An Innovative Mentoring Program

Presenters:

Judy Spangler, Chief Program Officer
Big Brothers Big Sisters Southeastern Pennsylvania

Ted Qualli, Vice President External Affairs & Marketing
Big Brothers Big Sisters Southeastern Pennsylvania
Who We Are: Big Brothers Big Sisters Southeastern Pennsylvania

- Located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- Will celebrate our 100th anniversary in 2015
- We serve Philadelphia and three surrounding counties
- Professionally trained staff of 60+ employees
- Serving nearly 7,000 children and volunteers annually
  - Community Based Program
  - Site Based Program
- Original partner in the Amachi Mentoring Children of Prisoners program with Public/Private Ventures and former Philadelphia Mayor Reverend Wilson Goode
2011 By-the-Numbers

✓ We made 1,114 **new** mentoring matches and served 3,535 children

✓ Average length of mentoring match in our community-based program is 29 months and in our site-based program is 13 months

✓ 91% Match Support Compliance
What Our Children Are Facing

- Philadelphia has the highest homicide rate among large cities in the Nation
- More than 127,000 children – 31% of the youth population – live below the federal poverty line
- More than 327,000 Philadelphians rely on food stamps for their daily sustenance – 43% of which are children
- The School District of Philadelphia has failed to make “Adequate Yearly Progress” for eight consecutive years and is home to all 25 of Pennsylvania’s “Persistently Dangerous Schools”
Challenges For Our Agency

- Money and Men
- Strengths and challenges vary from neighborhood to neighborhood
- Geography of volunteers as compared to geography of children
The Innovation

Kids → Mentors
The BSW Program: How it Started

• Pratt Elementary School – high need, low resource area

• CIGNA corporation agreed to innovative solution
How BSW Works:

• Littles leave school during their lunch hour

• Meet with their Bigs at the corporation

• One hour every week or every other week
Two Crucial Components:

• Strong Partnership with Corporation

• Strong Partnership with School
Create & Support the Corporate Partnership

• Functional responsibilities
  • Create an MOU

• Corporate liaison

• Logistics of program
  • Set day/time of program
  • Discuss meeting space availability
  • Balance of planned events vs. one-to-one unstructured time
Volunteer Engagement

• Information Session for Employees
  • Work with liaison to determine best way to recruit
  • Process and logistics of session

• Intake Process
  • Application packet
  • Interviews on-site

• Volunteer Orientation
Create and Support School Partnership

- School with students who need mentors
- Infrastructure to support program
- Selection process
  - Research demographics and needs of children
  - Research distance
Introductory Meeting

- Meet with Principal and/or Vice Principal
  - Determine School Liaison(s)
  - Discuss Liaison responsibilities
  - Determine structure of program
  - Discuss district/school permissions/requirements
  - Confirm date/time of program (including school calendar)
Introductory Meeting (continued)

- Schedule meeting with School Liaison
- Recruitment of Littles
- In-school Interviews
- Reinforce program details and expectations
- Training for Littles
- Discuss on-going Match Support processes
First Match Meeting Day

- Logistics
  - Bigs meeting
  - Arrival of Littles
  - T-shirts and name tags
- Puzzle pieces
- Required paperwork

**Best Practice:** Check-in conference calls

**Best Practice:** Cousin matches
The BSW Program: It’s Helped Us

• Serve kids in harder to reach areas

• Provide exposure to workplace environment

• Increase corporate volunteerism

• Identify dedicated funding
Impact On Children

Children mentored by Beyond School Walls Bigs:

- Improved their focus at school
- Improved their grades
- Believed that their Bigs were important to them
- Experienced a positive change in attitudes or perceptions
- Enjoyed the program

“I used to want to be a teacher. Now I want to be a president of a company.”
- Beyond School Walls Little
Employee Impact

• 96% agree that the program has positively impacted them
• 90% enjoyed interacting with their Littles
• 83% are more likely to work for a firm that has a reputation for volunteering in the community
• 85% plan to continue their mentorship beyond the first year
• 93% would recommend the program to colleagues
Spotlight on Success

Comcast Corporation &
Fairhill Elementary
Fairhill Elementary School:

- **99.4%** economically disadvantaged
- **51.4%** of students are chronically truant – 10 or more unexcused absences
- **49%** of adults 18-24 have no high school degree
- **Ranks a 10 on OJJDP’s Community Disadvantage Index** – indicating this census tract is among the most disadvantaged in the country
Comcast:

Program started during the 2008-09 school year

- 29 matches in year one
- 45 in each year since
- All levels of the organization from entry-level to CFO
The Impact:

• 51% of Fairhill students are “chronically truant”

• Every single student mentored in the Beyond School Walls program reduced their unexcused absences

• More than 50 incidents reported to the office of school safety, including 3 assaults on teachers and 23 assaults on students so far this school year

• 81% of students mentored in the Beyond School Walls had zero disciplinary infractions
Additional Benefits

- Comcast has adopted the school
- Brother of Little secured an internship
- Rolled the program out in 10 other markets
Growth

- Started with 1 program in 2005, currently have 21 programs
- Serving kids in 2\textsuperscript{nd} through 12\textsuperscript{th} grade
- Large and small companies
- Shared programs
  - US Attorneys/FBI/Federal Defenders
  - Business Parks
- Helping us redefine our impact
  - Education
  - Volunteerism
  - Corporate retention
Questions & Discussion

Contact Information:
Ted Qualli – tqualli@bbbssepa.org
Judy Spangler – jspangler@bbbssepa.org
(215) 790-9200