



**Big Brothers Big Sisters**  
of Northeast Ohio

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**For Immediate Release**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **January is National Mentoring Month**

#### ***Big Brothers Big Sisters Needs Support to Help More Kids Beat the Odds***

Painesville, Ohio—December 18, 2009— In recognition of national Mentoring Month, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio is calling on not only volunteers, but donors as well, to provide support for thousands of children who need mentors and positive role models in their lives. Big Brothers Big Sisters is the nation's largest donor-supported volunteer network of long-term mentors for youth, providing matching, screening and ongoing support for their "Bigs" and "Littles".

"Our priority and what differentiates Big Brothers Big Sisters is our commitment to providing long-term mentoring, resulting in proven positive educational and social changes that improve kids' chances to succeed," says Tim Kehres, executive director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio. "Donor support is critical. Donors enable us to continue to provide more children each year with an adult mentor who will broaden their life experiences, help them see their own potential, provide a good example, offer guidance and become a friend they can count on."

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This year the children in the agency's after school and lunch buddy mentoring programs will be making cards and creating keepsakes and mementos that they will present to their Big Brothers and Big Sisters to thank them for all they do. High school mentors will also be recognized in their school announcements and newsletters.

According to Carole Niebes, director of after school programs, "Our high school mentors are wonderful assets. Their dedication and generosity of spirit provide invaluable support to their Little Brothers and Sisters."

Independent research shows that Big Brothers Big Sisters improves the odds that the children they serve will succeed educationally and socially. It finds that Littles are more likely than their peers to have better school attendance, improved behavior -- avoiding violence and illegal activities -- more self-respect and more self confidence.

The children the agency serves are among America's most vulnerable, whether they have one parent, live in households experiencing poverty or have a parent who is incarcerated. There are many more boys than girls waiting to be matched. This month, with emphasis on mentoring, the organization is hoping males, 18 and older, will step forward to become Big Brothers. They are also hoping that donations will come in as well, so that they can help even more children beat the odds.

For more information on Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio, how to become a Big Brother or Big Sister, or ways to donate contact the agency at 440-352-2526 or long onto their website at [www.bbbsneo.org](http://www.bbbsneo.org).

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### **About Big Brothers Big Sisters**

Big Brothers Big Sisters is the oldest, largest and most effective youth mentoring organization in the US. Big Brothers Big Sisters has been the leader in one-to-one youth service for more than a century developing positive relationships that have a direct and lasting impact on the lives of young people.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio is a non-profit organization that has been part of the local community for more than 40 years. They provide mentors to children, ages six through 18, through two separate and distinct mentoring programs in Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula counties.

In their traditional "match" program, caring adult volunteers, age 18 and older, are matched with children, age six to 15 years, in one-to-one relationships. The agency also operates after-school and Lunch Buddy mentoring programs that are designed to help elementary school children in grades three through five develop positive attitudes toward school, build self-esteem and have fun while improving their natural abilities and social skills. The agency also operates and administers the Big Brothers Big Sisters E CITY Lake County program, an entrepreneurship and life skills class at Harvey High School in Painesville. The goal of BBBSNEO is to provide a mentor to every child who needs and wants one. The programs are available at no cost to the children and their families.

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

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

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