



Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Kansas City

Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters Funding Proposal

Brief Description of Request

Big Brothers Big Sisters has been operating since 1964 in Kansas City, and nationally is the oldest, largest, and most effective youth mentoring organization. Serving 235,000 children across the nation and 1200 in Kansas City, Big Brothers Big Sisters provides at-risk children with professionally-supported one-to-one youth mentoring, with measurable impact. While there currently are many young people in Kansas City who benefit from the presence of an adult mentor in their lives, we wish to target young people of the Jewish faith who would benefit having a mentor who would respect, encourage and enhance their culture. We are requesting funding to initiate the recruitment and matching process of volunteers and children specifically of the Jewish faith in the Kansas City area. Our goal is to serve 15 children in the first year and double the number of children served each year thereafter for the following two years.

Need for the project

Nationally, children from one parent homes make up about 25% of the school aged population in metropolitan areas, but are responsible for 90% of juvenile court cases, 90% of high school dropouts, and 60% of teen suicides. The Jewish community is not immune to this crisis--according to Jewish Family Services, there are 241 Jewish families in this community that are single parent homes. Using the average number of children per household for the area (currently 2.0), it's safe to assume that there are more than 400 Jewish children living in one parent homes. Without the positive intervention a mentor can bring, they will be at risk of not reaching their full potential. This program seeks to assist them by providing a caring adult Jewish mentor to each Jewish child who applies for our service.

Nationally, some form of a JBBBS has been in existence for over 90 years. Some of the longest serving programs are located in Los Angeles, Boston, and Baltimore. They were created in the early 1900's as a way to prevent the Jewish community from losing its most precious resource – the children – to the streets or the criminal justice system. At that time, many Jewish immigrant children were poor, lived in one-parent families, didn't have enough access to educational opportunities or simply needed guidance. Over the years as the faces and the challenges of the Jewish child changed, the programs expanded and changed to continue to meet the needs of the Jewish community. Today, while remaining dedicated to their original goals, they have added innovative services and dynamic programs to reach even more volunteers and children.

One of the most successful programs is located in Minneapolis, a community similar in size to Kansas City. Leaders in the Minneapolis Jewish community identified the need for a Jewish specific mentoring program more than 20 years ago. The program was formed in conjunction with Big Brothers Big Sisters and Jewish Family Services. The program now makes between 50-60 matches annually and employs one full-time and one part-time staff. Like other mentoring programs, it is based on knowledge gained from the BBBS model. Due to the strong and positive

Don't forget you were going to do something meaningful someday.

publicity the mentoring program has received, other programs and services of the Jewish Family Services and Children Services have gained awareness and support.

Kansas City has shown its desire and need for such a program in the Jewish Community. The Jewish Family Services and BBBS Greater Kansas City will work together to ensure that JBBBS becomes a successful program and enable the Jewish community to reach out to those who need a special mentor in their lives as well as those who have so much to give.

Target population

JBBBS is a case work service designed to establish Jewish school-aged children (aged 7-14) from single-parent or non-traditional homes in a developmental relationship with a caring adult mentor. This relationship, when properly structured and monitored by a Case Manager, will increase a child's sense of self-worth. This increase in self-worth will consequently improve personal, social and academic performance. In addition to the positive individual outcomes, the program also functions as a way to help the child grow in their Jewish faith through the positive relationship with a Jewish role model. We plan to start this program in the first quarter of 2008. Our goal is to serve 15 Jewish children in the first year, 30 in the second year and 60 children by the end of the third year. The service process is explained in the following sections.

Child's in-take process

A child will be referred to JBBBS by schools, social workers and the Jewish Family Services. Once a child is referred to JBBBS, the child and parent attend an orientation session. During the orientation, the basic Do's and Do Not's of the program are discussed, along with a review of some common issues that come up - communication, spending money, etc. Training will also discuss group activities that focus on religious and cultural activities which enhance the Jewish faith. Following the orientation, the child is assigned to a Case Manager, who makes an appointment with the family for a home visit. The home visit is designed to help the Case Manager obtain background information on the child's home environment, social adjustment and school performance and then determine the need for service. Social adjustment and school performance are determined by information obtained through reports from pertinent school and referral sources. The parent is also interviewed, once with the child and then alone, to gather details regarding the child's background. At this time, it is determined whether the child's other parent has regular contact with the child. The child is also interviewed along to gauge their interest in the program and their preferences for a suitable volunteer. Once all information has been received, the child's application is reviewed by a screening committee to determine suitability for the program. If accepted, the child will be assigned to a wait-list on this list until a suitable JBBBS volunteer can be identified.

Volunteer's in-take process

The potential BIG's assessment is very similar. Each volunteer attends an informational meeting either in a group setting or individually. The informational meeting explains the program to a potential BIG, reviews JBBBS's expectations of the volunteers and details the program's rationale, results and other related matters. At the end of the meeting, a volunteer will be able to make an informed decision to become a BIG and if they choose to, begin the assessment process.

Don't forget you were going to do something meaningful someday.

The first step in the assessment process is the completion of the written interview. In this interview, the volunteer provides JBBBS information about his/her personal history including social, family, professional and personal history. This comprehensive interview is designed to: 1) evaluate the volunteer in terms of his/her ability to work with a child, 2) commit to a long-term relationship, and 3) meet the requirements of the program. JBBBS also obtains car insurance verification. Additionally, the volunteer signs releases allowing the agency to perform a background check on his/her criminal history, history of sexual offenses, history of residence and employment history. Three references, both personal and professional, are also secured.

In addition to these steps, the agency also requires completion of a home assessment. The home assessment serves three distinct purposes: First, it allows the Case Manager to see the volunteer's home and ensure it is a safe place for a child. Secondly, it allows the Case Manager to offer volunteer-specific training to the potential BIG. Finally, it allows the Case Manager the opportunity to ask any follow-up questions that arose during the review of the written interview. Following completion of the assessment process, the information is then summarized by the Case Manager to be reviewed by the supervisor or screening committee. If accepted, the Case Manager assigned to the mentor begins the matching process by searching for suitable children to pair with that mentor.

Matching process

The matching process is conducted by a Case Manager. A mentor is provided with a non-identifying profile of several children who are potential matches. The mentor selects the child he/she deems to be the best match, and then the Case Manager presents the mentor's information to that child's parent. If the match is acceptable to the parent, a teaming meeting is held at the child's home whereby the child and parent meet the mentor. This meeting is moderated by the Case Manager and established the pairing as an official 'match'.

A mentor commits to spending two-to-four hours a week, at least three times a month, with his/her assigned child for 12 months. The match is monitored on a monthly basis by a professional Case Manager. The role of the Case Manager is to ensure that the relationship is developing and that the child's needs are being met. They are also available to serve as a connection to community resources for the child's family. In addition, JBBBS tracks the program's impact on the child through the use of six month and annual evaluations. The evaluations are designed to track the program's impact in 22 different social, academic, and developmental areas. These surveys are utilized by the individual Case Manager to assist the match's development, and also by the agency to indicate program impact. This dual purpose allows JBBBS to identify and report specific program impact results for each child and for the program as a whole.

Service goals

Our goal is to serve 15 children in the first year, 30 in the second year and 60 children by the end of the third year. As one of the key components of a successful match is longevity, the program expects to achieve a six month retention rate of 85% and a one year retention rate of 70%. As this program grows, it will provide ongoing support for children from families with special circumstances in the Jewish community.

Don't forget you were going to do something meaningful someday.

Expected Outcomes

JBBBS expects to serve 15 children the first year, 30 children in the second year, and 60 children in the third year.

A national study of the BBBS program found that children matched with an adult volunteer are:

- 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs
- 27% less likely to initiate alcohol abuse
- 52% less likely to skip school
- 37% less likely to skip a class
- more confident of their performance in school
- better able to build strong relationships in the peer groups

Additionally, local surveys indicate that kids matched in the BBBS program feel better about themselves, are more open to new ideas and opportunities, gain new interests, and are likely to recommend the program to their friends.

Based on these historical numbers, JBBBS expects the following outcomes:

- 65% of youth will report improved performance in school and show progress toward grade advancement and/or progress toward their diploma.
- 80% will have no contact with the Juvenile Justice System
- 85% will resist drug and/or alcohol abuse
- 70% will report improved family relationships
- 65% will report improved peer relationships
- 70% will report improved self-esteem, self-confidence and possess an improved outlook for the future.
- 75% of youth will report an increased knowledge of and comfort with their Jewish faith

Emerging trends and issues

Although targeted mentoring programs have been in existence for some time, current research is validating the need for these types of programs. Religious observance, social situations, and understanding of one's role in society are uniquely singular from a Jewish standpoint. As a minority, a young person's Jewish identity is certainly better served and developed by an adult of the same background. A parent involved with a similar program in another city sums up the basis for JBBBS. "We are a religious home, we have our own level of observance, and we wanted someone who would have these things in common . . . with our son."

Capacity to serve the identified population

The over-arching goal of Jewish Big Brothers Big Sisters is to provide a mentor to all Jewish children who are deemed to need additional adult involvement in their lives; hopefully they will be matched with Jewish adults. This program allows us to meet the needs of a specific population of children, who, in the past, have been underrepresented in our program.

We hope to publicize this program by using a combination of marketing techniques. Our first step will be to spread the word about both the program's function and the need for the program

Don't forget you were going to do something meaningful someday.

by meeting with individuals and groups in the Jewish community. We also hope to increase awareness through a low level marketing campaign focusing on community partners, flier distribution and some targeted media. We also plan to maintain a consistent presence by sponsoring popular events within the Jewish community. These include a Bagel Bash, Young Professional Initiative Happy Hours, and special events, including the Beat the Heat race. This is also an area that JBBBS will rely heavily on Jewish Family Services to assist with, as that agency has pledged to help build the program through word of mouth and direct referral services.

Big Brothers Big Sisters has a proven track record of success working with one parent families in Kansas City. The agency recently celebrated its 40th birthday. Over that time, more than 25,000 children have received service from the agency. More germane to this application, Big Brothers Big Sisters has experienced tremendous success with small, focused initiatives over the past decade. We have successfully opened two small offices that serve Nodaway, Andrew, and Johnson Counties in Missouri. These offices now serve close to 100 children each year. We have also opened two additional office locations in the Kansas City area. Our Wyandotte County initiative has been active for six years. This initiative started as a way to increase participating in a traditionally underserved area. Since then, we've increased the number of children served in Wyandotte County by nearly 200%. Last summer, we opened an office in Platte County with the goal of increasing the level of service in the Northland. After just six months, we are already serving 15% more children than at this point in 2006. In 2004, we engaged a population that is perhaps more at-risk than any other demographic--those children with parent in prison. In the three years since the formation of this project, we've increased the number of children of prisoners in our program by 158%. We are confident that this initiative will lead to similar results in the Jewish community.

Collaborative Efforts

The program is a joint collaboration between Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Kansas City and Jewish Family Services. The program will function as a special initiative of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Kansas City. Therefore, the program will subscribe to the BBBS standards. BBBS will assume oversight of program delivery and financial management. Jewish Family Services will provide in-kind support, office space, and guidance in growing the program in the Jewish community. The program will be advised by an advisory board of volunteers from the Jewish Community. This board will advise the organization on program and fundraising development, ensure accountability in both financial matters and program delivery, and assist with marketing and recruitment effort. The program will be led by Lucia Harding, a BBBS employee. Lucia has been a Case Manager with Big Brothers Big Sisters for six and a half years, and has been designated as a Senior Case Manager the past four years. Lucia has a Bachelors Degree from Pittsburg State and a Masters Degree in Management from Baker. She is also very active in the Jewish Community. Case Managers at Big Brothers Big Sisters must have a degree from a four year university in human services. Senior Case Managers are Case Manager who have demonstrative an ability to successfully manage their responsibilities as Case Managers as well as completing other supporting initiatives.

Children will be referred by both agencies and as a result, we will be able to reach and serve more children. Additionally, JBBBS will receive referrals from various school districts.

Don't forget you were going to do something meaningful someday.

Counselors talk to eligible children about BBBS and encourage them to seek more information about JBBBS. Secondary benefits are realized in the area of volunteer recruitment, program growth, and general community awareness of our program.

Budget

A. Specified requested amount:

We are requesting \$10,000 in for 2008

B. Total cost of project: \$52, 592 year one, \$75, 742 year two, \$90,057 year three.

C. The board of BBBSKC has pledged more than \$45,000 over a three year period to help this program get off the ground.

- Additionally, Jewish Family Services will be supporting this program by offering in-kind support of office space and assistance in targeting marketing to potential volunteers and clients.
- Cost breakdown—Once a program is established, it costs nearly \$1200 a year to establish and support a match. The majority of this cost can be accounted in the marketing necessary to recruit a volunteer, the work hours needed to effectively orient, assess, and match a client and volunteer, the cost of background checks, the cost of match insurance, and the cost of maintaining contact with and supporting a successful match. Big Brothers Big Sisters operates with very low administrative costs—according to Forbes Magazine, BBBS is one of the top 10 charities in the country based on a donor’s expected return on investment.

D. Sustainability plan

Because the costs associated with starting a new program, the cost per match will be well above our agency average--almost \$3300 for one year. As the program grows, the cost per match will drop to \$2500 per year in the second year, and \$1500 per year the third year. Eventually, the cost per match will settle at the agency average--\$1200 annually. Once the program is established, we plan to fund 50% of the budget through soliciting gifts from individual donors, 30% from special events, 10% from a used clothing business that supports Big Brothers Big Sisters, and 10% from foundation gifts.

Conclusion

Mentoring programs offer many positive outcomes for children and volunteers. These positive outcomes include primary impacts in the areas of family and peer relationships, school performance, self-esteem, drug and alcohol abuse resistance, and a positive outlook on life. Secondary impacts include the benefits of friendship, volunteers, and mentoring. Traditionally, the Jewish community has been underserved by traditional mentoring program, denying this population the chance to share in these positive outcomes. By creating a program that is designated for Jewish families and volunteers, we hope to foster an acceptance within the Jewish Community that will lead to positive outcomes for Jewish children.

Don’t forget you were going to do something meaningful someday.