



PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release**

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NATION'S LARGEST MENTORING NETWORK URGES AMERICANS TO *START SOMETHING*™ TO HELP KIDS SUCCEED IN, OUT OF THE CLASSROOM

January is National Mentoring Month

Painesville, Ohio – January 6, 2011 – This January, as part of National Mentoring Month, Big Brothers Big Sisters launches *Start Something*™, a national initiative inviting all adults – not just volunteers-to support quality mentoring to help children who face adversity beat the odds.

The nation's leader in quality one-to-one youth mentoring services, Big Brothers Big Sisters holds itself accountable for and is able to measure specific youth outcomes—educational achievement, avoidance of risky behaviors (especially juvenile delinquency), higher self-esteem, confidence and ability to relate to others. *Start Something* challenges Americans to get involved by donating, sharing mentoring success stories or volunteering. Increased funding will allow Big Brothers Big Sisters to carefully make more mentoring matches and provide ongoing assistance for mentors, mentees and families to help sustain long successful relationships unique to its programs.

“We know the serious risks – high dropout rates, juvenile crime, teen pregnancy-facing today's youth and we know all too well what happens when we do nothing. *Start Something* empowers Americans to become a part of a proven solution,” said Timothy Kehres, executive director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio. “We are proud of all who take the initiative to *Start Something*. What better time than now, National Mentoring Month, to start a child on the road to success? When our kids improve in and out of school, the entire nation succeeds.”

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Start Something/Mentoring Month cont.

The empowering new campaign highlights the amazing achievements of the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, and encourages donations to support this engine of positive, personal change. The campaign highlights the life-changing impact of the one-on-one relationships through real life stories and inspiring imagery. PSA's will be distributed to media outlets nationwide and will run in time and space donated by the media.

According to Kehres, "National Mentoring Month draws attention to the wonderful contribution our volunteers makes. But we hope they know that we appreciate what they do every day of the year."

To learn more about Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Ohio, to refer a child, 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 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. 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.

Big Brothers Big Sisters programs are based on a data-proven model focused on creating and sustaining strong and long mentoring matches. Longstanding research by Public Private Ventures, a national nonprofit research and program development organization, found that after 18 months of spending time with wither Bigs, the Little Brothers and Little Sisters, compared to those children not in the program are:

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