

# PRESS RELEASE

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## MENTORING YOUTH WORKS IN JACKSON COUNTY!

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JACKSON (January 19, 2010) – Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) and other area mentoring groups are celebrating January as **National Mentoring Month**. A BBBS survey reports that 87% of the mentees had increased self-esteem and 80% felt a better sense of the future due to their mentoring relationships. Mentoring not only benefits the individual child, but these positive outcomes benefit the entire community. Additionally, 70% of the youth said they were more able to make positive decisions as a result of the mentoring.

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) provides evidence-based mentoring programs for Jackson County youth and holds a prevention license for operating a Substance Abuse Program from the Michigan Department of Community Health. BBBS partners with the Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (JCSAPC), the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative (TPPI) and other prevention efforts to help make our community better for all. “When a youth is provided with a mentor their self esteem increases, and they are better equipped to make decisions that make a positive impact on their lives, which creates a ripple effect for the community,” says Erica Vogel, Executive Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters.

In a national independent study done by Public/Private Ventures, children who are matched with a “Big” are:

- 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs
- 27% less likely to begin using alcohol,
- 53% less likely to skip school,
- 50% more likely to go to all classes,
- 33% less likely to hit someone,
- Get along better with their teachers and parents.

For some children, having a BBBS mentor can provide them with stability they may not otherwise receive. Raising strong kids in our community is a preventative effort, which will ultimately strengthen our community.

BBBS will be holding a Mentor Appreciation & Awards brunch to recognize the tremendous good that mentors do in and for our community at 10 AM on January 30<sup>th</sup> at the Salvation Army (RSVP is required). In addition, BBBS also recognizes community supporters, such as the Jackson Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition and Mid South Substance Abuse Commission for their consistent support of mentoring in Jackson. Big Brothers Big Sisters currently supports 165 Jackson area youth in a mentoring relationship (an increase from 99 active youth at year end 2008). There are several kids “on deck” waiting for a “BIG” to share their time and friendship with.

### **More information about:**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Jackson County, please contact Karen Smith at (517) 784-7181 or e-mail [office@bbbsjackson.org](mailto:office@bbbsjackson.org). Interested parties can also visit BBBS on-line and sign up to mentor, donate or get involved at [www.bbbsjackson.org](http://www.bbbsjackson.org)

*Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition* and its activities, please contact Kelsey Haynes at (517) 796-5133 or via email at [khaynes@uwjackson.org](mailto:khaynes@uwjackson.org)