



BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF WARREN COUNTY

2008 Changing How Our Children Grow Up In Warren County



New School Programs Open New Opportunities for Warren County Kids

Fall 2008 was a busy and exciting time for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Warren County as they kicked off new school-based mentoring programs in Washington Township and Hackettstown School Districts.

Volunteers in the school-based mentoring program meet with their Little Brother or Little Sister at their school one lunch period a week. The two generally hang out, read, play games. The simple act of spending time together forms a friendship between the Big and Little that lasts beyond the lunch hour.

With programs already in place in the Phillipsburg, Belvidere, and White School Districts, the opportunity for growth in the other end of the county was made possible in part by a grant from the Hoop-a-paluzza foundation and funding

Big Impact Through “Fun”raising Efforts

This year’s fundraisers continued our tradition of enabling more matches through volunteer, community, and corporate support and participation.

Bowl For Kids’ Sake, The Turtle Race, *Fall Into Fun* Tricky Tray, the Dustin Merunka Memorial Swim-A-Thon and Run For Kids’ Sake all proved to be a successful combination of community support and fundraising.

As our largest and longest running campaign, this year’s 24th Bowl for Kid’s Sake helped raise \$47,699 with community days at Oakwood and Warren Lanes. With a newly added online fundraising tool, participants found this year’s BFKS more interactive. The 468 participants who came out found it was less about actually bowling and more about bringing together the community for a good time and a great cause.

Local school groups at our three Rock n Bowl events raised \$6,649 for BFKS, making our April bowling campaign the year’s most successful fundraiser. It’s no wonder people are already talking about Bowl for Kid’s Sake 2009!

We also saw an increase in participation at this year’s 5th Annual Turtle Race held in August at the Warren County Farmer’s Fair. The

from Mars Snackfood and White Township School District.

“Mars Snackfood held a Corporate Bowl for Kids’ Sake event in June to help fund the Hackettstown program and we are lucky enough to be working with the Washington Township School District and Hoop-A-Paluzza for funding the program in Port Colden and Brass Castle Elementary Schools,” said BBBSWC Executive Director Karen Cassano.

With 147 school-based matches in October, 2008, the new programs promise to deliver more opportunities for making Little Moments Big Magic.

Interested in volunteering as a School-Based Big? Contact BBBSWC for more information about how you can have a part in Changing How Our Children Grow Up in Warren County.

event really gained a following this year as the turtles raced downstream despite the rainy weather. Raising \$3,124 through the sale of turtles and the sponsorship of local businesses, our Turtle Race continues to provide fun and success each year.

Summer brought the Dustin Merunka Memorial Swim-A-Thon as our friends and supporters took to the water. This year’s committee was instrumental in organizing the event. Held in July at the Washington Borough Pool, the day included swimming laps, fun relays, and a volleyball game. Through the efforts of the event’s committee, sponsorships, the swimmers and their fans, BBBSWC was the recipient of the \$2,201 raised.

In September we threw open the doors to our biggest tricky tray event yet. Held at the Comfort Inn in Mansfield with dinner from Mama’s & Café Basi for the first time, this year’s event was a huge success. The 135 attendees had the chance to win prize packages from local businesses, Longaberger items and lia sophia jewelry. Our Tricky Tray sent lucky winners home with baskets, pottery, necklaces, earrings and more while raising over \$4,750 to benefit expanding our programs. “Fun”Raising continued on page 2

Spotlight On A Match



Little Brother Frank and Big Brother Tyler

It may seem like an unlikely friendship — the high school baseball player and the middle school student. But through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Warren County’s High School Bigs Program in Phillipsburg, these two have formed a friendship that both say impacted their lives.

“Having Frank as my Little Brother has made me realize how being there for someone and doing what you can to make their life better and improve how they feel, can help them achieve all the goals they would like,” said Big Brother Tyler of his match. From his Little Brother, Tyler says he’s learned how to open up, make new friends and to be creative and enjoy what he has in his own life.

The two meet once a week after school at the Reach program. Their favorite match activities are hanging out, playing board games, making paper airplanes, and even working on a little homework.

“Tyler helped me become more social. I look up to him,” Little Frank said of their match, now in its’ second year. “I’ll be a good Big one day because I was a Little.”

With Big & Little looking forward to spending more time together this year, both say their dream match activity would include attending a professional sporting event.

“My wish for Frank is to grow up to have a good family, job, and excel in other aspects of his life,” Tyler said of looking towards the future for his Little. “I want him to enjoy himself.”

Proof of how strong this unlikely friendship has grown — Frank wishes the same thing for Tyler in the future. Adding only, that he wants to see him win a lot of baseball games.

THE BIG PICTURE



Welcome to Our “Big Family”

Becoming involved with BBBSWC as a Big Family was easy for our family. We each knew we wanted to help...to be involved... but who had the time? School, PTA, soccer, basketball...each of us had so many responsibilities on our own it just couldn't be done...or could it? Maybe the answer wasn't which ONE of us would become a “Big”, maybe the answer would be that we ALL would be “Bigs”.. “A Big Family”!

My wife, MaryAnn along with our son, Justin, talked about it and decided we would like to welcome a “Little” into our family. We knew it would be a big responsibility but we also knew it would be a shared responsibility with each of us contributing time and interest to help make our new “family” member grow and learn in a caring environment.

“Fun”raising continued

Runners and walkers took to the road for October's 6th Annual Run For Kids' Sake presented by Coventry Family Practice. This year's racers had clear skies for the 5K run and 2 mile walk through the Spruce Run Recreation Area, raising more than \$3,200. The top three male and female overall winners along with top performers in each age group were honored with awards.

This year's fundraising was a winning combination of support and community participation, business sponsors,



Several members of the 11 Mallinckrodt Baker Inc. teams that helped raise over \$11,000 for BFKS

The decision is one of the best we have ever made. Over the past three years we have shared many afternoons with our “little” playing games, listening to stories about his latest fishing adventure or attending BBBSWC events. We have come to know his family as new and supportive friends. Perhaps most importantly we have seen growth, maturity and an increased willingness on the part of our “Little” to share his life with us.

One of the great things about being a Big Family is that it didn't take time away from our family being together.

We would be glad to share our experience with any other family contemplating becoming a “Big Family.” It is an exciting and satisfying experience that you will treasure for a lifetime.

— The Simmons Family

& community participation. Fundraising efforts and community support continue to make possible growth of our agency and successful matches.

We have a lot planned for 2009 and are always looking for event-participants and volunteers. Keep looking for more information on these events in your mailbox or on our website www.bbbsowc.org

BBBSWC would like to thank everyone who supported this year's events — we look forward to seeing you in 2009!

Things You May Not Know About Big Brothers Big Sisters

- ◆ Littles are children in the community who benefit from the time and attention of a caring adult to share everyday, life experience with
- ◆ 100% of matched children remain alcohol & drug free
- ◆ Bigs are older, more experienced adults who volunteer to spend a few hours a month with a child and make lasting impacts on their life
- ◆ Littles teach their Bigs how to be a kid again
- ◆ Our volunteer opportunities are flexible to suit your lifestyle
- ◆ Bigs are cheerleaders and confidantes
- ◆ Improved family relationships, attitude towards school, and social interactions were evident in more than half of BBBSWC 2007 matches
- ◆ You don't need a special skill to be a Big, most Littles say they like hanging out best
- ◆ It only takes a few hours each month to be a Big
- ◆ You can help Big Brothers Big Sisters in other ways too, by giving a hand at our fundraising events
- ◆ If you can't be a Big, you can donate event tickets or gift certificates to share with our Bigs and Littles
- ◆ Spreading the word to someone you know who would make a great Big is another way you can help us impact a child's life

We recently asked our matches to complete a survey with questions designed for both the Big and the Little. The idea was to give the people who really are the heart of the agency a chance to get their voices heard about what being part of BBBSWC means to them.

The results were heartwarming, inspiring, insightful and full of big magic. Here's a little of what they had to say about the program that, together, we all make possible

I'd tell someone to volunteer because being a Big doesn't take a huge commitment—just a couple of hours a few days a month to do simple things that can be so rewarding and not to mention, fun! —Big Sister, 32

Being a Big is what life is all about —Big Brother, 55

I'll be a Big when I grow up because I have had the experience of how it feels to look up to someone and I would like to be able to do that for someone else — Little Brother, 12

What I like best about my Big is that she's nice & pretty —Little Brother, 8

Being a Little sister is the best experience of my life —Little Sister, 13

Being a Big has given me insight into how children view the word. It is a great responsibility and a great privilege — Big Sister, 24

Wanted: Big Brothers to make Big Impact

You can't have a man to man talk with your mother . . . it's true, which is why BBBSWC needs Big Brothers.

There are young boys in your community that would benefit from having someone give a couple hours a month just to hang out with them, let them talk or play or just be a kid. Seventy percent of Littles are boys but only 3 out of every ten Big Brothers Big Sisters volunteer applicants are males. The need for Big Brothers is great, the possibilities are even greater.

Being a Big Brother is the opportunity for you to act like a kid and not get yelled at for it. Be silly, funny, be yourself—it'll only make them like you more.

Think about who taught you to throw a nice spiral with the football or spent the afternoon just washing the car with you. At some point in our lives we were each shaped by little moments that made big magic in who have become.

Studies show that kids who have a strong one-on-one relationship with an adult mentor do better in school, social, and family environments. Who knew you could have that impact on a child and you don't even have to change your life to accomplish it.

That's what the Little Brothers in your community need. Someone to be a role model, inspiration and mentor. To talk sports or movies or maybe even about girls!!

Being a Big Brother would be your chance to pass along what you know about sports, life, love, growing up—and come on, you probably know it all!

These are kids who just need someone to have that man-to-man talk with. Who knows, they might even have something to teach you.

So go ahead, volunteer to be a Big Brother. Everyone knows that real men MENTor.

How You Can Make a Difference Without Leaving Your Home

Dear Fellow Friend of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Warren County,

About a year ago I relocated to the area and became a Big Sister to my wonderful Little Brother Devon. I knew Big Brothers Big Sisters to be a highly reputable organization with programs that were effective and far reaching. My goal was to give back to the community by being a positive influence and making a difference in the life of a child. I had no idea what to expect. And the experience has been more than I could have been prepared for.

In one year's time I have developed a friendship with my Little Brother Devon & he has made a friend in me. My Little and all the kids I meet at his school treat me like a hero just for showing up one lunch hour a week to hang out with him.. His social skills have improved with his peers. I've become a teacher and instructor in life skills. He shows more confidence when he speaks to me and to others. My skill at playing board games is beginning to improve! His attitude and his schoolwork have improved.

My perspective of my day, week, or outlook on life can change for the better because of a 45-minute visit with my Little. Together we've done fundraising and used our so called bowling skills for "Bowl for Kids Sake". We both are working to build a relationship of trust. I went to Trenton recently to lobby on behalf of BBBS. The benefits to both of us from being matched seem endless and it would be impossible for me not to extend myself on behalf of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Warren County

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Warren County is a bridge connecting the needs of both Big's and Little's. When investing in a child's life, there is a cost. The cost is far greater if we don't invest and the child pays the price. There is great need to make the investment now. And with this in mind, I ask that you consider making a donation to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Warren County during this year's Annual Appeal. The money you send in the enclosed envelope will make a direct impact on the lives of children in Warren County. Consider donating \$20.00, or whatever you are able to give to an incredibly

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Upcoming

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Warren County Events

Bowl for Kids' Sake

April 2009

6th Annual Turtle Race

August 2009

Tricky Tray

September 2009

Run For Kids' Sake

October 2009

Agency Staff

Karen Cassano, Executive Director

Erikka Sherman, Community Development Coordinator

Marnie Carrick, Community Based Case Manager

Marianne Gano, School Based Case Manager

Walter Kilcullen, School Based Case Manager



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Warren County

A private, non-profit organization that has been helping children since 1980, we match children with caring volunteer mentors in Warren County.

Our unique prevention program targets youth between the ages of 6 and 18. Studies show that children who have a Big Brother or Big Sister have improved self-confidence, attitude towards school are more likely to remain alcohol and drug free.

For more information on how you can become involved as a volunteer or supporter, please contact Bus at 908-689-0436 or bbbswc@comcast.net.

Together we are changing how our children grow up in Warren County.



Our Programs

The *Community-Based* program entails an adult Big and a little doing everyday, life activities within the community. This can be anything from planning a menu and grocery shopping, to time in the park or washing the car together.

Part of our Community-Based Program, *Big Families* involves a family's being matched to a little. Together they enjoy activities within the community, which can involve everyday, life activities. This allows the volunteer to participate in the program in a way that includes their whole family & doesn't detract from time spent with their family.



In our *School-Based* program, adult Bigs and their Little take part in activities in a pre-scheduled, supervised school setting. In the course of one lunch period a week, these Littles and Bigs grow an amazing friendship.

Our *High School Bigs* program brings high school Bigs and Middle School Littles get together after school once a week to enjoy crafts, games, and benefits of having a mentor close in age and life experience.



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Warren County

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Be a Part of Changing How Our Children Grow Up in Warren County — Please Support BBBSWC's Annual Appeal Drive