



**Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Mendocino County**

"Changing perspectives, changing lives"

Monday, November 09, 2009

Dear Community Member,

If you are wondering how you can really make a difference in the lives of the young girls and boys in our community, I hope my story will help you decide.

Growing up on the Mendocino coast I was surrounded by natural beauty, yet struggled with isolation, poverty and homelessness. By 7th grade I started to pull away from school convinced I didn't belong. My attendance and grades started to sink. Luckily I was referred to the Big Brothers Big Sisters program by a teacher who believed mentoring would help me to feel more confident and connected to school. She was right. Our local Big Brothers Big Sisters program helped me to feel as if I mattered at a time when that was what I most needed.

I now have the honor of giving back to the program that shaped my life, and I'm asking you to join me. There are kids out there who need our help.

This year's giving is more critical than ever in the light of changing economic circumstances. After seeing the values of many assets decline, we all are more aware of the importance of investing wisely -- and that includes our investments in community organizations. You want to be sure you are spending limited resources on what really 'makes a difference.' The data backs up your investment in Big Brothers Big Sisters: both national studies and local outcomes show that youth who participate in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program are more likely to succeed at school, feel connected to their peers and teachers, and resist drugs and violence.

We all know youth today carry big future responsibilities, such as developing a sustainable economy, caring for the baby boom generation, and addressing growing environmental concerns. We are counting on today's youth to grow up to become adults who will take seriously these responsibilities and rise to these challenges. **Your donation to Big Brothers Big Sisters programs invests in the future of the communities we love by helping our youth-- our future leaders-- to succeed.**

Please take a look at the enclosed 2009 Annual Report to see the successes that we have been able to achieve with community support. Last year we provided comprehensive services to more than 735 local youth and their families. Teachers reported that 70% of our mentored youth improved their homework completion and more than 59% improved in math.

If you want to see this success continue, your help is urgently needed. BBBS is facing the loss of \$500,000 per year in grant funding starting in mid-2010. Local support will 'keep the lights on' and the doors open at our after school, mentoring and youth development programs, which are offered year round at no cost to youth and families. Just like you, we work hard to be frugal and stretch our limited resources to serve as many youth as possible. We match your financial donation with local and national grants, time invested by community volunteers, in-kind donations, and discounts on materials and supplies.

Please join me in investing in the future of our youth by donating to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mendocino County.

Sincerely,

Jez Anderson

Jez Anderson, MS, Executive Director

P.S. 100% of your donation will support local programs for local youth. Thank you!



Spotlight on What Works: School-Based Mentoring



Celebrating a new match in Fort Bragg, Fall 2009

Local high school and middle school students are developing their communication, compassion and confidence by mentoring younger peers.

In Ukiah, Anderson Valley, Fort Bragg, Mendocino, Laytonville and, soon, Potter Valley, BBBS partners with local schools to offer mentoring programs tailored to needs of individual students.

Why Mentoring At School?

School-based mentoring has been proven both locally and nationally to help youth improve their grades, attendance and sense of confidence at school.

Teachers, administrators, and parents agree. Mentoring works and students want this program—they are excited to sign up and be matched as Bigs (mentors) and Littles (mentees).

Ask Cailin. Now an 8th grader at the Laytonville Middle School, Cailin (pictured below with her Big Sister) was a Little through the Buddy Program. "I liked being in the Buddy Group because I got a new friend. She helped me with homework, and I liked being able to talk to someone I could trust."

In Ukiah, BBBS partners with Ukiah High School leadership students, who mentor Yokayo elementary students.

Robert L. Dieffenbach Jr., Director of Student Activities at Ukiah High School, commends the program. "Big Brothers and Sisters provides our Leadership students with the **opportunity to improve their communication skills while acting as role models.** They also gain empathy by learning about some of the issues their younger peers face today."

"Yokayo is so grateful for the service we receive from the BBBS young adults," According to **Yokayo School Principal, Carl Morgensen,** "The relationships developed by BBBS young adults with our students are a **bright spot in the lives."**

Anderson Valley Elementary School Principal Donna Pierson-Pugh agrees: "The BBBS program has been a great asset in our school district. We focus on meeting the needs of the whole child, and the Big Brothers and Big Sisters have **helped strengthen the assets of some of our neediest students.**" Pierson-Pugh adds "Anderson Valley students have shown steady improvement in their scores and BBBS has been an important part of that."

BBBS is seeking donations for upcoming fundraising events to help preserve school-based mentoring programs For information please email bbbs@mcn.org.

Mentoring, After-School Support, Character Building

**2008 Report:
735 Youth Served**

- 335 youth participated in our **high school mentoring program**
- 39 youth were **mentored by adults** in our 'core' program
- 29 youth participated in Friday Night Live **drug and alcohol resistance mentoring**
- 40 youth received **behavior and emotional support** from our Project Counselor
- 163 youth cooked, hiked, participated in anti-bias groups & created art with a professional artists in our **¿Que Onda?/What's Up? After School Program**
- 30 youth participated in **Teen Peer Court.**
- 278 youth attended **"Character Counts" and GRIP (Gang Resistance is Paramount) classes.**

**Changing Perspectives,
Changing Lives:**

In 2009, an independent study of our local BBBS programs found:

- 70% of mentored children evaluated showed improvement in their ability to complete homework.
- 63% improved (or were already graded "excellent") in reading
- 59% improved in math

Source: 2008-2009 Evaluation Report to the U.S. Department of Education



Cailin, left, and her Big Sister Keeley, were matched through BBBS Buddy Program in Laytonville schools.

Cooking Up Healthy Fun With the ¿Que Onda? What's Up? After-School Program

Each Monday afternoon when the bell rings a group of Fort Bragg middle and high school students head to the kitchen at a nearby church to learn about cooking, and themselves, in the Que Onda/What's Up After School program. Guest chefs and BBBS activity leaders help students to research and select recipes, and prepare a meal together. The highlight of the afternoon is, of course, meal time, when all sit down together and enjoy a 'home cooked' meal. Que Onda is generously supported by local churches, businesses, and individuals, as well as a grant from the United Way of Wine Country and a federal Title II prevention grant.

Leadership for Youth. Our volunteer Board of Directors meet monthly to set policy, review finances and determine strategic direction. Each year, our agency undergoes an annual independent financial audit. Audited financial statements are available upon request.

Our Budget for the fiscal year July 2009-June 2010 requires \$681,234 income. Once again this year, local donations and fundraising events are crucial to balance our budget. **To assure we can provide the services we're planning to offer in 09-10, we need to raise \$60,000 this year in local donations and fundraising events. With your support, we can do it! Last fiscal year we raised \$53,838.**

Looking ahead we are faced with the reality that this is our final year of our two largest grants. April 2010 we will see the end of our three year \$327,000 per year grant which supports a broad range of effective intervention and prevention programs in Fort Bragg. October 2010 our \$200,000 per year Department of Education grant will expire.

Moving forward is our focus. Working with community leaders, parents, advocates and other BBBS supporters, we are seeking new resources and partnerships to support effective programs for youth. You are invited to get involved, have fun, and help us to change lives by changing perspectives.

BBBS Board of Directors 2009

Apryl Bonham, President
 Mark Johnson, Vice President
 Margaret McClure, Secretary
 Joel Borges
 Steve Horne
 Linda Eyerly

*Changing Perspectives
 Changing Lives*



Discover the Power of One: Mentor.

Local History, Local Future

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mendocino County was founded as a nonprofit (501c3) organization in 1974 to help the community meet the needs of local children.

Today, 35 years later we have served thousands of youth, helping them to *change their lives by changing their perspectives.*

We rely on our local communities to support programs that work. Each year, over 300 businesses, 500 individuals and 100 organizations donate directly or by supporting one of our benefit events.

We are deeply touched and honored by your support. We are committed to making a difference for years to come.

Thank you!

BBBS Staff 2009

Jez Anderson, *Executive Director*
 Melissa Schlafer, *Operations Manager*
 Wonnell Dawe, *Fiscal Manager*
 Patti McCluey, *Senior Case Manager*
 Seanen Bevilacqua, *Assist. Case Manager*
 Miranda Ramos, *Program Coordinator*
 Janette Ornelas, *Bilingual Case Manager*
 Amy Kincaide, *Prevention Case Manager*
 Celeste Echeverria, *AV Case Manager*
 Karen McDonell, *After School Activities*
 Ben Abell, *After School Activities*
 Adrian Brumley, *MCP Case Manager*
 Emily Husson, *VISTA Volunteer*
 Kathryn Castro, *Office Assistant*



KEEPING THE LIGHT ON FOR OUR YOUTH
21st Annual
**MENDOCINO COAST
 Candlelight
 Inn Tour**
 DECEMBER 9TH-10TH-11TH 2009

Innkeepers of the finest retreats and coziest lodges of Albion, Little River, Mendocino and Fort Bragg invite you to celebrate the season with festive decorations, a bounteous array of food and drink, and a peek at accommodations available to visitors.

New this year, enjoy live music by young performers and an art show and sale of original work by local youth.

Tickets \$25/\$10 youth. Link to all 16 participating inns, find local ticket outlets, or purchase tickets online www.mendocinoinntour.com.



Fort Bragg Big Sister (right) mentors her Little each week at Dana Grey Elementary School.