



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release**

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IMPORTANT GRANT AWARDED TO SUPPORT MENTORING PROGRAMS FOR OHIO CHILDREN OF PRISONERS

Painesville, Ohio – December 15, 2010 – A \$1.5 million grant has been awarded to a collaboration of Ohio Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies to support mentoring programs for children of prisoners.

The grant, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is initially for fiscal year 2010-2011 and includes the opportunity to receive two additional years of funding at the same amount each year.

The Ohio collaboration of Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies, known as Big Brothers Big Sisters Amachi Ohio, will match mentors with 433 children whose parents are incarcerated in the first year, and a total of 1,500 new matches over the three-year period. The collaboration will also be able to continue to serve an additional 476 Ohio children of incarcerated parents who are already matched with mentors.

Locally, the number of incarcerated persons with children continues to rise. This poses a significant risk to the children involved. Research indicates 70% of children of incarcerated parents become incarcerated themselves. Without early intervention, at the point of incarceration, the cycle may never be broken.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio is currently in the process of hiring a regional outreach and training manager who will coordinate the Amachi Ohio program across Northeast Ohio. The successful candidate will identify children of incarcerated parents, recruit volunteers to become their mentors and assist with training those volunteers.

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Grant for Mentoring Children of Prisoners cont.

“The children served by Big Brothers Big Sisters Amachi Ohio are among the most vulnerable in our state,” said Tim Kehres of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio. “This grant will allow us to match adults with more children of prisoners in one-to-one mentoring relationships. The mentor serves as a resource, support system, confidante, friend and role model to the child to help him or her decrease the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors.

The service area of the program includes more than 6.3 million people and 31,100 children of incarcerated parents. Youth must be between the ages of 4-18 to participate in the program. Nearly four out of five in the existing program are currently being raised by single mothers and nearly four out of five live in households with annual incomes of less than \$30,000.

“We are thrilled by this opportunity to address the needs of Ohio’s most disadvantaged children,” said John Neville, President of the Ohio Big Brothers Big Sisters State Association. “Mentoring has the potential to transform lives. On behalf of the children of Ohio, we thank all those who lent their support to our grant proposal and helped make this possible.”

Supporting the proposal were: Senator Sherrod Brown; Senator George V. Voinovich; Representative Mary Jo Kilroy; Representative Patrick J. Tiberi; African Methodist Episcopal Church Bishop C. Garnett Henning; Limited Brands, Inc. Philanthropy Manager Todd Tuney; The Ohio Benefit Bank Director Shannon D. Teague; Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Director Douglas E. Lumpkin; Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Director and Ohio Ex-Offender Reentry Coalition Chairman Ernie L. Moore; Columbus Urban League President & CEO Eddie Harrell, Jr. and Rev. Dr. W. Wilson Goode, Sr.

For more information about Big Brothers Big Sisters Amachi Ohio, or to refer a child, visit AmachiOhio.org. To learn more about Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio, or to become a Big Brother or Big Sister, log onto the agency’s website www.bbbsneo.org or call 440-352-2526.

About Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio, is a donor and volunteer supported mentoring network that has been providing mentors to children in Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula counties for more than 40 years. The programs, offered free of charge, include:

the traditional “match” program that matches caring adult volunteers, age 18 and older, with children between the ages of six through 15

after school mentoring programs that utilize high school student volunteers to mentor elementary school children in grades three through five one day a week after school

lunch buddy mentoring which recruits senior citizens to mentor children in grades three through five in their elementary school during their lunch hour

Big Brothers Big Sisters/ E City Lake County, an entrepreneurial/business class, that recruits local business men and women to mentor high school students enrolled in the class and offer guidance and advice as they create

a business and produce a product

Amachi Ohio program which matches children, ages four through 18, of incarcerated parents with a trained adult volunteer

Grant for Mentoring Children of Prisoners cont.

Big Brothers Big Sisters believes every child has the ability to succeed and thrive in life. Most children served by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio are in single-parent households. SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) has given Big Brothers Big Sisters the designation of effective program for the prevention of drug and alcohol use by youth. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has given Big Brothers Big Sisters the designation of Blueprint Program.

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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