

“Back To School” Mentors Needed

As summer winds down and children go back to school, the need for School-Based mentors increases dramatically. In a press conference held last week, Topeka Public Schools' Superintendent Dr. Julie Ford announced the goal of recruiting 100 Big Brothers Big Sisters volunteers by Labor Day, stressing the positive impact mentors have a child's life. Dr. Ford was joined at the news conference by TPS School Board President Janel Johnson, Nancy Daniels Area Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters; Miriam Krehbiel, President of United Way of Topeka; Mayor Larry Wolgast; Rev. Sarah Marsh and representatives of JUMP. In the first week, the community has responded enthusiastically with 60 people taking the first step toward applying.

Nancy Daniels, Area Director at Big Brothers Big Sisters in Topeka encourages other individuals to step up and become mentors. ***“The need for mentors is always there, but this time of the year our agency works especially hard to help children start the year on the right foot. A caring, adult mentor can make a real difference for a child facing adversity.”***

The School-Based mentoring program through Big Brothers Big Sisters is one of the most popular programs because of its flexibility for volunteers. The mentor spends just 30 minutes a week with a child building a relationship, helping them with reading and becoming a role model for the student, preparing them for success in life.

Sheriff Herman Jones has been in the program for two years and has seen noticeable changes in his Little. *“I've seen my Little Brother improve his ability to express himself as well as take responsibility for his actions and learn self control.”*

Data from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America substantiate that the mentoring program has positive academic, socio-emotional and behavioral outcomes for youth who face adversity. Reports show improvements for youth during the first year of enrollment in the program in the areas of educational success, avoidance of risky behaviors and social-emotional competency. Jones supports the program stating, *“I'm confident this program helps children make positive choices in their behavior as it relates to home, school, and community.”*

For more information on how you or your company can get involved with mentoring, go to www.kansasbigs.org or call 785-234-5524.