



For Immediate Release
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IMPORTANT GRANT AWARDED TO SUPPORT MENTORING PROGRAMS FOR OHIO CHILDREN OF PRISONERS

Columbus, OH -- A \$1.5 million grant has been awarded to a collaboration of Ohio Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies to support mentoring programs for children of prisoners.

The grant, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is initially for fiscal year 2010-2011 and includes the opportunity to receive two additional years of funding at the same amount each year.

The Ohio collaboration of Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies, known as Big Brothers Big Sisters Amachi Ohio, will match mentors with 433 children whose parents are incarcerated in the first year, and a total of 1,500 new matches over the three-year period. The collaboration will also be able to continue to serve an additional 476 Ohio children of incarcerated parents who are already matched with mentors.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Shelby and Darke County will recruit additional children and volunteers for the Amachi Ohio program. Nineteen existing matches were previously served under this program and will again be covered by Amachi grant funds, in addition to new matches enrolled in the program.

“The children served by Big Brothers Big Sisters Amachi Ohio are among the most vulnerable in our state,” said Edward N. Cohn, President and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio, the fiscal agent for the grant. “This grant will allow us to match adults with more children of prisoners in one-to-one mentoring relationships. The mentor serves as a resource, support system, confidante, friend and role model to the child to help him or her decrease the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors.”

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The service area of the program includes more than 6.3 million people and 31,100 children of incarcerated parents. Youth must be between the ages of 5-18 to participate in the program. Nearly four out of five in the existing program are currently being raised by single mothers and nearly four out of five live in households with annual incomes of less than \$30,000.

“We are thrilled by this opportunity to address the needs of Ohio’s most disadvantaged children,” said John Neville, President of the Ohio Big Brothers Big Sisters State Association. “Mentoring has the potential to transform lives. On behalf of the children of Ohio, we thank all those who lent their support to our grant proposal and helped make this possible.”

Supporting the proposal were: Senator Sherrod Brown; Senator George V. Voinovich; Representative Mary Jo Kilroy; Representative Patrick J. Tiberi; African Methodist Episcopal Church Bishop C. Garnett Henning; Limited Brands, Inc. Philanthropy Manager Todd Tuney; The Ohio Benefit Bank Director Shannon D. Teague; Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Director Douglas E. Lumpkin; Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Director and Ohio Ex-Offender Reentry Coalition Chairman Ernie L. Moore; Columbus Urban League President & CEO Eddie Harrell, Jr. and Rev. Dr. W. Wilson Goode, Sr.

For more information about Big Brothers Big Sisters Amachi Ohio, to refer a child, or to become a Big Brother or Big Sister, visit AmachiOhio.org or bigbrobigsis-shelbydarke.org. Call the office at 937-492-7611 or 937-547-9622.

About Big Brothers Big Sisters:

As the nation’s largest donor and volunteer supported mentoring network, Big Brothers Big Sisters makes meaningful, monitored matches between adult volunteers and children. Big Brothers Big Sisters provides a system of ongoing evaluation and support which is proven by independent studies to help families by improving the odds that children will perform better in school and avoid violence and illegal activities, and have stronger relationships with their parents and others. The 29 Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies in Ohio supported thousands of mentoring relationships in 2009. *Learn how you can positively impact a child’s life, donate or volunteer today at BigBrothersBigSisters.org.*

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Shelby and Darke County