

FACT SHEET

THE NEED AND VISION

- More than 50 young people and families are on the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) waiting list and the community demand is continually growing
- BBBS may not be able to support these young people in need because of a lack of funding
- The BBBS vision is that “every young person who needs a mentor has a mentor”
- To fulfill this vision BBBS needs community and financial support
- BBBS is calling for support and seeking to build partnerships with local businesses to strengthen the program

ABOUT BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

- Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) was first established in Geelong in 2003.
- BBBS of Geelong is auspiced by Barwon Youth
- BBBS is a preventative program which provides young people with a caring adult mentor in their lives.
- The program is based on the US model which has been running for more than 100 years.
- BBBS is the largest youth mentoring program in Australia and around the world, operating in 20 International countries.
- BBBS operates under the most rigorous and clearly defined structures and policies of any mentoring program.
- The program ensures thorough screening of all potential volunteers (involving police checks, interviews, referee checks and psychological profiling)
- Average length of a relationship has been determined by Big Brothers Big Sisters Melbourne as lasting 3.87 years.

HOW WE HELP

- The Program assists young people who are isolated and require additional adult support and friendship.
- There is evidence of the benefits to vulnerable young people who participate in a long term mentoring program. These include:
 - Improved school attendance (52% less likely to skip school).
 - Lower rates of youth offending.
 - Reduced rates of risk taking behaviours (46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs, 27% less likely to begin using alcohol)
 - Increased self-esteem and confidence.
 - Improvements in relationships with family members.
 - Increased social networks and support with peers.
 - Reduced risk of harm to self and others.
- BBBS works in turning around the lives of young people most at risk of becoming an expense to society.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BBBS or Barwon Youth: www.barwonyouth.org.au or www.bbbs.org.au