

## The Buddy Program Guide for Parents

- Benefits of Mentoring: Young people who have *more* caring adults in their lives do better in school, engage in fewer risky behaviors, and are more likely to become caring, healthy, and responsible adults.
- Having a Big Buddy in your child's life can actually reinforce the good habits that you are trying to teach your child.
- Having a Big Buddy may improve the relationship between you and your child.
- The Buddy Program's goals are to:
  - Increase youth's self-esteem
  - Increase youth's attendance at school and attitude towards learning
  - Increase youth's ability to make healthy, positive decisions
  - Increase youth's ability to maintain healthy relationships with peers and adults

### Roles of the Big Buddy

- A friend and role model – Big Buddies are supportive and try to set a good example.
- A confidant – A Big Buddy is there to listen to your child's dreams, hopes, and fears, while encouraging them as a person with many life possibilities.
- Another person who is proud of your child – A Big Buddy can help your child channel his/her gifts towards positive actions and help expose them to new opportunities.
- A Big Buddy is NOT a mentor to the family, a social worker or doctor, a financier, a babysitter, or chauffeur, a disciplinarian, a substitute or foster parent, or a savior – A Big Buddy provides special attention to one child while maintaining healthy boundaries and not overstepping their role as a mentor.
- A Big Buddy is NOT a religious or spiritual advisor – the religious doctrine and teaching will be left to the parent.
- A Big Buddy is NOT a significant other for the parent – these actions could well interfere with the relationship your child has with their mentor.
- A Big Buddy is NOT there to replace *you*. You are your child's parent and nothing will ever change that. You can set aside your own special time with your child too.

### Roles of the Parent(s)

- A good listener- Share in your child's excitement and concerns about his or her Big Buddy.
- A schedule keeper- Help your child plan time with his/her Big Buddy, and find ways to remind him or her about upcoming meetings.
- A voice of gratitude- Help your child show their appreciation to their Big Buddy. Find ways to show your appreciation and say "thank you".

### How you can support your child's relationship with their Big Buddy

- Be positive.
- Tell your child the positive skills you see him/her developing as a result of having a Big Buddy.
- Let the Big Buddy know how much you appreciate that they are a part of your child's life.
- Be available to the relationship but not overbearing. Show your interest but don't make demands.
- Share feedback from your child with the Buddy Program staff.
- Give your child's Big Buddy copy of school, sports or performance calendars.

- Let the Buddy Program staff know if there has been a change or incident in your child's home life that the Big Buddy should know (examples- moving, death in the family, financial stress).
- Be prepared that eventually the Buddy relationship will end.
- Your role in your child's mentoring relationship is very important. The more supportive you are, the more likely their relationship will be a healthy and successful one!

Roles of the Case Manager (each youth will be assigned a Buddy Program Case Manager)

- Interviewing referred youth and their families, and overseeing required paperwork that goes along with such duties.
- Recruiting, screening, training, and matching adult volunteers with appropriate youth.
- Offering on-going support throughout the youth's participation in the program: counseling services, scholarships, activities, and referrals to other agencies.
- Offering on-going Case Management throughout the youth's participation in the program. Case Managers contact the youth on their wait-list every three months. Once a youth is matched with a volunteer, Case Managers contact the youth, his/her family, and the volunteer bi-monthly during the first 6 months and monthly after that.
- Assisting youth and their families with any needed paperwork in regards to their participation in our programs (ex. parent permission forms, updated policies and procedures, etc.).
- Please do not ask your Case Manager to do anything that is not related to your child's involvement in the Buddy Program. She/he will be required to say no.