

For Immediate Release

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Big Brothers Big Sisters
Mountain Region

Big Brothers Big Sisters Mountain Region Celebrates National Mentoring Month this January

Santa Fe, NM – January 4, 2016.

This January marks the 15th annual National Mentoring Month, and Big Brothers Big Sisters Mountain Region is participating in this campaign aimed at expanding quality mentoring opportunities to connect more of our community's young people with caring adults.

"There is a powerful mentoring effect demonstrated by research and the experiences of young people who are connected to a mentor in real life" said Andrea Maril-Fisher, BBBS Mountain Region CEO.

"Mentoring is linked to improved academic, social and economic prospects for young people, and that ultimately strengthens our community."

Research has shown that when matched through a quality mentoring program, mentors can play a powerful role in providing young people with the tools to make responsible decisions, stay focused and engaged in school, and reduce or avoid risky behavior like skipping school, drug use and other negative activities.

For example, in a recent national report called *The Mentoring Effect*, young people who were at-risk for not completing high school but who had a mentor were 55 percent more likely to be enrolled in college than those who did not have a mentor. They were also:

- 81% more likely to participate regularly in sports or extracurricular activities.
- 78% more likely to volunteer regularly in their communities.
- More than twice as likely to say they held a leadership position in a club or sports team.

This same report found that one in three young people in our country will grow up without a mentor.

Today, in our community there are over 100 kids waiting to be matched with a Big Brother or Big Sister.

As we focus on engaging more community members in volunteering as mentors, we will share a simple message: **Mentor IN REAL LIFE**. Mentoring relationships are basic human connections that let a young person know that they matter, and mentors frequently report back that their relationships make them feel like someone is there to help them make the right choices in life; it's a win-win.

Other important dates for this public awareness campaign include:

- January 14, 2016: “I Am a Mentor Day,” when volunteers across our community and the country will share their stories about being a mentor on social media using #MentorIRL and #BBBSMentor.
- January 18, 2016: Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, when our nation will shine a spotlight on volunteerism and inspire people seeking service opportunities to learn more about mentoring.
- January 21, 2016: “Thank Your Mentor Day,” when we encourage anyone who has had a mentor to say thank you by sending a note, a card or sharing a story on social media using #MentorIRL and #BBBSMentor.
- January 27, 2016: New Mexico State Legislature, Mentoring Advocacy Day at the Capitol.

About National Mentoring Month

National Mentoring Month is led by MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, with support from the Highland Street Foundation. Each year since its launch in 2002, National Mentoring Month has enjoyed the strong support of the president and the United States Congress. Other prominent individuals who have participated in the campaign include: Maya Angelou, former President Bill Clinton, Clint Eastwood, Quincy Jones, Cal Ripken Jr., Bill Russell, and Usher.

About Big Brothers Big Sisters Mountain Region

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) has been the leader in one-to-one youth service for over a century, with proven success in creating positive friendships that benefit children, volunteers, families, neighborhoods and communities. Research has shown positive relationships between adult mentors and at-risk children have a direct and measurable impact on children's lives. Youth in the program perform better in school, get along better with their families, and are less likely to use drugs or alcohol. In 2015 BBBS of Southwestern New Mexico merged with BBBS of Northern New Mexico to form BBBS Mountain Region. BBBS Mountain Region currently serves nearly 1,100 local youngsters and their families in Dona Ana, Grants, Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Taos, Colfax, McKinley, San Miguel, and Mora Counties.

PHOTOS, INTERVIEWS AND FURTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST