



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Northeast Ohio

Media Contact:
Lynne Strah
Director of Marketing & Communications
440-352-2526
lstrah@bbbsneo.org

PRESS RELEASE

CHARITY FUNDRAISER CAPTURES THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio Festival of Trees Gala Lights Up The Night and The Future of Area Youth

Painesville, Ohio — October 19, 2009 — There will be much glitter and sparkle as the 8th annual Festival of Trees Gala, benefitting the mentoring programs of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio, kicks off the holiday season on Friday, November 20 in the Grand Ballroom at Quail Hollow Resort in Concord.

The elegant, black-tie evening will begin at 6:00 p.m. with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres accompanied by harpist, Xiao Lei Salovara. Dinner and a Designer Dessert Dash will be followed by the always competitive live and silent auctions of designer-decorated holiday theme trees conducted by auctioneer Bob Hale.

The 13 trees featured in this year's event incorporate themes that range from the whimsical to the comical to the practical and include: It's A Wonderful Life, "Snow" One Like My Man, The Believe Tree, Winter Fun, A Christmas Tea, Mardi Gras, The Ohio State Tree and the Wizard of Oz tree. GE Lighting & Industrial will be sponsoring "A National Tradition Goes Green" tree that incorporates gold stars and energy efficient lights from the 2008 National Christmas tree with an estimated value of \$2,500. MC2STEM high school students (GE—Nela Park) will be designing an "It's Not Easy Being Green" tree that includes a device that collects solar energy and converts it into electricity, stores it and uses it to power the light on the tree.

The highlight of the evening will be the live auction of select tiers of the organization's signature seven-tiered wine tree which holds over 250 bottles of wine. The top level of the tree features a magnum of wine and a one-week stay at a stunning vacation home at the Sea Pines Plantation on Hilton Head Island. The vacation home, donated by Dave and Judi Crockett of the Crockett Team, is located off the 18th fairway of the Heritage Golf Course, a short walk from Harbour Town, and boasts four master suites, each with a private veranda, 4 1/2 baths, a gourmet kitchen, swimming pool and hot tub.

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New this year will be a performance by professional dancers from WHYM dance studios in Chagrin Falls that will take place after the auction. In addition to performing several dances, the dancers will offer guests dance lessons. And, the culmination of the evening's festivities will feature DJ Dan Diamond who will provide music for dancing after the performances.

This year's event sponsors Fairmount Minerals and tec, inc.

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.

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 years, in one-to-one relationships. The agency also operates after-school and Lunch Buddy mentoring programs that are designed to help grade 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.

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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