

'Fulfilling someone else's life'



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Jonathan Hirsch bowls with his son, Tandyn, 5, both of Painesville, during the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio's annual Bowl for Kids' Sake fundraiser at Ernst Lanes in Chardon on Sunday afternoon. Hirsch owns a restaurant in Cleveland called Vivo, which donated \$200 to the cause.

Agency strikes 'Big' with kids

■ Annual bowling event raises money for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio

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Darlene Fury and Alex Bunda joined Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio five years ago after they lost loved ones.

Fury's husband had died, and 11-year-old Alex had lost her mother.

"Alex's situation was so similar. We were a match," Fury said.

The first time the two met, it was at the agency's annual Bowl for Kids' Sake fundraiser at Ernst Lanes in Chardon in 2003. They went to Ernst Lanes again Sunday for this year's event.

"When I started this, I realize now that it was maybe for selfish reasons," said Fury, who lives in Burton Village.

"I was looking for someone to fill my life, and now it is a reward to know that I have been fulfilling someone else's life."

Fury and Alex, who lives in Wickliffe,

were joined Sunday by several others who raised money for Big Brothers Big Sisters.

"This is a celebration after the fundraising, so it's a 'thank-you' party for helping us raise money to help kids," said Tim Kehres, the agency's executive director

Each of the bowlers had to raise at least \$50 for Big Brothers Big Sisters, and some collected more than \$600.

There also will be bowling fundraisers in Lake and Ashtabula counties. Kehres is hoping they raise between \$25,000 and \$35,000 total.

While some of Sunday's bowlers are participants in the program — like Fury and Alex — many are not.

John Glasser brought his grandchildren along, and they bowled with Glasser and his de facto little brother.

"I think it's very rewarding," Glasser said of being a big brother. "You can give as little time or as much time as you

want, and you'll find once you get started, you give more and more because you have a good time."

There are more than 70 boys and girls in Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula counties waiting for a big brother or big sister, Kehres said.

Children in the program are 46 percent less likely to use drugs, 27 percent less likely to abuse alcohol and 33 percent less likely to get in trouble with the law, he added.

Big brothers and big sisters can see the effect they have on the children.

"Not that I'm a replacement mother for Alex, but I'm sure having a female in her life has been a big difference for her," Fury said.

Kehres said the donations go to expand existing programs in the area.

The Lake County Bowl for Kids' Sake fundraiser is 1 p.m. Sunday at Freeway Lanes in Mentor.



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with Big Brothers,
Big Sisters tout
the benefits
of the agency

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time or money

Anyone interested in donating to the agency or becoming a big brother or a big sister should call (440) 352-2526 or (800) 222-2440.