

Information Sheet for Referring Agencies

Program Description

Big Brothers Big Sisters Geelong is a community based support program for young people and families. The program utilises adult volunteers who are matched on a one-to-one basis with a young person in need of additional adult support.

Target Group

Big Brothers Big Sisters focuses on young people between the ages of 12-18 years, who live in the Northern or Eastern suburbs of Geelong and who may be disengaged from education and training. Assessment for suitability is based on this criteria.

Volunteers

People wishing to become volunteers of the program are accepted following the completion of a comprehensive screening, selection and training process. Big Brothers and Big Sisters are matched with young people based on similar interests, personality, location and the needs of the young person. Volunteers are supported in their mentoring role by professional staff. Volunteers commit to spending quality time with a young person for only an hour a week for a minimum of 12 months.

Supervision of Matches

After each match has been arranged, and the guidelines for each party fully explained, the supervision process begins. Supervision is conducted weekly for the first three months and then may become less regular depending upon the needs of the young person and the volunteer. The supervision process is seen as vital to the ongoing success of each match.

Waiting List

The length of time a young person is on the waiting list is determined by the availability of a volunteer, the area in which the family lives and the needs of the young person referred. Combined with an ongoing shortage of suitable volunteers, means that sometimes it is not always possible to find a match for every child on the waiting list.

Agency Referral Process

- Please read program information regarding target group to ensure that the referral is appropriate, with the young person's knowledge and permission.
- Contact the BBBS program worker to discuss the referral. All relevant forms/ documentation will be forwarded to you.
- Fill out and send in referral form
- Responsibility for the assessment of referrals rests with the BBBS worker.
- It is important for the referring agency to notify the program of any changes to the young person/family circumstances prior to and during the match.

Young Person /Family Role in Referral Process

- Application Form and other program information is sent to the parent /caregiver of the young person
- BBBS worker will contact the parent /caregiver to arrange a meeting to interview the young person and the parent to discuss the application and program requirements in order to identify a suitable match

If you have any further questions or wish to make a referral to the program, please contact BBBS Senior Program Worker Petrina Hare on 5221 4466. Thank you for your interest in the Big Brothers – Big Sisters Program.