



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Northeast Ohio

PRESS RELEASE

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AGENCY SEEKS SPONSORS AND BOWLERS FOR ANNUAL BOWL FOR KIDS' SAKE EVENT

Painesville, Ohio, January, 2009 – Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio (BBBSNEO) is seeking event sponsors and bowlers for their annual Bowl For Kids' Sake bowling bash to raise cash. The event will take place on Sunday, March 8th, at Ernst Lanes in Chardon at 1:00 p.m. and on Sunday, March 15th, at Freeway Lanes in Mentor at 1:00 p.m.

Due to the nature of the economy, the agency is concerned that many who would normally support the event, either by bowling or becoming a sponsor, will withdraw this year.

“We’ve had a Bowl For Kids’ Sake event each year for 24 years now. It’s a part of BBBS history”, said Tim Kehres, BBBSNEO executive director. “We’re hoping that the community and business leaders recognize that our need is greater now than ever and, that this event is one of the few low-cost fundraisers out there. More importantly, it’s fun for all ages -- young, old, teens, families, groups and individuals. It’s also a way for churches and businesses to get their members and employees involved in giving back to the community.”

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The event -- a celebration that will include two hours of free bowling, food, and beverages -- is the organization's way of saying thank you to those who raise a minimum of \$50 each. This year WELW radio will sponsor the BFKS event in Mentor at Freeway Lanes. They will be doing live cut-ins and giving away prizes throughout the afternoon.

One of the most important aspects of the event, according to Kehres, is that the monies raised will go directly into expanding existing programs. That means that more children will be able to get a Big Brother or Big Sister of their own and that more after-school programs for children in grades three through five can be started in the coming school year.

By announcing open registration to the general public, BBBSNEO hopes to attract more bowlers to the event. "We have over 36 boys and girls on our list waiting for a Big Brother or Big Sister", says Kehres. "Most of those are boys, and we are actively seeking men aged 18 and older to help us give these kids a Big Brother of their own. The revenues from Bowl For Kids' Sake will allow us to recruit more volunteers and create matches for these children."

Big Brothers Big Sisters asks that anyone interested in bowling, or becoming an event or prize sponsor to contact the agency at 440-352-2526/1-800-222-2440 for more information.

Big Brothers Big Sisters is the oldest and largest youth mentoring organization in the US. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio is a non-profit organization that has been part of the local community for over 40 years. It provides mentors to children in Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula counties through two separate and distinct mentoring programs. The programs are available at no cost to the children and their families.

In their traditional "match" program, caring adult volunteers, age 18 and older, are matched with children, age six to 15, in one-on-one relationships. Mentors do not take the place of the parent(s) but provide another adult figure that offers consistent support and friendship. The second program offered by the agency focuses on supplying mentors to elementary school children in an after school setting. At present, 16 after-school programs are being held in elementary schools for children in grades three to five. The programs are designed to help the children develop positive attitudes toward school, build self-esteem and have fun while improving their natural abilities and social skills.

Independent studies have proven that children matched with a Big Brother or Big Sister are:

- 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs
- 52% less likely to skip school
- 33% less likely to exhibit violent behavior

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For children who participate in an after-school mentoring program:

- 64% have a more positive attitude toward school
- 58% get higher grades
- 60% improve peer relationships
- 64% develop higher levels of self esteem

The goal of BBBSNEO is to provide a mentor to every child who needs and wants one.

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