



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release**

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BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS 9TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF TREES GALA A DELIGHTFUL WAY TO START THE HOLIDAY SEASON

Benefit Brings Hope and Happiness to Area Children

Painesville, Ohio – November 1, 2010 – Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio announces their 9th annual Festival of Trees Gala will be held on Friday, November 19 at Quail Hollow Resort in Concord. This year's Gala, a black-tie optional benefit for the non-profit agency, is the perfect way to begin the holiday season and capture the warmth and good cheer that comes along with it. Advance reservations are required and all proceeds will go to support the mentoring programs offered by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio.

Guests will be treated to a breathtaking display of 17 exquisitely decorated holiday trees, many valued at thousands of dollars, in themes ranging from the classically whimsical to the outrageously modern. The trees, and more than 40 gift baskets, will be part of silent and live auctions conducted throughout the evening by premier auctioneer, Bob Hale.

The evening will begin at 6:00 p.m. with cocktails and hors 'oeuvres accompanied by the music of harpist, Xiao Lei Salovara followed by a specially prepared dinner featuring Jonny spice crusted prime rib with horseradish cream au jus. A vegetarian menu will also be available. Dessert will be an exciting affair, as guests join in the traditional Dessert Dash. A program highlight will be the live auction of select tiers of the organizations signature seven-tiered Wine Tree which holds over 250 bottles of wine. The top tier and last auction item of the evening features a magnum of wine and a week stay at a luxurious vacation home in beautiful Sea Pines Plantation on Hilton Head Island.

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BBBSNEO Festival of Trees Gala cont.

Tree themes this year include “I’m Dreaming of a White Christmas” decorated by Dianne Mull and Susan Sorensen; “Everyone Wishes for Silver and Gold” by Karen Szmanie Interiors and Brenda Schultz of Somrak Kitchens; “Blue Christmas” by GE Lighting; “Christmas is Key” by the MC² Stem High School; “Beach” decorated by the Kent State University Student Nurses Association; “Harry Potter” by RRRL Design; and a “Man Tree” decorated by Karen Hayes Interiors which comes complete with a NFL Game Rocker with a built-in wireless speaker system.

This year’s Gala major event sponsors are Fairmount Minerals, and the John and Susan Turben Foundation.

As a donor and volunteer-based organization, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio relies on fundraisers for operating revenue. The Festival of Trees Gala is one such fundraising event that supports the on-going mentoring services the agency provides to more than 270 children in Lake, Geauga and Ashtabula counties. All proceeds from the event will go directly into maintaining current mentoring programs.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio invites everyone to ring in the holidays and embrace the spirit of the season by participating in this delightful charity event. They suggest that if you are unable to attend you can still support the event by contributing a monetary donation or auction items.

To learn more about Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio and the Festival of Trees Gala log onto the agency’s website www.bbbsneo.org or call 440-352-2526.

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 tradition “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

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.

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

