malmö university, rather than strive to keep some sort of gender balance. In the following year, a more conscious effort was made to attract more male applicants, something which actually succeeded. (appendix 2)

Age distribution amongst mentors
In every year, the majority of mentors have been aged between 21–25. There has, however, always been a noticeable gap between the youngest and oldest mentor. The youngest have been twenty years old, whilst the eldest have been approaching their fifties.

“Foreign” backgrounds and an expanded recruitment policy
A Malmö university survey – “Studiestart ht 05”, has shown that almost one in three students has a so called “foreign” background. The term “foreign” refers to students, or at least one of the student’s parents, having been born outside Sweden. (2006, Hellström, Leif ) In relation to the above, it should be pointed out that both the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education and the Central Statistics Office define the term “foreign background” as relating to those persons who were either born outside Sweden, or were born in Sweden but with two parents born outside Sweden. (http://www.scb.se/ )
It is also important to point out that the preconceptions, which still exist, regarding the link between educational traditions and ethnic background are neither accurate when it comes to students at Malmö university, nor for society generally.

The link between qualification levels and educational traditions have been stressed in many studies. However, the process of surreptitious recruitment for places, posts and positions is, first and foremost, a question of social class, not ethnic background. But surreptitious recruitment is still a feature of college and university recruitment and the student who is most likely to apply for third level education will have Swedish parents who are well educated and possess good qualifications.

Following a request from the government, The Swedish National Agency for Higher Education has carried out an assessment of the efforts being made at the moment to broaden the recruitment base for the country’s colleges and universities. This assessment has been published in a report (rapport 2007:43 R), which contains descriptions and evaluations of the work being carried out at individual colleges and universities. Moreover, each college/university has described its own work in this area in their own separate reports. The concept of broadened recruitment refers to increased recruitment from social and ethnic groups which are underrepresented at present. The concept has been borrowed from the government white paper “The Open University” (2001/02:15)

Percentage share of new students from a “foreign background” (OSS’s criterion)

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<th>03/04</th>
<th>04/05</th>
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<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
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(Registration data OSS/Swedish National Agency for Higher Education)
The percentage of students from a “foreign background” was at its highest in the academic year 2004/2005, and has fallen since then. With the above figures in mind, it is of particular importance that initiatives with regard to recruitment strategies are made early on in the process, so that the diversity that is now part of the fabric of Swedish society can be reflected in (and help to enrich) university life.

The various mentor recruitment areas in Malmö university
During the first three years of the Nightingale scheme, only students from the teacher training department were recruited as mentors, but in the fourth year of its existence (2000–2001) students from all areas of Malmö university could apply. The fact that most mentors in previous years had been recruited from the teacher training department may be partly ascribed to the fact that the Nightingale office was located there for the whole period in question, and partly to the fact that students in the department viewed the mentoring scheme as a further, and instructive, immersion process for their coming careers as teachers. Year 10 (2006–2007), showed a far more even distribution of mentors from all areas of Malmö university. (see appendix 3)

In the first year that the Technology and Society course became involved with Nightingale (2002), the active contribution of an information officer in the recruitment process played a great part in the final, and successful, outcome. There has also been an increased interest in the Nightingale scheme on the part of students taking the Health and Society course. Most mentors from the Health and Society course are training to be social workers.

In 2006–2007, which was Nightingale’s tenth year, most of the student applicants came from the IMER (International Migration and Ethnic Relations) course. This may be because the students regard the mentor scheme as a further opportunity to immerse themselves in their subject, or area of interest. But the reason may also be that there was a page referring to Nightingale on the IMER website, that a newsletter carrying information about the scheme was sent to all employees at IMER, and that Nightingale flyers were inserted into the information folders which all new students received.
At the moment the scheme only receives a small number of student applicants from K3 (Art, Culture and Communication) and OD (the Deontological faculty) seeking to become mentors (appendix 3). The explanation which students give for this is that they do not have the time to get involved because of demands from practical training, or practical assignments, which are normally timetabled for late afternoon/early evening.

**Withdrawal statistics**

In the course of a mentor year, withdrawals do sometimes occur. It can either be the mentor who withdraws from the scheme, or the child who, for various reasons, may not want to continue. The reasons why mentors would decide to withdraw from the scheme are usually to do with uncertainty about their studies; they might not have been placed on the course they actually wanted to do, or have been offered a course abroad; or sickness may be the factor which makes them call a halt. The reason may also be that arranging suitable meeting times with the child was a big problem, particularly where he/she already had prearranged activities during the week: or perhaps simply that the family situation was too difficult.

The reasons why a child would withdraw from the scheme would usually be similar to the above; difficulties over arranging meeting times, the child may be in the midst of moving home, or may simply just not wish to continue. As mentioned earlier, a rematching of the pair is done in these cases, assuming that both child and parent(s) are happy with this. The mentors used in the rematching process are those who are kept on the standby list. The rematching process takes place in the autumn term. The reason for this is that the new mentor and child need time to establish and maintain contact, as well as leaving enough of a space for the cessation of mentoring activities; that is to say, to give them time to prepare mentally for the “closure” of the relationship.

Lena Rubinstein Reich’s (2001) assessment showed that 97% of mentors fulfilled their mentor obligations to the child. A review of all ten years of the scheme shows that approx. 94% fulfilled all their obligations, which implies a failure rate over the whole ten years of approx. 6% – 7%. (Appendix 4)
Why would students want to be a mentor?
Below, we reproduce a summary both of what students have written in their applications, and what they had to say in their interviews, from Nightingale’s fourth year onwards.

Previous experience on the part of the students
Many of the students who apply for mentor places on the Nightingale scheme already have experience of working with children and young people as au pairs, via work experience placements in preschool or school environments, or via involvement in sports clubs or other associations. Others will have worked in a caring role, within the home help service or as personal assistants. A number of them will have worked abroad doing voluntary work and a good number have both lived and worked abroad, or have travelled widely over an extensive period.

Social engagement and being an adult role model
The thing which more than anything motivates students applying to Nightingale is their own social engagement, a desire to help others, to offer support and be there for somebody else. They are looking for an opportunity to help others, to get involved in something which is of real importance, these are the most important things which make them apply.

- The reason why I applied to be a mentor in the first place was because I wanted to do something different, and then because I wanted to make a positive contribution.
- It’s my duty as a citizen, simple as that!

The applications also contain comments from students to the effect that they believe they can be a positive role model, as an adult female, or man, or as a student.

- I wanted to show that it is possible to get on here, even if you have had to move from your own country, but you have to fight your way up.
- I believe that as a dentistry student, I can be a positive role model.

In some cases, the students themselves have experienced the absence of an adult role model as they grew up:
– I myself came to Sweden without my parents when I was 9 ....I could have done with a mentor then...but now, maybe I can play that role for someone else instead.

One’s own need to feel needed – a risk
Behind the wish to become a mentor, there may be a desire on the part of the applicant to feel needed and important, or to heal old wounds. Feeling good when getting the chance to do something for someone else, or reinforcing one’s own identity and self esteem by helping others is a normal human phenomenon. But where an overriding desire to feel needed is detected, Nightingale management staff have just cause to question the student’s suitability as a prospective mentor. Mentors must be able to relate to their designated child without distracting thoughts about what wonderful, self-sacrificing people they are.
– I’d like to do something like this, because it also gives you a good feeling about yourself.

To experience and learn new things
Quite a number of students make a point of saying that they want to share in the life of the child and thereby also expand their own horizons. Some feel the need to renew the kind of interaction they once had with their own younger brothers and sisters (or their friends’ siblings) now that such opportunities were few and far between, given their intensive studying and/or their having moved to Malmö. A good number say that they want to do something proactive in their free time and supervising a child, they say, can offer them new experiences and expand their horizons. Others mention the fact that they want to learn something new; for example – what life is like for a child in today’s Sweden, and gain an insight into today’s child culture. Quite a large number of the students referred to here have themselves just moved to Malmö and see the mentor scheme as a chance to get to know Malmö better in the company of a child.
– I just thought it would be nice to do things in the company of a child, and at the same time find out what Malmö has to offer in terms of culture and sport.

The majority of applicants are open, inquisitive, and interested students
who want to share part of another person’s “day in day out” reality, a reality which is often a million miles from their own. A good number mention the fact that they want to meet a child, and his/her family, which does not have its roots in Sweden. Many say that they had a normal upbringing in a normal terraced house, or semi detached home, and that most of their school pals were Swedes like them, but now they wanted to get to know what it was like to come to Malmö from another country.

– To get to meet someone whom you otherwise would never have met, someone from another culture and background, that kind of thing can only help to widen your own horizons.

– Building bridges.....I love that idea!

Another string to add to the bow of the new profession and also another kind of qualification

Above all others, trainee teachers are the ones who say they want the chance to supervise a child, or get to know a child, because once they have been trained, they are the people who have most contact with groups of children and youths. They are also looking for hands on experience of handling either slightly younger, or slightly older, children than the age group they will encounter on the basis of their chosen module at the teacher training department. However, it is not exclusively trainee teachers who regard the mentor scheme as a kind of qualification. A prospective property agent says:

– I wont, presumably, be selling apartments in the part of the city where the children live, but I think it will prove to be a very useful experience for me and an excellent additional element to my training.

And a prospective dentist says:

– I see it as complementing my studies – the fact that I am regularly supervising a child….our studies don’t really cover children that well. And who knows, perhaps at some time in the future I’ll be working as a children’s dentist.

What has being a mentor done for the mentor him/herself?

All mentors keep a monthly record of all the things they have done with their mentor child and, at the end of the mentor scheme, they also compile
an account of the year in which they describe their experiences as a mentor; the events that took place and the impressions that were left upon them; the benefits they feel have accrued to them (and also how the child has benefited) by participating. This documentation is then retained by the Nightingale management team for research purposes. Moreover, at the end of each supervision period, the mentor fills in a “Mentor assessment” sheet. The Mentor assessment sheet consists of approximately ten questions, which refer, amongst other things, to the mentor’s relationship with the child and the child’s family; how the mentor has engaged with the child; whether the mentor had any specific difficulties when interacting with the child; the mentor’s feelings about the mentor scheme, and so on. Below, there is an outline summary of the contents of the annual reviews and the mentor’s own assessments, which have been compiled by Nightingale mentors over the last ten years.

By far the majority raise the idea of the “encounter” as having been the most fruitful and instructive, the encounter with a different lifestyle, different ways of thinking, different values, norms and rules. They write about encounters where these differences emerged very clearly. However, they also write about the affinities which unite people and express their pleasure at having been a mentor during the period when they were supervising the child, along with the pleasure of having got to know the child and his/her family. The majority also feel, and are happy, that they did a good job as a mentor. They feel that they have used their free time in a positive way and have spent a happy, enjoyable and informative time with their mentor child. Being a mentor has given them the kind of insights and skills, which they would otherwise never have been able to acquire. The mentor scheme has also given them new perspectives, both about themselves and other people; new perspectives, also, on the world around them.

The chance to share in the everyday life of a child
The greatest benefit and experience by far that the mentors refer to, is that they were able to share in the everyday life of the child. They now know so much more about what it means to be an 8 – 12 year old child in today’s Sweden, but with the added factor that this is a girl or boy growing up on the margins of a city like Malmö. In many instances,
they also discover what it means to have come from another country, to be a refugee (or be exiled) from another country, and how a child copes with the transition from a Swedish school life to a different life at home – where norms and rules are very often completely different. Many have also gained an insight into what it is like to live in cramped conditions, and to sometimes have to live on the breadline.
– *This has been the most informative academic year I have done so far.*

**I have been able to share in the child’s views, feelings and thoughts**

The mentors have been able to participate in a child’s life at home, at school, and during free time activities. On top of that, they have been privy to the child’s ponderings on life and the kind of opinions they have formed. The mentors write that they have had long conversations with their children. They have listened and tried to understand the child and also to offer support in various situations. These conversations with the child have also led them to revise their own views on many occasions, which of course suggests that they too have developed as people.
– *My first thoughts were that I was going to teach the child loads of things. Yes the child needs help and support but I have learned an awful lot from my child – about different thought processes, what it is like to go to school, to get real and look at life around you in the here and now...there’s a time and a place for everything.*

They also reveal that they have learned to approach things in a different way because of the kind of questions the mentor child has raised; questions which led them to revise their own fixed ideas.
– *Our meetings were always taken up with interesting discussions, which I then found I could mull over again and again.*

A good number also reveal that they became fascinated by the way the child developed and the fact that they were a part of the process; especially where the development of the child’s language skills were concerned in what was a bilingual or even multilingual situation.
The mentor’s inner child and childhood memories are brought alive
Some mentors describe the experience of being a mentor as having re-
awakened their childhood memories, and having been given a chance
to do the type of things they otherwise would never have done with
their own friends, but which now had become part of their lives. The
child has not only brought them slap bang into the reality of now,
but also helped them to look at things from a different point of view.
The child has drawn out the playfulness and creativity that has lain
dormant inside them. As a mentor, the student gets a chance to escape
from a sometimes deadening college routine – where there is no longer
anything exciting in the minutiae of everyday life. Whereas, a mentor
in the company of a child, gets the chance to stop, do a double take and
become fascinated by the fact that the coffee machine is hubbling and
bubbling, that the leaves are tumbling from the sky, or that the lake has
frozen like a cake.
– One minute we could be talking about jellyfish, then we are baking buns
and the next minute it’s outside because she challenges me to a race!

Being given the opportunity to share in a child’s feelings and dreams
has caused many to reflect on their own childhood and the way they
themselves were brought up. These reflections then lead them to com-
pare their own childhood with that of the mentor child’s. Some describe
a journey into themselves – suddenly their own childhood is there in
front of them, and they are in a position to observe it from a distance,
as it were, and compare the scene to that of today’s child at the begin-
ning of the new millennium. Many see that everyday life for today’s
child is completely different from what they experienced as children.
They cite the sedentary lifestyle of today’s children, where they are very
often to be found sitting in front of a computer or TV, that children are
almost never physically active outside of school and that they rarely
move out of the area where they live.

The relationship between the parents and the city
Many mentors state that they have gained great satisfaction from just
being appreciated by someone. However, it is not just the children
who in different (and sometimes very subtle) ways have shown their
appreciation. The children’s parents have also expressed gratitude for
what the mentor has done for them. Many parents have invited the mentor to their evening meal or to a dinner, or perhaps just for coffee; the mentor, meanwhile, has helped the parents with various tasks. Some mentors have helped the parents with various educational issues, or Swedish courses, loaned SFI books from the library on their behalf, and have also spent time explaining Swedish words and grammar to them.

– I was regarded as a kind of guardian angel, and an oracle for all things technical, when their computer needed fixing.

The mentor has very often proved to be a fount of inspiration for parents by showing them the kind of things that are available for kids in Malmö, as well as activities and locations which accept visitors. On many occasions, parents have gone out and engaged in exactly the same activity with their children as the mentor had engaged in with the mentor child. At the “parting of the ways” occasion, a good number of parents have told Nightingale staff that they had never before been to Ribersborg strand but that they now intend to make it a regular place to visit.

In a mutual spirit of adventure, both mentor and child have explored and discovered many aspects of Malmö’s sports and cultural life that were new to one or other of them. And on this journey, the mentors have not just had occasion to see Malmö from a child’s perspective, but they themselves have been able to look at the city in a different light. They also say that they have learned – or become more interested in – various skills and activities which they previously would not have touched with a “bargepole”.

– The city shows many different faces to the world and I have been lucky enough to be able to observe those faces in all their vibrant, hopeful, joyful, and sometimes depressing, aspects by being involved with Nightingale.

Differences become similarities – opposites present new ways of looking at things

Many mentors say that the whole experience has been tremendously enriching and informative, to have the opportunity to meet so many different people, to get to know a child and his/her family, sometimes
a whole extended family. With the mentor year behind them, many former mentors have had cause to reflect on what they first perceived as differences, but what they subsequently came to see as similarities. Similarities, for example, between their own families and that of the mentor child, despite very different childhood backgrounds. After the mentor year is completed, it seems that the mentors are able to look upon themselves and the children more as individuals rather than using a yardstick based on age, gender, or ethnicity.

Personal development
Many mentors stress the fact that they have matured and developed during their time with Nightingale. They have successfully dealt with situations which they never would have believed they could handle, and taken on more than they ever dreamed they were capable of. Through the mentor scheme, they have experienced things they would not have missed for the world. Many mentors write that they feel they have made huge strides in their own personal development. Many of them state that some of the new skills they have developed are to be clear and concise, to make decisions, give praise and criticism, and dare to take the initiative where necessary. They believe that their communication skills have improved and, in hindsight, realise that this also had a positive affect on the mentor child, who had also become, not just better able to speak and listen, but also now had the courage to express an opinion.

Many mentors refer to the fact that the mentor scheme had taught them to be more patient, to plan the meetings with the child, to be exact about time and to do exactly what they had arranged to do. The relationship with the child has also meant that the mentors have learned to contemplate the lives of others and put themselves in their place, as well as pondering and taking a position on various moral and ethical dilemmas, of which the mentors gave many examples. Some have also attested to having a greater compassion, or feeling more in touch with humanity.

– I think I have become a more compassionate person.

Many of the answers given by the mentors bear witness to the fact that they have become more positive and open and have greater curiosity about things that are “different”; something which they believe
they had never had before to the same degree.
– Instead of standing there and staring at the buses going to Hermodsdal, as I had done at the start, I now look on with great curiosity and a slight smile on my face.

Many descriptions show that the mentors have been obliged to show leadership, mediate in conflicts, improve their problem solving skills, take the initiative and be creative – all skills which can prove invaluable in most areas of life and work.

For many, the experience of having to think about, and make the effort to actually be, a good adult role model helped them develop as people. They write that the have had occasion to question their own values and decide what is actually important in life. Their understanding of their own beliefs and which values they would actually be ready to stand up for has increased.
– I have learned from my Nightingale experience and have become less hasty in the way I react to things.
– Getting the chance to take part in the Nightingale scheme was an enormously important event in my life and something which has given me many new personal insights.

Challenges in just getting by
One challenge which many mentors have had to face is trying to make themselves understood when language difficulties have arisen. Some of the mentors had great difficulty in understanding what the parents were trying to say and then, in turn, faced an uphill struggle to make themselves understood. The mentor scheme was a challenge in many other regards as well, something which they learned a great deal from and something which brought them on as people with each new problem that they resolved. They have had the chance to test themselves, their patience and their determination, something which increased their self esteem and the belief that they could handle various situations under their own steam. Through practice, they have also improved their skills in being able to communicate in a simple and concrete way. Once the mentor year was completed, they were glad, not only that they had
been able to successfully deal with being a mentor, but also the fact that they got the chance to find out what it is like to come from another country and not be understood in your new country.

– As I had been assigned to a child that had just landed in Sweden, I got to learn a lot about how you deal with language problems amongst children.

– To be suddenly put in a situation where you are standing alone with a child you hardly know, and then have to plan activities, was at times a bit stressful. It placed demands on me as a mentor, but it also forced me to get switched on – fast. In the meantime, you are trying to build up trust and confidence. Of course it was a challenge, but also incredibly empowering.

Some mentors found it both difficult and very challenging to have to be faced with a family which was at the bottom of the social and economic ladder. Certain mentors have grown into their role, whilst others felt that the task facing them to be incredibly gruelling on account of the poor standard of living endured by the families.

– Given the fact that the relationship between myself and my mentor child was not exactly plain sailing, I learned a great deal about how to handle those kind of problems and achieve positive results.

The mentor’s dilemma
The role of mentor contains an inbuilt dilemma, which involves the fact that the mentor acts as an adult friend but, at the same time, must be the one who sets boundaries and eventually terminates the relationship. Many mentors describe being a mentor as acting like a big sister or brother, or as an adult friend, to whom the child can turn and confide in. It is clear that certain mentors found it difficult to find a good balance between friendship and asserting their role as a mentor. A small number of mentors have actually on occasions felt, in a negative way, like “the friend from the big house”, or like an unpaid babysitter.

Qualifications and benefits for the future profession
Many former mentors believe that the experience they have acquired as mentors will stand them in good stead, not only in their subsequent
professional careers but also in their private lives. The mentor scheme has helped them to refine their communication skills – to listen and be clear when communicating their ideas to others. They are far better at setting boundaries, taking responsibility, and they have had no choice but to learn to be more patient.

– The best part of all my time on my college course.

Many mentors feel that the mentor scheme will prove to be an excellent qualification for them in their future profession, and they also believe that the mentor scheme can be seen as a type of voluntary social work and a sign that they are socially engaged, something which can be of great value to them in future job applications.

What are the greatest difficulties?
The mentor review sheets sometimes reveal that the mentors were taken aback by how time consuming their role was. Some also believe that certain periods were very stressful; for example when they had work experience placements – or exam periods. A number of mentors say they felt a sense of relief when their mentor tasks no longer dominated their weekly agenda.

Some mentors found it particularly hard when a family was obviously not well off and struggled to find money for the mentor child’s various activities, bus tickets or admission fees. In these cases, the mentors were extremely reluctant to ask the parents for money and felt huge pressure to come up with activities that were free of charge. Other problems with regards to finance have been caused by the fact that some children have regarded their involvement in the Nightingale scheme as a kind of “status symbol” and have almost demanded that their activities should have a costly “wow” factor.

Other problems referred to by the mentors include instances where their child showed very little initiative in suggesting activities during supervision sessions. This sometimes made things difficult for the mentor when he/she was the only one bringing ideas to the table. Others have found it difficult to pin down their exact role as mentors.

Common questions with regards to mentoring include: Should I speak my mind? Should I be strict and/or set clear boundaries as to what is acceptable behaviour? Do I myself have enough adult authority?
Some mentors have had problems with parents who had not been sufficiently informed about the aims and procedures involved in the scheme. These kinds of problems have arisen when the family situation has been particularly bad. Such problems have actually on occasion proved to be a kind of shocking revelation to the mentor with regards to the reality of a particular child’s, or youth’s situation at home, or simply their everyday existence.

– My mentor was scared to go out and play in the sandpit because a murder had been committed there.

Where the difficulties become too great
Occasionally, the problems surrounding the mentor child’s parents became so great that they were ready to go anywhere for help and, thus, turned to the mentor. In such a scenario, it is has always been extremely important that the mentor contacts Nightingale staff immediately for help in clarifying the boundaries for his/her role as a mentor and refocusing on being a mentor for the child, despite the difficulties faced by the family as a whole.

A good number of mentors managed to build up regular and positive contact with the child’s family and the parents were happy to place a lot of trust in these mentors. This element of trust has led to a situation where some mentors have (at the end of their year as mentors) effectively become contact persons for the families concerned, but this is something which lies outside Nightingale’s jurisdiction.

Expectations fulfilled and disappointments along the way
The vast majority of mentors feel that their expectations regarding their role as mentors were fulfilled. But there are some mentors who feel slightly let down by the fact that they were not assigned to a mentor child with a difficult background, or had huge problems in their lives. Then, there are others who feel nothing but relief that the above was not the case. It is interesting that the mentors’ own reports suggest that where the child does not have any real problems, it becomes harder for mentors to define a specific role for themselves. There are also mentors who have felt let down by the fact that they were not assigned to a child which had roots in another country. To conclude, there were a number
of mentors who felt they had more things to offer than the scheme could actually cater for.

Lena Rubinstein Reich’s assessment paper (2001) shows that mentors (trainee teachers) felt that they had learned new things in three particular areas. The first one relates to the insight they gained into a world which was alien to them. The second one relates to acquiring child based skills, and the third relates to personal development; and here communication skills are rated the highest. My own review refers to mentors who are students from every area of Malmö university, but I feel that the results of Lena Rubinstein’s assessment concur with a large part of what I have found.

The mentor’s view of what the child gained from The Nightingale scheme

Increased self confidence, improved self esteem
Many mentors write that they tried their best to support their child in various situations and that they also gradually saw signs of increased self confidence in their charges. Working in tandem with their child, the mentors have engaged in activities which the children would either never before have dared to try, or had never done before. According to the mentors, shy children became more outgoing. Children whose usual reply to most questions would be “I don’t know”, and who would be reluctant to offer an opinion, became more confident in voicing their own impromptu ideas and would have sudden moments where they found the courage to assert their own opinions.

– She has “found her tongue” now. She’s not afraid to speak her mind.
– It has been an amazing process, watching her come into bloom. She has become more open, bolder, and has far more self confidence.
– I tried my best to give him free rein whenever possible, so that he could build up his self belief and have his own space, even when other adults were around him. It is important to encourage him to think for himself and value his own ideas, so that his self confidence can develop.

A good number of mentors were able to observe the way their efforts were paying off in terms of the child’s development, which, in turn,
reinforced their role as mentors and gave them a sense of affirmation. – To get stuck into something that you weren’t really properly prepared for, and then to see such positive developments, has strengthened not just the child’s self confidence, but also my own.

Expanded horizons, new experiences and discoveries
Many mentors were a little shocked by the fact that their mentor children had rarely, if ever, visited Malmö town centre, and almost never moved outside the area in which they lived. For this reason, the mentors themselves came up with the idea of having joint activities, which would give the children a chance to discover new parts of the city, and thereby expand their horizons and see places they did not even know existed. Together, they have been to libraries, art exhibitions, cinemas; they have gone skating, tried skateboarding – all involving activities which the children had either never tried before, or visits to places they had never been to.

– Now, every time I go to the pictures, I hear the voice of my mentor child in my head – “Wow! Look at that big massive TV!” – that was what he shouted when he made his first ever visit to the pictures.

Some mentors either own a car, or have access to one, and thus were able to offer their child trips out to the country, forest or seaside. For the children, these were completely new and ground breaking experiences, and not always an unbridled success.

For many children, the first encounter with the mentor is also the first time they have ever properly engaged with another person outside of their extended family and people from their “home” country. Add to this, the fact that they when they visit the mentor’s home (and often experience a completely different lifestyle) this is the first time that they have been in a home which has no connection whatsoever with their families. For most of the children, discovering how today’s young Swedish man or woman lives and socialises is a complete revelation to them.

– He was a bit nervous about visiting my home... my bookshelf and my partner were the biggest surprises for him. He drew into himself and got more nervous throughout the evening because my partner was there.
Many mentors have told us that one of the first questions that the children ask them is:
– *Do you live all by yourself here... but where is your husband (wife)?*

**Language development**
Another issue which nearly all mentors have raised is that the children get the chance to improve their Swedish language skills every time they meet with their mentor. This applies especially to those children who are relatively new arrivals to Sweden, where the mentor has been able record undoubted progress in the child’s language proficiency. Teachers, too, have told their designated contact person in the school (in order that this information is conveyed to the mentor and the Nightingale management team) of the progress made by the mentor child with regards to his/her proficiency in Swedish.

The mentors have come up with a whole host of ideas for helping the child’s proficiency in Swedish. Some mentors and their children have compiled their own small dictionaries with simple pictures and words in the child’s own language, and then in Swedish, and the added bonus was that they had great fun doing it! Some mentors have chosen to write out sheets with simple comments about things they had done together. These sheets were then read and reviewed at every subsequent meeting. Other mentors have set up email addresses for their child and shown him/her how to chat online, so that the child was able to chat with both the mentor and with his/her classmates. During their meetings, both mentor and child have frequent cause to stop what they are doing and work through the communication of particular feelings and thoughts.

**Friendship and someone in whom you can confide**
Many mentors state that they have had long conversations with their mentor child, who has gradually opened up to them and begun to ask questions on moral and ethical issues. Then, there were occasions where a mentor was placed in a moral dilemma when, for example, his mentor child told him that he had stolen a box of snuff from a shop to give to the mentor because the child knew how much he liked snuff.
Many mentors have described their sense of having been enriched after conversations with their child.
– *It took a long time to get his trust, but he has opened up to me now. It’s a great feeling.*
– *We have got to know each other more and more, to the point where it feels like we have a close and trusting friendship.*

Most mentors feel that the relationship they had with their mentor child was a good one. Some were a little surprised by the ease with which they became friends with a person who was much younger than themselves. The good times far outweighed any awkward moments and they also say that they had a lot of good laughs together, and that they would treasure those moments for the rest of their lives. Many have placed an emphasis on the humorous side of things, and then the warm and trusting conversations, as central aspects of their time as mentors.

A number of children opened up to their mentors about personal problems, problems they had at school, or in the family. In these instances, it was important for the mentor, on the one hand, to be receptive but, on the other, to show respect for both the child and the family’s position.

**The chance to widen the circle of friends**
A number of mentors, have occasionally expressed their gratitude at being able to bring their mentor child along to the Nightingale group activities. This applies especially to those mentors supervising shy children, who noticed that their child perked up and thought it was cool to be in the company of other children. For many children, this kind of occasion also meant a chance to experience a camaraderie with a peer group and other mentors; to gauge themselves within a new set of relationships and to try things which they had, perhaps, never tried before.

Those children who were a bit reserved at the start, gradually came round and began to show greater trust in their own abilities. The opportunity for the child to gain new friends and acquaintances from their
own age group – whilst accompanied by their mentor – was seen by the mentors as being a particularly safe and rewarding activity for the child concerned. The mentor has also sometimes played an important role in finding new friends or acquaintances for the child. For those children who may have been the victims of bullying, or had very few friends outside of school, the group activities proved extremely important.

**Venturing into the unknown**
Many children got the chance to try things which they had never tried before, but could now do so in the company of their mentors. Female mentors who were at first slightly uneasy over which activities to do along with their male mentor child have, at the end of the scheme, often stated that they got on really well together, and that they finally managed to get the, previously slightly sullen and negative, boy to laugh and to try things which at first they absolutely refused to do. The mentors have always made a conscious effort to support their children in a wide range of situations, so as to help them in building their independence and belief in their own abilities.

One mentor told a story of how a child, who had otherwise been quite shy, began to sing out loud and with a fine voice when the mentor sat down at a piano. The child sang about their meetings together and the mentor began playing a simple accompaniment. Afterwards, the mentor sang little questions to the child and the child sang the responses back. From that time on, the mentor continued to play the piano at subsequent meetings and thereby raise certain areas of conversation which the child could sing about instead of having to answer a barrage of conventional questions from the mentor.

**Your own time – your own life**
Some of the children involved in Nightingale had a lot of “adult duties” to worry about in their free time, collecting and watching smaller brothers and sisters, or cleaning and organising household chores and, thus, having little time to themselves. Some of the children also felt like they were in a game of “tug of war” between two different worlds and with different normative systems and sets of values – between the world at
home and the other world outside those four walls. For these children, their time with the mentor was an oasis of calm, a chance to enjoy their own time and pursue their own interests.

– My objective as a mentor was to give my mentor girl the space to relax, have a good time and just be herself. Not only that, I always tried to get her to come out of her shell and give her a chance to decide for herself what she wanted to do. For that reason, I strove to ensure that she was the one that primarily came up with ideas and suggestions about what we should do.

For a number of children, the meeting with the mentor was the only time in the week when they could lead independent lives and immerse themselves in child centred activities and games. Many of the children live in cramped conditions, so their time with the mentor can also be seen to be that time in the week when they could enjoy their own free space and breathe a little easier. One mentor tells how he brought his mentor child home with him one afternoon, as had been agreed. They made dinner together and then sat down on a two seater sofa, at which point the child cried – “Ahh, what a lovely big sofa, and it’s so quiet here!”. That particular child lived in a small flat along with the child’s mother and six brothers and sisters.

Another mentor tells how she and her mentor child had agreed to go to the swimming baths the following week. When the mentor arrived to collect the child, she came running out already wearing a bathing costume, boots and a coat. All her brothers and sisters stood around her and it was obvious that she had been standing waiting a long time for her mentor.

Happy and proud
Those mentors who visited their children in school report that the children were very proud of being able to show off their mentor to their classmates. They wanted to show their mentor everything there was to see in the school, but also make sure that their curious classmates knew who the mentor was. The other children often asked the mentor whether they could also get a mentor.
– I think, more than anything, that my mentor child thought it was so cool that someone came to him once a week, just to see him and nobody else. Hearing how his classmates and siblings were a bit jealous when they found out about all the cool things we had done. That he had been given the chance to feel a bit special.

A mentor’s tale: One mentor tells of an occasion when he was kicking a football around with some of his mentor child’s classmates, when the child suddenly said to the other kids. *Is he a cool dude my mentor or what?!* Whereupon his friends answered – *Yeah!*

However, there are also children who do not want their mentor to visit their school. This may be because they do not want to share their mentor with anyone else, but rather want to ensure that their mentor time is quality time for themselves alone. Another reason may be (mainly amongst the older children in the 11–12 age bracket) that they do not want the mentor to visit their school because they do not want their mates to see him/her.

An adult role model who is also a student at Malmö university
One of the main aim’s of the Nightingale scheme is that the child assigned to a university student should gain new skills and insights, and that the child sees the Malmö university student as a role model. Thus, the mentors have made a point of explaining the college course they are doing, and showed them the areas where they study on trips to Malmö university. A mentor child who had visited different areas of the university with the mentor, said the following to his parents:
– *At first, I didn’t want to study at Malmö, because you have to cycle all round the houses to get there, but now I’ve made my mind up, I want to do environmental studies at the university, just like my mentor.*

Many mentors have described how they spoke to their mentor child at length about their particular subjects and how they came to be
doing the course they are on. Some mentors have gone on to explain that there are many different courses to choose from at the university. It was a complete surprise for some children to discover that courses other than the traditional subjects that they knew about (i.e. medicine, law or teaching) could be taken at university. There are also a number of children who had never been to the area in which the university is located, and some children have said that, now they know where it is, they intend to study there, and that they even know which bus to take to get there! A number of parents have told the relevant mentors that they had really influenced the child, and that he/she was now talking about emulating the mentor by going to study at Malmö university.
Children who have gone through the Nightingale scheme will often have greater self esteem and self confidence, they will have learned many new things and expanded their horizons, they will be more proficient in Swedish (and more generally verbally adroit) and will also have discovered that there was an exciting world out there beyond the confines of family, school and the area in which they live. All this progress stems from the simple fact that the child has gone around with a mentor for a couple of hours each week for a period of eight months.

The big question for the child once the Nightingale has stopped singing is whether he or she will carry that song in their hearts, or will the melody quickly fade and die? This key Nightingale question led to our conducting a follow up study where former mentor children have looked back and spoken about their time as a mentor child. The aim of the follow up study was find out as much as possible about their experiences and what they remembered most, and whether these things contributed to a major change in their view of themselves and their future prospects.

I was able to identify twenty seven youths who had had a mentor in the first three years of Nightingale’s existence – and at that time were in course year five or six. Thirteen people out of this group jumped at
the chance to do an interview regarding their memories of when the
Nightingale sang for them. A fourteenth person, and former mentor
child, was found on the list of students who had applied to be a men-
tor, and he too was willing to be interviewed. These fourteen people
were between the ages of 17–19 – seven women and seven men. Two
of the group had just left upper secondary school. The rest were either
finishing their final course work at upper secondary, or were in course
year two.

The interviews were only partially structured, and were based around
the following questions:
– What memories do you have from the time with your men-
tor?
– How do you feel now about the fact that you had a mentor?
– How did having a mentor influence you subsequently?

The interviews were all recorded on tape and were between thirty
minutes to an hour in duration. The recordings took place between
the months of March and May, 2006. I personally conducted the in-
terviews, and I am well aware that my positive expectations may have
influenced these youths to perhaps use more positive language than
they otherwise would have done with a “neutral” interviewer.

Positive youths
All the young adults interviewed came across as being really happy
that they had the chance to express their feelings about having a men-
tor. Many of them rang a couple of days after the letters were sent out
to say that they would love to come. Most of them made the added
point that they were so keen to come because they wanted to praise
their mentor and the things they did together.

Was it just the positive side who wanted to speak? Were the oth-
ers, who declined the interview, reluctant to speak because there were
things they were not happy with? Or perhaps there are those who
quite simply have negative memories from that time? It is impossi-
ble to answer these questions fully, but my sample group were asked
whether they knew anybody else who had also had a mentor and
how, in their view, these people felt about the scheme. Everyone an-
swered by saying that they knew several people who had been mentor
children and they believed that these people, too, were positive about
it all, given that they had often talked about their mentors and the
great things they did together. Of course, this does not represent any
kind of established proof, but rather, it is an indication that this may
have been the case.
Despite the fact that nearly ten years had passed since the interview
group had been in the Nightingale mentor scheme, they still had a
clear recollection of many things they had done with the mentor.
A spontaneous and emotional response seemed to be an important
starting point for their recollections, and it is clear that their feel-
ings were warm and positive.

One of the youths said:

- Straight away I thought...ah, Hasse Klang... he was my mentor ...
  and then immediately, all those things we did together came flooding
  back...

And then another, Emil, put it simply and directly

- It was far better than I expected it to be...

Some of the group appeared particularly glad to be reminded of the
whole thing again. Was there a need there for some kind of reaffirma-
tion? Carmen, one of the youths said:

- I was delighted and thought to myself – imagine, they still have it
down that I was part of the scheme and had a mentor! I thought that
was really cool and I said to myself, right, I have to ring them...
I actually think it was great that you contacted me. It was a class mes-
sage to get. It felt real again when I read the letter.

John, who has been unemployed for a lengthy spell, seemed to have
two aims in doing the interview. Partly to describe his memories, but
perhaps also to use the occasion to show a positive side of himself,
which might lead to employment down the line. He said:
– I was happy at the thought that they were thinking of me… I thought to myself – who knows, maybe something else will come out for you, given that I had had a mentor? And then someone might ask me whether I’d like to work with kids or something.

In answer to one of the introductory questions as to whether they could remember the name of their mentor, everybody gave their mentor’s first name and many could even remember their mentor’s surname. One of the group could actually remember her mentor’s telephone number, something she was happy to show off about.

A milestone was reached for Nightingale with the discovery that one of the student applicants seeking to become a mentor had himself been a mentor child during Nightingale’s first year. He was now a student at Malmö university. When I met him he said:

– I think that it is really brilliant that a thing like Nightingale is actually available.
I really want to be a part of this. It seems like a great thing for kids!
I know how much it has given to me, and how rewarding it has been, so I would like to be involved and do something for somebody else.

What did mentor and child do together?
Everybody spoke warmly and at length about what they did with their mentor and how things worked out for them. They were all very open about things and were happy to share memories and experiences. All of them could remember an immense amount of what they had done with the mentor at their “sessions” together. Amina said:

– A lot of water has gone under the bridge since those days, as I am lot bigger now and can’t remember everything about my childhood… but all that I do remember!

All the youths told different stories about the type of things they had got up to with their mentor, where they went and what happened. Much of what they did together just involved the two of them. They remembered everyday activities such as:
– We took my dog for a walk, we went to the mentor’s house and then home to me, we baked, cooked together, had coffee.

Whilst they described their different activities, many from the interview group would start to smile and then laugh out loud, and when this was pointed out to them, many of them said it was because the memories of what a great time they had just came flooding back.

Many of them also talked about activities which they did together outside of the home, where a bus or car journey was sometimes necessary to get where they were going.
– We took a bus into town, we played badminton, went bowling, went to Laserdome, to the library, to museums, we took a train to Lund.

Above all, they remember that they did an awful lot with their mentor. Everybody seemed to have a healthy and close relationship with their mentor. There was a positive feeling about the twin dynamic – “me and my mentor.”

None of the youths interviewed ever thought that it was boring to have to meet their mentor.
– It was never boring.

Nor could any of those interviewed remember a single occasion when they were bored, or an occasion when they did not want to meet their mentor. In fact, most said that they always looked forward to meeting the mentor. It seems that it was not what they actually did which was important, but how they got on together, which is what comes across in the interviews.

One of the first questions put to them was:
– You had a mentor nearly ten years ago. What would you say was the key thing about it all?
A recurring answer, or theme, was that it was nice, and an enjoyable thing to have a mentor and that the mentor was someone who they got on well with. They all had clear recollections about certain occasions and what they had done together. Most of them said that they
remembered everything really clearly and that it was almost as if it had only happened yesterday. 
Erik told me about the time he and his mentor went to the pictures, when they played bowling and then, to cap it all, that they went off to Copenhagen one day. He then added
– *It was just brilliant, actually.*

And John said that he was always glad when he knew it was time for his mentor to come, and that he did so many things with him, instead of just sitting at home twiddling his thumbs. Amina gave a big smile and laughed when she spoke about the things she and her mentor used to do together. She spoke about the coffee mornings they had had together; how they had gone into town to do different things; but most of all she remembers the day when they painted each other’s toes!

For many of the youths, the different activities seem to have been the only things that gave them a meaningful free time of their own. Nihad still remembers the time he went on a wander around the city with his mentor. He explained how they looked at different buildings and houses, and how his mentor did a kind of tour guide routine, and how lots of things fell into place for him then with regards to his spatial awareness of the new place in which he lived. He remembered that this tour round the city seemed to go on for ever.
– *Maybe that’s because I was so small then.*

Alan, meanwhile, said that, at first, he did not want a mentor in any shape or form. Full stop. He remembers that it was his mum who had applied on his behalf, without even mentioning it to him! A little later in the interview, he said that he was under the impression that, if he got a mentor, all his free time would disappear and he wouldn’t be able to see his mates.
– *But actually it was nothing like that. Instead, it turned about to be way cool.*

Some of the youths also remember the group activities which Nightingale arranged during the year. It seems from what they have to say
that it was an extra cool thing to be involved in; that you were there with your mentor but, at the same time, meeting others from your class, other mates in the school, or kids from other schools. Carmen told a story about how she was at a group activity, and that she and her mentor had made a cake. It was a heart shaped cake, and she remembered that all the others had brought a cake but that theirs was the best. Erik said that it was even better fun when he and his mentor were out together and a friend of his was there as well with his mentor. He said that he could just about remember every brilliant thing that they did together. Nihad said more or less the same thing. He said that his mentor had a twin brother, who was also a mentor. He added that they would sometimes meet his brother and then they would do things together as a group. These two brothers and their mentor children have subsequently stayed in touch, and had actually met each other just recently, some ten years down the line.

Another question for these youths was: How often did you and your mentor meet? The answers to this question tended to swerve into the content of the activities themselves. In other words, the actual things they did together when they met. The actual time of day that they met did not seem to be as important as remembering the meetings themselves, and these were the things they wanted to talk about. They emphasised the emotional aspect of it all, saying that they had a great time and that they did so much together. Those who answered the question, stated that they usually met up two to three times a week. Both Hussein and Dragan said that they met with their mentors quite a few times in the run of a week, which is not quite correct. Is it because they got to know each other so well (as they say here) that it just felt afterwards as if they had met more often than was actually the case? Dragan said that he was not sure how how many hours at a time that they spent together and added:

– We always managed to do the things we had agreed, no matter what – so I would say we ran up the clock!

Most of the group could even remember how it all started – when the Nightingale brochures were given out at the school, and what actually happened subsequently, at both the information meeting and the
start day. Sandra remembers that they distributed the brochures at her school and that she was allowed to take one home. She remembers they were a light yellow colour. Natalie said that she got a sheet and a brochure to take home with her, and that her parents had to fill it in. She recalls that she said straight out to the teacher that she wanted one of the sheets. She really wanted a mentor because she was bored and had nothing particular to do in her spare time. Sara remembers the information session at the school and that there was something like four people in her class who got a mentor. She remembered that she was interviewed and that she had to answer a load of questions about her interests, what she generally liked to do, what music she liked, and then she said:
– Oh yeah and then I got a mentor called Anna Andersson!

Most of the group also clearly remember the start day. They remember that this was the occasion when they first met their mentor. Almost everyone could remember that they were given a number and the mentor had the same number. That they had to search around for their mentor and that their parents had to help them. Many of them said that it all felt a bit formal and that they were somewhat nervous, but also that it was a bit like going to a party with all the excitement of the day. Some of them could remember the place where the start day was held, and more of them could actually recall that they played Give Us A Clue with their mentor.

The activities they described were the kind of things they never otherwise would have done without having a mentor. Dragan remembers that he did an awful lot of fun things with his mentor and then added:
– The kind of things I never would have done.

Carmen also said that she and her mentor did things that she would otherwise never have done.
– And then I remember when we went to the pictures. I loved the pictures and, of course, our family was not exactly loaded so going to the pictures was normally out of the question …so we ended up going to the cinema a lot, because she knew I loved it so much!

Nihad explained that he and his parents had fled from the war in
Bosnia and that they came to Sweden in 1992. He said that he did not usually do much with his parents in his free time. So that getting a mentor was an extra special thing.

– We usually just stayed in.... they were quite depressed..my parents had no Swedish so they didn’t have a clue about what you could do in Malmö... they really liked the idea of me having a mentor...it was like getting a hand up into Swedish society...just by having the company...and I myself couldn’t wait to get started!

He explained that his mentor opened doors for him and showed him all the things you could do in Malmö, and also that he became interested in a lot more things than was previously the case.

Most of the youths said that the mentor had helped them in many different ways and that they had learned so much from them. Three of the group said that they had had problems at school with different subjects and skills. Then, they went on to talk about times when their mentor helped them out. Natalie said that her reading skills were not the best but that her mentor helped her out in a nice and entertaining way. They read to each other, wrote stories and, gradually, she said, her reading improved. Her mentor also helped her with her studies/homework. She described occasions when they read out loud for each other and wrote short stories together. She also described a joint visit to the teacher training department’s library, and how they took books out on loan. The mentor helped her to find simple books, which were easy to read. Sara said that her mum believed that she had been inspired by her mentor, and that Sara had learned so much from her, but that was not really her recollection of events.

Nihad said that his mentor sometimes helped him with his homework. He explained how both he and his mentor wrote down ideas together and how they practised grammar, but also that he helped him with maths.

– I remember very well all the help gave me with my maths... And, I’m telling you, it really helped a lot!

My parents, of course, did not understand all the terms in Swedish.

Carmen talked about various difficulties she had at school. She was
dyslexic and believes that her mentor really helped her a lot. She said:
– You know the way you have to be able to read by fifth class?...Well, I couldn't read at all.

Most of the group expressed the view that they learned an awful lot during their meetings with the mentor. Amina described some of the activities which she and her mentor did together and said that she had learned so much from them. Amongst other things, she mentioned going to new places and getting involved in new activities. And Nihad expressed the view that his mentor knew “loads of stuff about everything”. As a young boy, he had often thought about what a “mega-mind” his mentor was because he could explain so many things to him, and he could just do so many things.

Hussein described one outing when his mentor took him playing squash, something he had never tried before. He explained how his mentor taught him the rules and how you have to warm the ball up before starting to play. He demonstrated how you cup your hand and then said:
...I still remember that...how he taught me to do that
(shows me)...otherwise it won’t bounce just as good ...

Picked
In reply to the question as to whether they remember why they wanted a mentor, or why they were assigned a mentor, two of the group replied that they did not know why they got a mentor. Alexander, however, thought for a moment and then said:
– Actually, now that I think about it...what I mean is that I did not know why I was picked.

A bit later in the interview, Alexander said that, after thinking about it, he believed it was because he did not have many friends at that time. And that having a mentor had given him a sense of security. Sara said that it was a great feeling to be selected.
– I thought it was just sooooo cool to be picked, picked...for something at least...
Hussein also believed that it was a positive thing to be selected for the mentor scheme. He explained how others in his class became jealous of him. This, despite the fact that the children did not really know what it meant, given that this particular school was new to Nightingale. He said that he was really happy, and also a little proud of the fact that he had got a mentor, and that the other children in his class often wondered about it and asked him what he did with his mentor, and he said that they always seemed jealous of him.

Two of the youths explained that it was their parents who had thought that it was a good idea to apply. Frida said that it was her father who had thought she should apply, but that she herself was not really sure at the time what it was all about. Her father believed that, given the mentor was studying to become a teacher, this could help her with her studies/homework. Therefore, Frida had at first believed that a mentor was just some kind of homework help, but quickly added that that was not the way it turned out. In fact, she said, I got an adult friend instead – the kind of adult friend that every child should have. She believed that it would be a good thing to have a friendship outside of her own family and outside of school.

Other members of the group also made reference to problems and difficulties which they had at the time and assume that this was the reason why they got a mentor. Carmen described her problems with dyslexia and said:

- *It was because I had a problem at school, I was dyslexic. They realised that I actually could not read, even though I was in fifth class, and so I got a mentor... this was a very important step forward for me.*

She did not feel as if she had been chosen by default, because she had made the application and really wanted to have a mentor. She saw being selected as a positive thing, given that she needed help.

**The mentor – a positive role model**

One of the main aim’s of the Nightingale scheme is that the mentor becomes an adult role model, as a student at a college/university. In
the student’s inquiry form, many state that they want to be a positive role model for a child. On the other hand, not that many say how or what way. But then, the guidance sessions and the annual reviews usually show that the mentors have become more aware of their function as role models, and that they have also often deliberated over what kind of values they are actually supposed to represent; something which is, important for them to be able to function as a role model. One question that I asked was whether – and in what way – they believed their mentor had proved to be a positive role model. Alexander described his mentor as a guide, someone who knew different paths to new places and sometimes even told him what paths to take for the future.

John reflected in a more general way over the things that make a mentor a good role model. He also spent some time deliberating over what it means for a child to have a mentor. He said that he believed that it was important for all children, even teenagers, that they had someone they could trust and talk to. He said that he too believed that a mentor should be an adult role model. When Nihad was asked the question about what he thought was important in the role of a mentor, he said that the mentor had to win the trust of the child in order to be able to be a good role model. And he believed that if the mentor was a good role model, the child would always look forward to the meetings.

I asked Nihad, who is still in contact with his mentor, whether meeting the mentor was different now that they were both adults. His reply to that was that when he was small the mentor was an adult whom he could look up to, but now it was more equal, like having a friend. However, he still enjoyed meeting his mentor in just the same way, and he still looked upon him as a major role model. I asked him in what way was his mentor still a role model and he answered:

– Because he reached his goal didn’t he?....he became a teacher. Obviously, he’s not exactly the same type of role model now...but just like him, I want to go to university and then get a job that I enjoy doing.
The mentor as a female/male role model

Some of the children in Nightingale are entering their teenage years and this is often a period where identity crisis kicks in. Some of them have already adopted role models from the soaps on the commercial TV channels, or musicians and celebrities, who more often than not simply represent a stereotypical image of how girls and boys should be. For this reason, there is a unique opportunity here, where the mentor can talk to the child and sometimes also raise questions about gender based social mechanisms and, perhaps, show other types of role model and alternative aspirations. And at the same time, in both word and deed, themselves present a positive female or male role model.

In order to find out more about whether the mentors were indeed a positive role model, the youths were asked what they thought a positive role model should actually be. Many of those interviewed answered that their mentor was indeed a positive role model for them. The youths gave examples of how their mentors gave them something positive to aspire to simply by the way they approached things. It was not a case of the mentors just telling them what to do, or not to do, or what they should think, or not think. They had been positive role models as men and women, and in their actions or comments had shown this, and it is clear that these youths had looked up to them.

When Alexander talked about his mentor, he said that he had shown how things “ought to be” done and said, but in a very gentle way, and he said that he was a male role model for him “big time” and that he looked up to him precisely because he was a male and had values he could aspire to. He deliberated over his mentor’s positive way of being in the world and his own attitude to this and said:

– He really was a male and adult role model for me but not in an aggressive way...he could be a leader without banging on the table and all that...I idolised him in a way.
It wasn’t that I just wanted to imitate him but I observed his way of being in the world.
And that got me thinking...I’d like to live like this....not – I want to be just like him...
It was as if he opened a door for me into my own world, not his world.

Sara said that her mentor was a fairly cool and alternative kind of girl, which with hindsight she sees as a positive thing.

– I don’t know…I was probably a bit of a special case…maybe at that time I was a bit of a loner…I had just changed class…I had never really been all “girly girly”, more of a tomboy actually. So if my mentor had been on the other hand a girly kind of woman, maybe that would have had a negative effect

…but instead she kind of showed that it was ok… that you have to get stuck in, not play with dollies

A bit later she said:

...getting a girl as a role model ...as a child you are so easily influenced... and everything is so gender fixated. At third level, you can relate to TV series and books but at the secondary school level... then you need role models, to have someone out there who can be a role model for you

Dragan also referred to his mentor as having been a “positive role model” and he also went on to describe his mentors approach to things and said:

– Like I remember that he would never take a pinch of snuff in front of me, I saw him when he didn’t realise sometimes...but no tobacco he said...he always tried to set a good example. Definitely he was someone I could look up to...he was a great guy. He was laid back and easy going, great at listening and receptive when I was saying what I wanted to do, not just what he wanted to do.

Just as Dragan made reference to his mentor’s approach to things, Hussein made similar points. He described his mentor as a very responsible person. He said that his mentor always took the things they were going to do together really seriously and he made sure that they happened.

– If it was agreed that we were going to meet on a particular day...then he made damn sure we did...he was responsible for his actions ...

...even when he was sick a couple of times, he still showed up!
The mentor – a positive role model studying at college/university

Nightingale’s long term goal is to undermine the process of surreptitious recruitment at universities and contribute to a levelling out of social and educational inequalities.

Malmö university was founded partly on the basis that a university should make efforts to increase recruitment from upper secondary schools to universities. In the long term work that is necessary to break down surreptitious recruitment processes in society, and increase the recruitment of students from non educational backgrounds, Nightingale can (according to the answers given by the youths in the interview group) play a very effective role. Based on the interviews that were carried out, it is reasonable to draw the conclusion that the mentors had a very positive influence on the children, partly because they were students at a university. The very fact that the mentor was attending courses at the university and he/she was seen to be reading and swatting up on subjects was a powerful symbol for the children. At some point or other, all the youths interviewed mentioned the fact that their mentor had attended the university and many of them also mentioned that the mentor was a student at the teacher training college and was studying to be a teacher. Some of the group also mentioned that they had visited the mentor where he/she lived in the student halls of residence. The very fact that almost everybody in the group mentioned that their mentor had been a student and went to university may indicate that this was something that they saw as an important issue.

This is what Sara had to say:

– *I did learn an awful lot, although precisely what is sometimes a bit vague, but one thing that sticks in my mind is that I found out about the teacher training college…it is actually great PR for the teacher training college*

Going to university, and the implications of this, was something on which most of them had reflected. Isabel said that her mentor studied an awful lot to get where she wanted to go and that this had a great effect on her. She added that the mentor had got her to realise that school was important, and that you have to work hard to achieve
things. I asked Isabel whether she believed that her mentor influenced her in her decision to keep studying and she answered:
– Yes, you meet people in your life who tell you that school is important and she was one of them…

Many of the Nightingale kids have no family tradition of being involved in higher education. I am not quite sure how these youths in particular feel about it. Two of the youths that were interviewed mentioned that they had no family tradition of being involved in higher education. University appeared to be a new world for many of them – a world which they had accessed for the first time via their mentor. One of the youths, Sara, said that the word university just did not exist before the mentor came along. She also said that she believed that her mentor had been a really positive role model for her and a great influence on her life. She pointed out that she will be the first one in her family who has stayed on at school.
– So, is that a role model or what?!
Now, looking back, I mean a young girl…who was studying away…I don’t know…but nobody in my family ever studied like that …or stayed on to study like that, mum is an auxiliary nurse, but nobody studied at uni…so I’ll be the first!

Nihad told me that neither his parents nor anybody else in his family had ever studied at university or college and so he is the first to go on to third level education. Just like Sara, he is of the view that his mentor had a great impact on him, but exactly what way he could not really say.
– There is no doubt that he influenced me to stay on at school, as I had had a problem with maths which he helped me with, and maybe I wouldn’t have done so well without that help, which I really needed …but I cant really put my finger on the exact reasons… but definitely he was a great influence on me.

Almost everybody in the group described going on outings to the university, and that there were several of these. They had all been involved in the group activities arranged by Nightingale, but also to the
library (media library), computer rooms, or other, parts of the university. The mentor gave a tour of the university and also explained his own courses. Natalie explained that her mentor “was studying to be a teacher” and this influenced her greatly. She said that she initially thought about being a preschool teacher, but when her mentor began describing the course for year 4–6 teachers, she decided that she too wanted to teach this age group. She giggled and said:

– It’s actually brilliant when you think of it. She was such a big influence on me.
There is no doubt about that.

When Alexander talked about what he and his mentor had done together, he said that he had both been on visits to the mentor’s home in the student halls of residence, and also to the university itself. He said that his mentor had been a role model who had influenced him to continue with his studies. He also said that, at the time, he thought that school was really boring, but that his mentor had given him an insight into what it could be like. He believes that he looked up to his mentor and remembers thinking;

– He is studying so hard there to improve himself. I’m going to do the same.

He said that his mentor had been a big influence on him to continue with his studies. But in what way?, I enquired.

– Well, he took me to where he was studying and it was there I got the idea…why can’t I be a student!…because I had been watching him…you watch what else he was doing and wonder how it felt …like all kids do at that young age because they are so inquisitive… what its like to study…do you know what I mean?…what a mentor does…you get a little insight before you yourself go to upper secondary school or upper level.

In reply to the question as to whether it should not really be his parents, or somebody else, who gave him that kind of push to keep on studying, Alexander said:
– Well... mm... Not so much, but then I would never have thought about studying and would not have had that male role model, and definitely not had a sense of what it is all about. You know, life. Does that make sense? All that I... from the moment when I first said hello to my mentor to today... I have learned so much from my best friend ever...yes, it has actually given me an awful lot...if I had never had a mentor, I'd still be the same person today...but I would never have had those thoughts!

Hussein, another one of the group, laughed when I asked him to tell me about his mentor and what was good about him. He said that his mentor had influenced him and I asked “How?” Hussein replied

– Well, he had a big influence. About the things that I was going to do in the future and all that. It was brilliant to get someone like that when you were small. You looked up to that person. It was mega really! No doubt about it, he was a really brilliant role model!

Hussein told me that he and his mentor would often talk about how school was going for him, and what he wanted to do in the future. He said that if he had never had a mentor, he would presumably never have chosen the upper level school courses he was now doing. Hussein said that at first he wanted to be a cook, but that he and his mentor had talked about this a lot and afterwards he decided that he would like to be a policeman. He said that his mentor had always been so positive and supported him and told him that it was never too
early to begin thinking about what you wanted to be as an adult. His mentor even knew a policeman, and he arranged a meeting between him and Hussein.

A bit later in the interview, Hussein said:

– Perhaps if I had never had a mentor, I might have gone for chef training in the army, instead of applying for the police … Now, on the 31st of June, I have to go and do military service, but after that it’s straight in to police training hopefully!

Sara observed that her mentor was a student and that she herself really did not know a thing about university at that time. She said that as a little girl she believed that college was something that might happen later. She pointed out that she actually lived near the teacher training college but was not even aware that it existed. Thus, she believed that it was “way cool” to go there with her mentor.

– That you actually get so close to something… I mean, the teacher training college itself.. of course you knew teachers… I think that it gave me… I think that it made things more natural for me… ah! maybe I will get here, later when I am big!

**The mentor’s attitude**

One of the things that stood out most clearly, in all the things that these youths had said, was the memory of how they were received as children, and what their mentor was like as a person. I interpret this as a memory of the approach adopted by the mentors, and also shows the attitude the mentors had towards them. Many of the group described in the interviews how their mentors gave them affirmation in those “great meetings”, and through their stories I can see examples of the approach the mentors took with the children.

I have chosen to describe the different kinds of approaches by using four categories, which can be seen clearly when analysing what these youths had said.
These categories are:
  Engagement and a physical presence
  Security and help
  Respect and understanding
  Consultation

**Engagement and a physical presence**

Everybody in the group described, on several different occasions, how their mentor engaged with them, how they did things together, but also how the mentor was physically present in the things they did together. When Hussein described going on a group activity with his mentor, he also described his mentor’s whole approach. He believed that his mentor, in his actions and attitude, presented a good role model:

– *We played bandy. He did it just right...no rough stuff or showing off, just right. He was a class act, a real role model!*

Hussein described a time when he was moving to another area, and how his mentor took him under his wing and even got him started in a new football club in his new area. His mentor introduced him to the coach, and Hussein subsequently began training with the new team, all thanks to his mentor. Dragan said that his own mentor was really “mega and sussed” but at first did not say exactly how, so I asked “In what way do you think he was mega and sussed?” And Dragan answered that his mentor was always so laid back, and that he was always kindly. Then, Dragan talked about the time when he played badminton with his mentor and he said:

– *He always let me win....how mega is that!*

Another one of the group, Isabel, said that her mentor was always so kind and positive. She believes that her mentor became almost like a big sister for her, someone who was always interested in her. She also said that her mentor always used to ask how things had
gone in school for her.

– *She always asked and was always interested.*

Alexander described different activities which he did with his mentor, and, whilst he sat there and spoke, it suddenly occurred to him that his mentor had always come to collect him. He smiled and said:

– *He came to collect me.......ah so many memories flooding back that I could tell you about...yes, he actually came to collect me every time...I never had to go anywhere...imagine that.. he always came to collect me!*

Carmen’s mentor seems to have given her support in different situations and there was a particular moment when they were baking muffins together and the cakes did not quite come out as planned. She described how her mentor spoke to her and told her not to worry because it was impossible to be good at everything, and sometimes you needed training. Thus, the mentor had shown a clear engagement and sensitivity to Carmen’s feelings and encouraged her the whole time. Carmen laughed and said:

– *She was always so mega kind!*

When Amina described her own mentor, she touched on what makes a good mentor. She said that the most important thing was that the mentor was committed to the child and that it came from the heart. She knew this, she said, because that is exactly the way her mentor had been! She had got on so well with her mentor and, besides, the mentor was in just the right age bracket where you can look up to someone, and that was really nice, she said. She also believed that her mentor had made her feel better about herself.

In all the things that these youths had said, the mentor’s ability to quickly familiarize him/herself with things, to understand and show sensitivity for the child’s feelings were clearly of key importance. These stories also reveal the importance of the mentor’s physical pres-
ence, which seems to cement the bond between child and mentor.

Security and help
The way in which the mentors fraternised with “their” children, and the kind of emotional investment they put in, seems to be particularly important for the way in which the youths subsequently view their relationship with their mentor. They described their mentor as someone with whom they felt secure. That they felt that they were in a comfort zone, both when they were alone together, and also when they went off on various activities. The mentors also tried to help and support them in different ways with their school work.

Isabel said that she felt at home with her mentor and I interpret “feeling at home” as feeling secure with someone. She told me about a particular moment which she has never forgotten when she and her mentor, and her mentor’s partner, sat on a sofa together and watched a film in the mentor’s home. She said:

…I remember that so well…there we were all sat there on the sofa…in a funny way, I felt as if I was in my own home...

Many mentors seem to have helped their mentor children in different ways with their studies/homework. This, despite the fact that it is not their primary duty as mentors. Carmen spoke about the times when her mentor helped her with her homework, how they read together and that her mentor even lent books to her. She described how her mentor helped and supported her, and it seems that there was both a sense of security in the relationship and a clear engagement on the part of the mentor. Sometimes the mentor helped her with her maths and Swedish, and she practised a lot and her reading and writing really improved. The mentor also used to give Carmen vocabulary tests, and she said that now when she thinks about it, her mentor actually did give her a lot of help. Carmen went on by saying:
– At the end of the day, I needed someone to help me, and on top of that I needed peace and quiet around me. I did get that kind of tranquillity whenever I was with her/the mentor, because at home there wasn’t that much peace. There was a lot of problems at home, so you know yourself... but with her,
I could draw breath and just be myself. It was just a gorgeous feeling!

I asked whether Carmen got any help for her dyslexia and she answered:
– Yes, she really helped me a lot, especially with maths and reading. But I still couldn’t get my head around maths...I did get loads of help and, like, one person who just gave their time to me and me alone. And this was exactly what I needed, and the fact that someone sat down with me, without a million and one things going on around me.

Others in the group told similar stories about how their mentors helped them with their studies/homework. Amina told me that she sometimes got help with her maths homework and that getting help from your mentor was a mega cool way of doing your homework. She said that she was always glad afterwards that her mentor had helped her with things like this. Malin, too, described how her mentor helped her with homework. How they went to the library together and loaned books which were easy for Malin to read and how they read out loud to each other.

Isabel said that most of the time she did her homework by herself but, on the other hand, she believed that her mentor always gave her support and was always interested in how she was getting on at school. Isabel was of the view that having an adult person by your side (someone who cared) meant an awful lot. Sara also said that she mainly did her own homework but that the mentor cheered her up. She said:

– My parents have never...I mean, they encouraged me and they were there for me...but they were never that interested...I would never have gone to them with my homework.. because I sorted that out myself...anyway it was cool to have my mentor there coz she was just like a big sister to me who could do everything...

When Sara began to think a bit more about what it meant for her to have had a mentor, she suddenly said that as a rule she never really got that worked up about it all, but now she was starting to fill up! Actually, at that time, she believed that it was quite natural to have
a mentor, but now in hindsight she understood that her mentor had given her a lot of help. Suddenly she lit up and smiled.

Respect and understanding
The second category which seems to be important is respect and understanding. Most of the youths described the relationship with their mentor as being one of mutual respect. When Amina began to talk about her identity as a Muslim, and how she and her family had chosen to live in Sweden, she said that her mentor had always been sensitive to this. She said this twice, “she understood me” The mentor seems to have both understood her and shown her respect. She said:

...I was a Muslim, don’t forget, and she was a Christian, but I am not a veil kind of Muslim or anything like that, and I go out just like anybody else, but it’s just that I was born a Muslim...and then we moved here and you are faced with the Swedish religious system and culture and all that... and then when I met her, well she was just...well...she understood me too. It was like... who cares what you are, or where you come from... She understood me!
The truth is that she was such a big influence on me ...and I hope she knows it!

A bit later in the interview, Amina began to talk about respect, in the context of what she thought she had learned from her mentor. She said:

–People can be different, have different backgrounds, think differently, yet still get on together, and that was one of the things that my mentor taught me.

Consultation
– More often than not... we came to an agreement

In reply to the question as to who made the decisions about what they
were going to do together, all replied that it was a joint process between child and mentor. It seems as if an equal relationship, of sorts, was established, where the child had a say and a vote! A consultation process, which years later still left these youths with a feeling that they had been involved and had made choices, and that they also could change the course of events.

Most of them said that either we decided together, or I was allowed to decide. Alexander said (with a gleam in his eye):

– We decided together but it was mostly me....I was the baby...so it was mega cool!

Carmen put it like this:

– Like, she actually really wanted to know what I wanted to do

She told me about one occasion when she and her mentor wrote out small notes with different proposals for what they should do, and then she said:

– Like, all these strokes she pulled because she cared...what I felt...She respected me!

Carmen said that her mentor always asked her what she thought they should do.

– Nobody had ever asked me that before. That she made the effort...like it wasn’t – right this is what we are going to do!...no, she said: would you like to do this or that...what do YOU think we should do?

Nihad observed that it was such a good thing that both parties had a say, both could make suggestions, and he thought that was much better because if only one person had a say, then there would be nothing new in it for most kids.

….without that element, it would have been just more of the same old same
old. I think it was the same for him, because he was looking forward to a good time, something new and interesting, and often something unexpected...

There was a cohesion between the answers given by these youths and those given by the children as seen above “We decided together”. I regard this as a consultative process and a bridge on the road to democratic child rearing. The children were given the space to speak on their own behalf. In fact, it was expected of them. And within this consultation process, the mentor has also shown that he/she has been willing to listen and respond. Good examples of how receptive the mentors had been were given in many of the things that the youths said. John, for example, said that his mentor always asked him “Do you really want to do that?” Or that his mentor came up with suggestions for activities that they could do but always first asked John what he thought of the idea. Alan said that he and his mentor always decided together, but that the mentor would sometimes ask: “is that alright, or what do you think yourself?”

Isabel’s mentor always had suggestions as to what they could do on their outings, but despite this, her mentor would still always ask for her views, which was something she had thought about since and really liked.

– I mean, she tried to involve me in everything; so that when we wrote in the diary, for example, she would say – no, now its your turn to write...In a way, it was just what we did together that was typical of two friends...yeah, we got to know each other very well.

The mentors assigned to these youths in those days, seem to have been keen to ensure that their mentor children were given the space to express their own thoughts and views. The examples also show that their opinions and views were respected. Their views appear to have been given a platform and were taken seriously.
The diary
Many in the group mentioned the diaries that they kept with their mentors. The idea behind keeping a diary is referred to in the Mentor Training 1 handout. Here, the mentors are advised to keep a diary with the mentor child and to stick in tickets and receipts from the activities they did together. They can also write about (or to) each other in the diary. The diary is seen as a kind of aide memoire and memento, and it is recommended that the mentor hands it over to the child on the “parting of the ways” get together.

Felicia brought her diary along to the interview session, and we sat for a long time just looking through its contents. Most people in the group still had their diaries, as a memento. When Frida came walking into the interview room with her big diary under her arm, I asked her straight away: “What is that you have with you?”
– It’s a diary that we kept together. It was Hanna’s idea. We named our diary “Frianna”, that’s a mix of Frida and Anna...we wrote in it every time we met...and I was just ten years old when we wrote.. We were on the mentor project – 97 /98...and then we put our names at the bottom..and that is a wonderful reminder!

Isabel also mentioned her diary. She said that she and her mentor always wrote in the diary together and that she has always kept it since. She remembers the time her mentor handed the diary over to her on the last day they met and the fragrance still lingers!

Natalie also mentioned her diary and said that she and her mentor wrote down everything that they did together. Erik said that he got his diary as a surprise on the last day.
– And she had “snapped” (photographed) nearly everything and then put in the pictures, and then written down everything we had done together for every day.

Some of the group also said in the interviews that they had kept various things which had been given to them by their mentor. Malin de-
scribed an activity where she and her mentor painted baskets and that they then exchanged these baskets.

...I still have mine at home.

Amina still has a jumper with the Nightingale symbol on it, the one she was given on the start day when she met her mentor for the first time.
And Hussein said (grinning and laughing):

– We did a video tape together and I still have the video at home…

Separation and the final parting
As mentioned earlier, a lecture is given (mentor training unit 3) at the end of the mentor scheme, which deals with the importance of unambiguous closure. The parting of the ways is seen as a very important moment in the mentor scheme. For the mentors it can sometimes feel like a major dilemma; to be initially asked to create a friendship and then be asked to end the relationship. In a normal relationship between friends, you do not usually factor in a final cut off point, as is the case here.

Lena Rubinstein Reichs assessment (2001) shows that more than half of the mentors had some kind of contact with their mentor child after their year had finished. Contact can mean anything from physical meetings, to a postcard, letter, telephone conversation etc., at some point. This implies that almost half of all pair groups had had no contact whatsoever after the parting of the ways.

In all years, there has always been some children who were a bit down because they could no longer meet with their mentor, and they have usually talked to their mentor about this. Sometimes, the mentors also have feelings of sadness at having to break off contact with both the child and the child’s family.
All the youths whom I interviewed said that things were just really
boring once the meetings with their mentors were stopped because time had passed by so quickly up to then, but the majority did not appear to have huge problems with it, or find it incredibly difficult to stop. Some described what they did together on the last day and they all seemed very clear that the meetings had come to an end, at least in the way they had been arranged up to then.

Anna felt that the whole thing came to an end very abruptly, whilst also observing that the meetings had gone on for almost a full year, which is actually quite a long time, she added. She described the parting of the ways in the park and the activities which she and her mentor did together, that day. She said that she got a letter and a painting, and that she recalls feelings of sadness at that point.

– It all got very sentimental...yes and sad too it has to be said.

She said that at first it was fine and then things went downhill. She felt that it was all a bit weird at first, the fact that they could no longer meet, but that feeling only lasted for a couple of days and then everyday life took over again.

On the other hand, two people from the group felt that it was really sad when everything came to an end. Carmen said that she definitely cried a bit and that she thought the whole thing was sad. Something that had been so enjoyable could not continue any longer. She said that she had felt that she was someone when she was with her mentor.

Natalie, too, recalls that she felt a bit sad and that she kind of felt:

– Oh!! Oh (laughs)...I’m not letting you go. You’re mine!

Hussein said that he did not remember that much of the last day. But he remembers when his mentor came to his school in the following term and had a new mentor child with him. I asked Hussein how he felt about that and he replied:

– It felt a bit weird that he was not my mentor anymore and that we couldn’t
just go out and do the same things again...me and him. Don’t forget that we had a blast together!

This answer led directly to the Nightingale management team’s decision never to pair a mentor with a new child at a school which is attended by the mentor’s previous mentor child.

Nihad is still in contact with his mentor. So in fact, where he is concerned, there was actually no break in the relationship, given that they have continued to meet down through the intervening years. He explained that they had had “loads” of contact at the beginning, that he sometimes would ring his former mentor and ask him about different things. He said that he would often make contact if he had a problem at school and that his former mentor still helped him. He also said that just lately he had been quite bad at keeping in touch but that now he was going to ring him and tell him about the interview. I asked whose initiative it was when they agreed to meet and he said that it was usually the mentor who got in touch, but that he always wanted to meet him. He told me that his mentor nearly always sent him a postcard from his holiday trips and that he was always glad when he saw that card in the post-box.

However, Alexander described the period afterwards as an even better time. He had grown up quite a lot and, in some way, found that he did not need a mentor anymore, not in the same way as he had at the start. He said that he felt better when it was all over and that he made more friends at his school.

– Like, this is the way I felt about it...like – I have to take control here...and do better at school and find my own mates.

As far as Alexander is concerned, it seems the mentor represented a positive launch pad for him, where the separation might be compared to a “fresh start”. For others, however, the mentor seems to have been far more important and, of course, the parting of the ways was much more difficult. This is most obvious to me when listening to Natalie and Carmen. That said, none of the group use the word “problems” or “difficulties” with regards to the end of the scheme.
Discussion

It was really interesting to share in all the stories told by the youths in the interview group, and their memories of the time when they had a mentor. They all seemed to remember their mentor very well and also the different activities they did together. Most of them mentioned how well they got on with their mentors, and that meeting the mentor was never boring. They even remembered the name “Nightingale”, or “mentor project”.

Obviously, what they remember will be different for each individual, given that each relationship was unique, a child and a mentor. However, what they remember is interesting. According to memory research, we all have an explicit, or conscious, memory which ensures that we remember situations in which we were involved and from which we retrieve knowledge and abilities. We also have an implicit memory, which ensures that we remember something, even where we are not conscious of the fact that we remember the actual learning situation. The things that we remember from situations and events (and of which we either have a strong or unconscious recollection), in which we ourselves were participants, is something called the episodic memory. The episodic memory is a recollection of events which are concrete and personally experienced events.

All the youths whom I interviewed recall particular, or specific, events which were set apart from their everyday experience. They also recall events in which they got the opportunity to try, or do, new things they had never tried or done before. Many of these memories seem to be imbued with the close relationship they had with their mentor. Those memories, experiences and discoveries, which the youths now in hindsight recalled, presumably contain both an explicit and implicit memory, their subjective experiences; that is to say both feelings and thoughts. And much of what they talked about seems to have been plucked from their episodic memory – their memory of what they did and the memory of their relationship with their mentor.

In the development of a child, the interaction with those closest to him/her is the most important one, but the interaction with other peo-
ple outside of the family circle is also very important. A mentor once said in an interview: “Children thrive with adult friends, the more adults who see and affirm the child, the better it is, end of story”. This is an excellent way to summarise one aspect of what a child needs in order to grow up strong and fortified. The way the child is received by all these individuals is the thing that forms the self image the child will internalise. For this reason, it is crucial that the child is both received and affirmed in a positive way.

When the youths talked about their mentors, it was very often their positive attitude that was the focus of their attention. They felt a sense of security with their mentor, and many described situations where the mentor engaged with them, supported them and helped them in different ways. Many of them also spoke of their mentor as someone who physically saw them, listened to them and who also taught them different and new things.

Gustafsson (2004) is of the view that the most important source of affirmation in life comes precisely with that “meeting” - that someone sees the other, is concerned about that person and understands that person. We are shaped and become the people we are through the paradigm of meeting with others. In the relationship with the mentor, therefore, the kind of reception given becomes a crucial factor in deciding what way the relationship will be established and developed. In the Nightingale scenario, the children get the opportunity to be placed once a week at the “centre of things”; the child has an adult willing to listen, attend to and encourage him or her, which can also become one of the pieces in the completion of the self esteem jigsaw. In other words, to not just be observed from without but to be the main character.

One of Nightingale’s basic ideas is to to raise the child’s self esteem. A healthy self esteem implies knowing who you are, and feeling that you are someone, and the things that you do and think are grounded in the person you are. Acquiring an improved self esteem can happen by being seen and affirmed by someone else. All the people with whom a child interacts, therefore, have an important role in this process. How is the child received? The way in which he/she gets the chance to under-
stand him/herself and the surrounding environment obviously affects that child’s self image and the way he/she sees others. “The status you are afforded creates the person you become.” Cullberg Weston, Marta (2005) believes that we are born twice. The first time biologically, the second time psychologically – when we are seen and affirmed.

During mentor training, the mentors are told about ways they can help strengthen the child’s self esteem. That they must always affirm the positive within the child and always act on the basis of what the child is good at and encourage the child in this. A positive reception, and to be seen and affirmed, can give the child an increased feeling of self worth. Many mentors often write in their monthly report that they tried to strengthen the children in different ways by allowing them to take centre stage, by listening to them and giving them their undivided attention. These are all things that in the long run may lead to improved self confidence on the part of the child.

Many of the group in the interviews came to their own independent conclusion that the mentor had contributed to their improved self confidence. Carmen believed that she was brought on as a person by having a mentor and said that she never would have had such good self confidence if she had not had a mentor. The mentor had helped her in so many different ways and also strengthened her, she said. Alexander put it like this:

– Yes, he definitely gave me more self confidence...because I had no self confidence whatsoever...it was actually him that gave it me...he explained... ahh...that’s the way you should be and do it like that...you know...nothing was bad like

When Anna spoke about what it meant for her to have a mentor, she said that she became more open. She described her mentor as a guide and a catalyst, and that she believed that she had become a better person by having the chance to talk to new people. She said:

…I mean I learned to be more open I think...start to come out...I used to be, like, under the table...I am not the kind that jumps in first...and then
When Felicia spoke about her mentor and what she had learned from her, she said that her mentor had taught her:

– *Venturing into the unknown*

She said that she had been quite a shy girl but with the mentor it became easier to talk. Hussein, too, was of the opinion that his mentor had been a big influence on him and that, afterwards, he found it easier to meet new people. He also said that his mentor had been a really positive role model for him, something that meant that he was now more responsible as a person. If he had never had a mentor, he believed that he would not have been as responsible as he is now, and nor would he find it as easy to meet new people. It was my mentor that taught me that, he said. Alexander also said that his self-confidence increased, and that the mentor supported him in many different situations.

The children involved in the Nightingale scheme are between eight to twelve years old, which implies that they are in the midst of an identity change and that all social relations will therefore have an impact on this process. The child’s inner self grows out of the different social experiences that he/she encounters, and in interaction with others. It is in these meetings with others, that this identity unfolds. The relationship with the mentor is therefore extremely important. The mentor is a new person in the child’s social network and someone whom the child can measure him/herself against; as well as being someone in whom the child can confide. A relationship can constitute another part of the jigsaw in the creation of an identity, how the child comes to see him/herself and the type of identity the child will adopt. To have a relationship outside of one’s own family can be both a stimulating and growing experience. Many of the group made reference to the mentors as positive role models, be they male or female, precisely because of their approach to things.
The Nightingale scheme offers children an insight into somebody else’s life and lifestyle. The youths talked about their visits to the mentor’s home and also about the times when they visited the university, and for most of them, this was the first time they had been to a university or college. In the company of their respective mentors, they were given an insight into the world of the university student. Many of them said that their mentor had been such a big influence on them that they themselves are now staying on to go to university or college. And one of them is already at university. Precisely what way the mentors have influenced them is impossible to ascertain. But via the mentor, they gained an insight into something they otherwise would, perhaps, never have seen. An insight which, at the very least, ensured the opening of another door of opportunity, and the door to the university was one such option. The mentor was also someone who believed in them and encouraged them at an age when this is clearly important. Now they carry with them positive memories, which have made them a little stronger and increased their self confidence. More fundamentally, they can dare to make the leap and take their rightful place in society.
A SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS

As referred to above, during all the years of Nightingale’s existence, we have undertaken a large number of data studies in the form of interviews and questionnaires, which have had the aim of obtaining as clear a picture as possible of how well the scheme is functioning and how it is perceived by the children, the parents, school staff and the mentors. Moreover, we have conducted the above follow up studies, with the involvement of previous mentor children – who are now in their student years – in which these youths have shared their recollections and reflections with others.

How well does Nightingale function vis-a-vis its ambitious aims and philosophy? This question will never have a simple and precise answer. But based on the information we have gathered in with regards to what the children, parents and mentors have experienced, thought and believed, a number of conclusions can be safely drawn.

For the children
As far as the child is concerned, meeting the mentor has meant that he or she has got to know an adult person of whom the child had no previous knowledge, and who came from outside of the child’s family, or extended family network. This was an adult person who was there solely to offer support and listen, a person whom the child could trust and who has widened the child’s points of reference and experiential framework.

The aim was that the children should gain new experiences and skills by being involved in enjoyable activities, go to new places, meet new people and do things they had never tried before, something which both the children and the youths say actually happened. The children
use words such as cool, brilliant, mega, and tell us that they have done loads of things with their mentor. For many children, the mentor’s physical presence has also meant that they were able to do activities which they never otherwise would have done, and that they enjoyed meaningful free time meetings with their mentor. For a number of children, all this has also meant that they have had the chance to try activities which they either dared not, or did not want, to do, but have now tried. The children have also learned a great deal from their mentors. Some children have reported that their Swedish has improved, or that they now dare to do, or can do, the kind of things they never could before.

The mentors also say that they have seen positive developments in their mentor child. Language development is the main thing here. But also that the children have become more open and confident, dared to do more, and have an increased self confidence, as well as greater self esteem. The mentors also report that their children have expanded their horizons, have been able to to measure themselves against new people, they have had new experiences and discovered new things. The children have also had the chance to engage in conversations of a different kind to what they were used to; whilst with their mentor they have also discussed core value issues, ethics and morals.

The children have also seen their mentor as an adult friend in whom they can confide. The mentor was someone they could talk to and get advice from. The mentor was someone who had time for them alone, who kept them as the fulcrum of the relationship. The mentors have also stressed that they have seen the children, in conjunction with their mentors, acquire an independent life, outside of the family and of school. The children have shown happiness and gratitude because they were assigned a mentor. Getting a mentor meant increased status for the child.

– No I am not coming out today because I am going to my mentor.

All the children and youths interviewed felt that child and mentor decided things together. Many of the children interviewed said that they
often got what they wanted, or were often allowed to suggest what they would like to do on their mentor outings.

In the assessment carried out by Lena Rubinstein Reich (2001), her conclusions were that the children had gained new experiences and discovered new things, that they had gained an adult all for themselves, which implies that their attitude to adults had developed. They were very proud of their mentor and had become more independent, developed their proficiency in the Swedish language and had increased self confidence. These conclusions have been confirmed, in my view, with the results obtained and set out above. To have the chance to step forward and present themselves as unique and valuable people was a completely new experience for many mentor children. That experience, that discovery, has given a powerful lift to the development of the child's identity, self esteem and ability to assert his/her own boundaries.

In accordance with Nightingale's aims, the children must get the chance to improve their self esteem, get a student as an adult role model, have new experiences and gain new skills in that relationship with the university student. The results outlined above show that the scheme is being run completely in line with our aims, and with a very high standard of quality.

One of Nightingale’s goal is that the children will do better, both inside and outside of school, and that a greater number of them will consider applying for higher education courses. Except for the interviews with the youths who after ten years gave their own impressions about their time as mentor children, there are as yet no studies which can shed light on Nightingale’s long-term effect on the children’s performance at school and free time activities.

For the children ten years down the road – youths who remember
The youths bear witness to the fact that they had a very positive time with their mentor, it was both enjoyable and they got on well together, whilst at the same time learning an awful lot. The mentor had opened doors for them to activities in Malmö which their parents
knew nothing about, and as mentor children they had the chance to do these things in the company of a mentor, which they never otherwise would have done. They mention places they had never visited before, which they visited in the company of their mentor. They have met new people, tried new activities, had the chance to discover what Malmö has to offer in terms of culture and sport, and got out into the great outdoors in outlying parts of Malmö. They have, in summary, stepped into a reality which was nothing like the place where they lived, something which has expanded their world immeasurably.

When the youths look back on their experiences with their mentor they stress all the time that they had been to a meeting, it was “me and my mentor” in a close relationship, which at that time was a whole new experience for them. They also got the chance to say what they might like to do on outings with their mentor, they felt that they were being listened to and were encouraged to bring their own ideas to the table, in a spirit of equality; that they actually had a say in what they should do together. Some of the youths describe it as – “I had a say in it all”. It was their mentor who asked “What do you want to do?” for the first time in their lives. The experience of having a say and influence in the relationship with the mentor, that your own desires were respected, was a strong and vivid memory for the youths.

The youths also confirmed that they had had valuable conversations with the mentor regarding basic norms, morals and ethics. Some have described the mentor as being more like a mate who did not have the same views as you had, so there was lots to discuss and learn from each other. The mentor’s engagement and physical presence had created a sense of security and trust for them.

None of the youths could in any way recall that their mentor had been negative towards them. Quite the opposite, they say that they felt they had been positively selected and were very proud of having a mentor. They are also of the view that the time they spent with their mentor had led to an improved self confidence, they were more open and dared to do the kind of things they previously would not have dared to do, like
talking amongst people they had never met before.

The mentor had been a role model, a guide, a woman or man who they could look up to. The youths had clear memories of visits to the university with their mentor. Here, they got the chance to see an environment and lifestyle as a student that appealed to them, and their mentors told them about their own courses and how they came to choose them. There is no doubt that as children they were inspired to choose the same path as the mentor had taken and, in one case at least, this is what has now happened.

For the mentors
The mentors have, when they sum up their experiences and impressions after eight months of regular contact with a mentor child, described the acquisition of many new experiences, skills and insights. The mentors have had the kind of new experiences, which they never otherwise would have gained except through being a mentor. They have learned new things in their meetings with the child and his/her family. They have gained an increased understanding of what it means to be a child growing up in the 2000s. Many of them mention the fact they have an increased understanding of the child’s social and domestic living conditions. They also refer to encounters across generations, encounters “across the tracks” and encounters across various social and cultural norms. The mentor scheme has meant that they have gained direct insights into issues such as multicultural societies, integration, segregation and social estrangement.

Moreover, the mentors say that they themselves – by getting to share in a child’s everyday life – have acquired a child’s perspective, so that they can now understand how the child sees and thinks into itself and its surrounding environment, as well as the options available (or not as the case may be) for “getting on in life”.

The challenge for a mentor in being an adult role model for a child, has also led to challenges for the mentors themselves, because this role automatically implies that they are forced to confront their own
standards, ideals and prejudices. This paves the way for increased self awareness and increased awareness of what they themselves can contribute to the meetings with the child and his/her family.

The mentors have also been placed in situations where they have been called on to show empathy and learn the benefits and disadvantages inherent in this.

Many mentors refer to the fact that the experiences they have had as mentors represented insights and skills training that would have been impossible to learn from a book. They were “right in the middle of it”, “seen it with their own eyes” or had “changed their opinions”. The mentors believe that the mentor scheme has given them new perspectives, both on themselves and with regards to others. They now see the experiences they have had as mentors as an important complement to their course work and something that will be of benefit to them and also another kind of qualification in their chosen profession.

For society
The mentors have gained direct insights into those homes, those life situations, the social prerequisites and future options which their mentor child has shown them. The mentors will be able to put these new skills to good use and disseminate their knowledge within their prospective professions. There are good reasons for thinking that their interest in questions surrounding democracy has increased in line with their increased social engagement.

The mentors have made great efforts to broaden the scope of university recruitment which – albeit on a small scale – long term will give results. In Malmö, which has become an ever more segregated place, the university has gradually been concentrated in an area in the city centre, “Västra hamnen”. The distances involved for those inhabitants – including “Nightingale families” who live in other faraway parts of the city is substantial. The Nightingale scheme is doing what it can to bridge that widening gap and make the university more visible for all families and their children in Malmö.
KEY NOTES IN THE NIGHTINGALE SCHEME

What is it that makes Nightingale work so well? What are the factors that create the right conditions for the scheme? The relevant factors, which are set out below – from a huge selection – include some of those which stand out so clearly in the reports, assessments and interviews we have carried out.

The pairing process is painstaking
Each pair is matched on the basis of some similarity, or interest, which thereby gives a prerequisite for a good thriving relationship between mentor and child. A mutual interest has often been the starting point for the first bonding encounter. Many mentors have seen similarities between themselves and their mentor child, others have subsequently discovered that they complement one and other. A good matching of pairs has proved to be a vital prerequisite for the development of a friendship and good relations between child and mentor.

Mentor and child meet with no strings attached
The mentor and child need only know each other’s name before meeting for the first time on the start day in Folkets Park. Nor does the mentor receive any subsequent access to background information about the child. Thus, the child can be seen simply on the basis of
his/her own personality – not on the basis of anyone else’s judgment, or preconceived ideas. The mentor can, without any preconceptions, meet and get on with the child and also does not have to wonder what needs or difficulties the child may be facing. Both parties are there voluntarily.

A structure is important
One prerequisite for building a good mutual relationship is the creation of a routine and continuity of interaction. The child must be absolutely certain that the mentor will be there once a week, every week. If the child has any reason not to trust an adult it is even more important that he/she can trust the mentor. Predictability and regularity of contact creates security.

The structures are also an aid for the mentors. There is a clear assignment to be fulfilled. The job in hand refers to taking responsibility for a child, once a week, for approximately 2–3 hours at a time between the months of October to May. There is a clear start, then comes the period when the building blocks and relationship with the child need to be developed and then a clear cessation.

The parents have a say
The parents have made the application for a mentor along with the child. They have also authorised that the mentor can meet the child and have completed a consent form and have also received both verbal and written information. All the parties involved want the meetings to go ahead, totally voluntarily, something which gives the best bedrock of all for the relationship.

The mentor’s meetings with the child are ongoing, and the parents can influence the way the meetings work by suggesting activities that they could do together. The parents can also be of great help to the mentor. Many mentors have a great relationship with the parents.
The mentor has a conscious approach to his/her role
The mentor training sessions stress the idea of the competent child, who is an active player in his/her own development, a child that has many powers. This is a way of looking at a child which emphasises the need to highlight and recognise the child’s abilities. In the Nightingale scheme, the mentors receive the children in a way that reinforces this aspiration. In Nightingale, it is the mentor’s task to be with the child and to affirm the child’s positive and strongest attributes, as well as affirming the child in different situations. In order to achieve this, a particular approach is required that focuses on what the child is good at, what the child can do and wants to do. This also requires an ability to embrace the world in which other people find themselves and a strong will and ability to sometimes lend a hand.

All this is contained and reinforced in the mentor training sessions – including the guidance sessions. Here, the significance of being able to place oneself in and understand the child’s social and cultural context, and embrace the child and his/her family with empathy and respect, is continually stressed. The mentors are fully conscious of the fact that they must continually give the child their attention, affirmation and respect, in a warm and committed engagement with the child “here and now”.

The mentors respect the children’s integrity
The mentors encourage the children to express and assert their own will. In this way, they also give the child a foundation in basic democratic principles; to expect to be respected for what you are, to be able to express a view and aspirations and to be involved and have a say.

The comedy club is always open
The mentors know that humour is an important and valuable device in all social interactions. Having a good laugh together creates an immediate sense of fellowship, the sharing of joy strengthens the relationship between mentor and child. A mentor who can laugh at his/her own mistakes and handle everyday life in a cheerful way (the supervisor’s bad hair day with a joke and a smile!), can help to tickle
the child’s own funny bone and be a humorous role model for the child. This can be a great release for the child; that he/she can break out in to childish activities along with the adult mentor and have a right laugh. Even where the child does not yet have fluent Swedish, horseplay and general fooling around can reach beyond language difficulties and help cement the relationship.

The mentors receive training, support, and also a real sense of fellowship and affirmation.

By the time they meet the mentor child for the first time, the mentors have already received a good deal of mentor training, which prepares the students for what is expected of them in their roles as mentors. They are, by now, fully aware of their responsibilities and the requirements placed upon them. They also know that the Nightingale team coordinators are there in the background and available for consultation whenever necessary.

Various problems and scenarios can also be discussed in the guidance sessions, which serve to both reinforce the mentor role and give the coordinators an insight into how the mentor scheme is progressing. All this, when added together, helps to ensure that the risk of a mentor/child pairing getting into difficulties is minimised.

A mentor need never feel lonely or isolated with his/her mentor child. There is always the option of either initiating, or participating in, a group activity together with other mentors and their children. This can be a source of great stimulation and entertainment for all concerned.

Gradually, the mentors get positive feedback from the children, parents, school staff and the Nightingale management team. They notice themselves that have a big influence on the child and can help to guide him/her down a positive road. They see the fruit of their efforts in the way the children develop, which in turn gives them self affirmation in their role as mentor.
The mentors get paid for their pains
The financial recompense received by a mentor is not exactly of the magnitude that would have stockbrokers resigning en masse in order to become mentors “for those lovely liquid assets”. However, the reward is large enough to give the management team legitimate cause to demand certain obligations on the part of the mentors and look for reassurance that all the mentors are taking those obligations seriously. The payment is also sufficiently large to serve as some semblance of a tribute to the great, sometimes difficult, but always extremely valuable work that the mentors do to make sure that the Nightingale children have a song in their hearts.

Lena Rubinstein Reich (2001) points out in her assessment that the provision of financial recompense and a real job helps to minimise a potential “drop out” syndrome amongst mentors, though she also shows that the size of the payment is not of decisive importance for them.

Once mentors have completed their assessment task, in the mentor evaluation, they are asked the question – “Has the fact that you are going to be paid been a prerequisite for your participation in the scheme as a mentor?” This question has been answered by the mentors in some of the following ways:
- I didn’t do it for the money.
- Well I’m not going to complain about being paid, because I do need the money.
- I used the money when I was out and about with my mentor child.
The Special Qualities of a Mentor

Nightingale’s mentor scheme is immersed in a give-and-take culture, of productive and rewarding meetings, which promote development and lasting benefits for all those who are involved. For the children and the mentors, their involvement with Nightingale gives them something they have never previously experienced and something which they would never otherwise have done. There are lots of things which are unique to Nightingale; the fact that a child engages socially with an adult other than his/her parents, extended family members or a teacher; whilst a student mentor enters into a special child’s world where the lecture room and formal education are left at the door to that new world.

A mentor is not a substitute parent

Parents see their children through the prism of previous events and experiences, all of which are given a framework by the deep emotional ties between parent and child. They have their own rituals, their own habits, and well established patterns of interaction with the child. The mentor, on the other hand, is an adult person whose personal and social orbit is completely outside that of the family’s. In other words, he or she is someone whom the child and the family would otherwise never have known. The mentor sees the child in a completely different light to the parents, which, in turn, gives the child the space and
freedom to perceive and develop latent powers and abilities that lie within him or herself. At the same time (in order to provide support and reassure the child), the mentor must establish a good rapport with the parents; one which is based on trust and respect.

A mentor is not a substitute teacher
A teacher in a school is obliged to supervise a whole group of children and ensure that every child’s needs are catered for. The mentor has no such constraints. The mentor supervises and focuses on one child, and one child only, and this child, therefore, becomes the “favourite”. A teacher is obliged to work to strict targets, show results, express opinions and bestow merits or penalties. The mentor’s task, on the other hand, is to support, follow, lead and allow the child to enjoy being that favourite person – the star of the show. Whilst with the mentor, the child is seen, and esteemed, as a unique human being, free from the need to “perform” before receiving that accolade.

The mentor can be the “significant other”.
The Nightingale mentor concept implies a professional relationship between a child, who is at the centre, and an often devoted mentor who provides the applause. In short, the child gets his or her own adult friend to play with! This mentor becomes the significant other for the child by standing by him or her, by accepting and respecting the child and, thereby, becomes a very important figure in the child’s life, and this will remain the case long after the mentor scheme has come to an end.

It is a well known phenomenon that children and teenagers can receive a new impetus via the establishment of a healthy relationship with an adult who exists outside of the family network. A mentor, as the significant other, as an adult friend, as someone who is almost but not quite a big sister or brother, someone who can do what big people do, helps to open the child’s eyes to new things, both in the surrounding world and deep within the inner world of the child itself. All this, which happens in the context of the wonderful free space outside of the family provided by the mentor – something which is for the child alone – has been shown to be of great value.
The mentor scheme – a training ground for life.
The mentor receives training prior to the start of the scheme, and subsequent guidance as the scheme progresses. Here, the mentor gets the opportunity to reflect, in a more systematic way, on the relationship with the child and to the events which have taken place whilst in the child’s company. It is in this way, by studying the ebb and flow of human relations from different perspectives, that the mentor can be seen to be receiving a training for life. Many mentors have also found great benefit from being obliged to take time to consider what being a good adult role model actually means. This has increased their own self awareness and the value systems, prejudices or ideals which they have and how these values are played out in encounters with others.

For the discoveries and experiences gained as mentor lead precisely to the kind of improvements in personal and professional maturity referred to above. The mentor role offers the student a chance to develop his or her leadership, creative and problem solving abilities. The time spent in the company of the mentor child increases the student’s relationship skills and willingness to empathise, and the student will also as a mentor come face to face with situations which call for reflection on questions of morals and ethics.

Students who have been involved as mentors down through the years have themselves spoken of the improvement in their communication skills and deeper personal maturity. All the new discoveries made, and skills acquired, represent something which may prove to be an important string to the student’s bow; the perfect complement to course work and exceptionally valuable experiences to have undergone when forging a new life, either on a personal level, or within the student’s chosen profession. None of these kinds of experience and knowledge can be learned by doing a high school or college course, but they do represent the perfect complement to conventional college programmes. For those students, above all others, in the teacher training department, doing social work courses and those studying in IMER, the experiences as a Nightingale mentor can be an invaluable asset to call on when they are subsequently dealing with children and their surrounding environment in a completely different context in their professional careers.
Being a mentor can also contribute to the development of students’ awareness of intercultural issues and improve their practical management skills if they are working in a multicultural situation. The close contact with a child and the child’s family, which the mentor experiences over a fairly lengthy period, gives the kind of insights which are a powerful antidote to both social and racial prejudice and social stereotypes. In other words, Nightingale can be seen as an effective tool for use in breaking down the walls of prejudice by the very fact that the scheme offers an insight into a world that the mentor has never seen before. Those experiences lead to an increased understanding and empathy on the part of those who have chosen to become mentors because of the vastly different living conditions with which Nightingale children have to contend. This is important when it is borne in mind that today’s Nightingale mentor is tomorrow’s social planner, senior manager and politician- who can then translate their Nightingale experiences into remedial action.

**Being a mentor is a qualification**

Being a mentor gives both an experience for life and for future work. A mentor is a person who shows clear social engagement; someone who will not shirk a challenge, who wants to help and can take the responsibility of helping. By the very fact of being a mentor, the mentor has expanded his or her own horizons, gained new perspectives and insights, and in many cases, also developed a measure of multicultural awareness after the many meetings with the child and family. The Nightingale mentor students, who, in tandem with their ordinary studies, have acquired such a broad ranging and meticulously organised informal qualification by being a mentor, have also made themselves extremely attractive to potential employers.
The Nightingale Scheme provides a “Song for the Heart”.

During Nightingale’s ten years of existence, many fruitful meetings and encounters have taken place, which have helped people to develop and mature. I personally am attracted to the core idea of “mutual benefit”. For a child to socially engage with someone outside its family, someone who will give encouragement, represents a completely new experience and may also open up new worlds for that child. For a mentor to gain the new insights into something which otherwise would have been a “No Go Area” is an experiential goldmine, which cannot help but lead to the acquisition of new skills and perspectives.

Many Nightingale children have formed a close social relationship with an adult who was not there because of his or her profession, but because that adult was committed to engaging with that child, had time to listen, wanted to do joint activities, and was happy for the child to make key decisions in a spirit of social democracy.

One of the Nightingale youths (referred to above) described how he remembers his mentor as a big and safe man, but went on to describe how one day, a couple of years ago, he met him again and was shocked to see that his mentor was actually quite small and realised that he himself had grown bigger than his mentor. For me, this story gives us a telling image of how children can perceive their mentors.
as being “big and safe” and a person they can look up to; and then some years later, they themselves have grown and both are suddenly standing there, smiling, and looking at each other eye to eye, and remembering.

Alexander got to the heart of the matter, for both child and mentor, when he described the great lift he experienced from simply being with his mentor. He said that he got a huge lift, which got him to start thinking differently about his future studies. He had heard the nightingale singing. His own view was that he was still basically the same person as before he had ever heard the nightingale but then said “I would never have had those thoughts. I got a great lift up”.

This “lift” also represents a mental and emotional shift, which leads to both the child and the mentor gaining new insights and skills which they would never have experienced but for their Nightingale interaction. They have been able to share in each others experiences, gained different perspectives and thoughts and both of them have grown because of it. Once this social exchange takes place, they are no longer quite the same people as before, they think differently; perhaps even act differently. Both sides to the human equation got a “great lift”.

For both of them, the Nightingale scheme has proved to be gateway to a wider society and a gateway into their own inner selves. As fellow citizens, both have been imbued with civic wisdom.

My fervent wish is that I will hear the sweet sound of the Nightingale’s call in many other colleges and universities, both inside and outside Sweden – so that many more children and their mentors can be lifted onto a higher social plane.
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VARUMÄRKE NUMMER 389583
Näktergalen


Patent- och registreringsverket intygar härmed att ovan avbildade varumärke är infört i varumärkesregistret med omstående uppgifter.

Patent- och registreringsverket 2007-06-15

Generaldirektör
(Appendix 2)

Number of students accepted - men and women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Applicant (vt + ht)</th>
<th>Accepted women/men</th>
<th>Number of mentors women/men who completed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| (1) 97-98 | 105                | 68 (56+12)  
= 82% + 18% | 68 (56+12)  
= 82% +18% |
| (2) 98-99 | 97 (78+19)          | 74 (60+14)  
= 81% + 19% | 73 (59+14)  
= 81% + 19% |
| (3) 99-00 | 124                | 60 (46+14)  
= 77% + 23% | 57 (44+13)  
= 77% + 23% |
| (4) 00-01 | 140 (111+29)        | 100 (79+21)  
= 79% + 21% | 90 (72+18)  
= 80% + 20% |
| (5) 01-02 | 135 (100+35)        | 86 (62+24)  
= 72% + 28% | 82 (59+23)  
= 72% + 28% |
| (6) 02-03 | 184 (82+102)        | 104 (78+22)  
= 75% + 21% | 91 (70+21)  
=77% + 23% |
| (7) 03-04 | 230 (171+59)        | 115 (98+17)  
= 85% + 15% | 104 (88+16)  
= 85% + 15% |
| (8) 04-05 | 182 (132+50)        | 94 (78+16)  
= 83% + 17% | 90 (75+15)  
= 83% + 17% |
| (9) 05-06 | 183 (130+53)        | 86 (69+17)  
= 80% + 20% | 82 (65+17)  
= 79% + 21% |
| (10) 06-07 | 293 (153+140)       | 93 (69+24)  
= 74% + 26% | 76 (55+21)  
= 72% + 28% |
(Appendix 3)

From which areas of Malmö university do the accepted students come?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accepted Women/men</th>
<th>Teacher-training</th>
<th>Health and Society</th>
<th>Technology and Society</th>
<th>K3</th>
<th>IMER</th>
<th>OD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00-01 100st</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01-02 86st</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02-03 104st</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03-04 115st</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-05 94st</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05-06 86st</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06-07 93st</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## (Appendix 4)

### Withdrawals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Accepted</th>
<th>Withdrawals</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Grounds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) 97-98</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) 98-99</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>1 child did not want to be involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) 99-00</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2 mentors left, problems finding time for child and studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 child did not want to continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) 00-01</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>No details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) 01-02</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>1 mentor left to study abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 mentor left due to studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 children for various family reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) 02-03</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>2 mentors left due to studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 mentor moving to another city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 mentor in car accident, sick note provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 mentor left, hard finding good meeting times for child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 children have moved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 child did not want to continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 children-families did not want to continue for various reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 left for various family reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) 03-04</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>4 mentors do not have time/unable to continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 mentor pregnant, on leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 children cannot/do not want to continue any longer, for various reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) 04-05</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>1 mentor left, hard finding good meeting times for child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 children, siblings do not want to continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 child is moving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) 05-06</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>2 children did not want to continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 child is moving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 mentor is sick, leaving course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) 06-07</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>3 children for various family reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 children do not have enough time, too many other activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 mutual decisions to withdraw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 mentor did not attend the training course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 mentor moved to another area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 mentors, studying abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 mentors left due to sickness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 children-mentors did not want to continue for various reasons</td>
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This book is about a series of encounters which had an immediate impact and left a lasting impression. For over a period of ten years, Nightingale has facilitated nine hundred such meetings between individual children and students. These are meetings where the differences between both sides have been an advantage, as the whole idea was to get to see the “other” person as an individual and not as a spokesperson for a particular group, religion or ethnic identity. Moreover, these meetings, or encounters, have represented a “helping hand”, as a former Nightingale child has put it. Now, ten years on, that child himself is going to act as a mentor to one of a new generation of Nightingale children, so that they too might have a “Song In Their Hearts”.

This book can be seen as a record of Nightingale’s achievements to date in the context of celebrations surrounding its 10 year anniversary. It seeks to convey the philosophy, aims and practical targets which inform the whole project, whilst at the same time giving a voice to the children, mentors and parents involved. The book has been written for those who have heard about Nightingale and wish to find out more, as well as for those who may be inspired to give a hand and perhaps start similar mentor schemes in their own areas.