

# Local News

## LAKE AREA

# 'Big' difference

Big Brothers Big Sisters seeking more volunteers to participate in program's lake-area chapter

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In today's fast-paced society, there seems to be less time for the simple things in life, such as playing catch with a boy or sitting on the front porch sipping lemonade while talking to a child about his or her day at school. This is not necessarily premeditated, but it is very real and very widespread.

With the current sluggish economy, many families rely on two incomes just to survive. This often leaves children on their own at times because their parents are out working

ey to be involved. BBBS takes time.

When an adult spends his or her time mentoring a child, that adult's life can be enriched and take on new meaning and fulfillment.

### 3 programs to choose from

BBBS knows each person's schedule is different. Therefore, they have several programs a "Big" can choose from to make it an easy match.

### BBBS'community program

A "Big" is asked to share eight hours per month for a minimum of one year with their match.

### School-based mentors

One of the easiest of all the programs begins at the start of every new school year. A school-based mentor will be matched with a child and meet at the child's school.

A "Big" visits the child for about one hour a week before or after school or during the child's lunch hour.

"One of the largest problems in our schools is at



Brett Parks drives the Celebration cruise boat on the Lake of the Ozarks on a recent trip with his "Big Brother" mentor David Creel. The Lake Area Big Brother Big Sister program matches children with adults who serve as a special friend and role model. PHOTO PROVIDED

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on two incomes just to survive. This often leaves children on their own at times because their parents are out working.

Many children are "latch-key" kids who come home to an empty house after school. Not only are both parents not there, but some work late into the evening with second jobs.

Single parents are also working several jobs just to make ends meet, again leaving the children to raise themselves.

These children need someone in their lives that can let them know they have hope and a future. They need someone who will take a little time to show them they are worth something.

The Lake Area Big Brothers and Big Sisters, BBBS, is working toward making a difference in the lives of children in the community. That mission is to increase a child's self esteem and outlook on the future by facilitating a positive one-to-one relationship with an adult role model.

BBBS reaches out to at-risk children ages six through 14 who need this extra support, guidance and encouragement.

They want to positively influence the lives of these children by uniting them with caring and committed volunteers.

A child is matched with a stable person who serves as a special friend and role model, a "Big Brother" or "Big Sister" or "Big."

## Volunteers needed

As any volunteer will say, the experience of being matched to a child is equally rewarding for the mentor. They get the opportunity to make a new friend, to have fun, to see a child grow and learn new skills, and to make a positive difference in a child's life.

BBBS is unique in that it does not take a lot of mon-

## BBBS' community program

In the Big Brother or Big Sister program, a "Big" will spend time each week for a minimum of one year with a young person ages 6 to 14 who needs a friend.

They are matched with a child in our community and encouraged to share activities.

A "Big" can share his or her favorite hobbies, sports, talents or places with a child.

This exposes the child to new interests they can later use to go on to excel in, thus building his or her self esteem.

## Big couples

In the BBBS Couple Program a "Big" and their spouse are matched with a child and encouraged to share everyday activities together.

This program is designed for couples who want to volunteer as mentors together. Many children have never experienced a caring and healthy marriage relationship.

during the child's lunch hour.

"One of the largest problems in our schools is attendance," said Bev Kincaide, guidance counselor at the School of the Osage Upper Elementary.

"Knowing that he/she is going to see their "Big" is often the motivation necessary to get a child to come to school in the morning."

Volunteers for the school program must be 16 or older and are able to meet with the children only at the school.

A "Big" can bolster a child's confidence just by just being his or her friend, and letting him or her know he or she cares about and believes in the child.

To get started or for more information, call Susan Creel, lake area program director at 573-964-6112 or email her at [screelbbs@yahoo.com](mailto:screelbbs@yahoo.com) or visit them on the web at [www.lakebbs.org](http://www.lakebbs.org).



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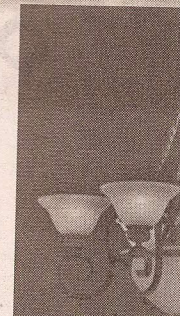
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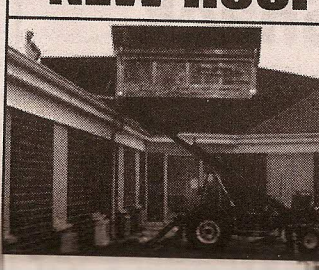
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