

Written by

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Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities (BBBS) announced the launch of its STAND! for our Children campaign, which is designed to recruit 100 African American male volunteers in 100 days. Tubby Smith, head coach of the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers men's basketball team, is the spokesperson for this year's STAND! campaign and will appear in a PSA airing on WUCW-TV for eight weeks between January and March.

Of the nearly 800 young people waiting for a mentor, 30% are African American boys. Finding African American men to serve as Big Brothers will have ripple effects far into the future. Through mentoring, BBBS provides services that help eliminate disparities in educational and social outcomes for the young people we serve by helping them to develop positive assets that will improve their current and future quality of life. In 2007, young people in our programs demonstrated the following increases in specific areas of asset development:

- Confidence: 69 percent showed an increase in confidence, which includes improved self-confidence, expressiveness and a sense of the future.
- Competence: 58 percent showed an increase in competence, which includes academic performance and decision-making skills.
- Caring: 70 percent showed an increase in caring, which includes maintaining better relationships with their peers, family and other adults as well as showing trust in others.

For 88 years, BBBS has been matching young people ages 7-13 with adult, volunteer mentors. Big Brothers and Big Sisters provide friendship, emotional support and hope to young people. BBBS serves 11 counties in the Twin Cities metro region, including Anoka, Carver, Chisago, Dakota, Hennepin, Isanti, McLeod, Ramsey, Scott, Washington and Wright.

BBBS offers programs to meet the needs of a wide variety of volunteer interests. Community-based mentors meet with their Little Brother or Sister two to four times per month at the locations of their choice. School-based mentors meet with their Little Brother or Sister once per week at the young person's school. What matters to young people is not what they do with their mentors, but the fact that they have a caring adult in their lives who listens when they talk about their successes, problems, hopes and fears.