



Hope WINS (What I Need to Succeed): A Family-Run Organization in Freeport, Illinois

Hope WINS (What I Need to Succeed) is a children’s mental health Family-Run Organization based in Freeport, serving families across Stephenson County and the surrounding Northwest Illinois region. Founded by educator and trauma-informed advocate Linsey McDanel, Hope WINS was created to ensure families navigating social, emotional, and behavioral health challenges have consistent, trusted support rooted in both lived experience and professional expertise.

Hope WINS offers parent coaching, mentoring, workshops, youth programming, and prevention-focused education designed to strengthen family relationships and build resilience. A cornerstone of the organization is MAC Camp (Mentoring, Activities, & Connection Camp), which provides structured, screen-free experiences during summer and no-school days focused on connection, regulation, and belonging. Additionally, RISE Family Connection Events and Parent Support Groups create welcoming spaces where caregivers and youth build relationships, reduce isolation, and increase confidence. Individualized Parent-to-Parent mentoring pairs families with trained mentors who share lived experience and offer practical guidance rooted in trust.

In addition to direct services, Hope WINS provides community education and prevention programming and works collaboratively with schools, nonprofits, healthcare providers, faith-based communities, and child-serving agencies. These partnerships help align families with trusted resources and improve coordination across systems that otherwise feel fragmented.

Hope WINS understands the unique challenges families face when resources are limited or geographically dispersed. By combining structured programs, peer support, and cross-sector collaboration, Hope WINS strengthens protective factors and equips caregivers with the tools and confidence to advocate effectively for youth.

At its core, Hope WINS builds durable relationships that allow families to move forward with stability, connection, and practical support, or in their own words, “a village of healthier adults raising healthier children.”

Hope WINS can be contacted via their website:

www.hopewinsfreeport.org

“We all need hope, but we all need different strategies and tools to win.”

