



CEO'S message

"We must invest in what is important: our children. It is imperative that we give Chicago's students the tools they need to succeed in college and compete and win in a modern, global workforce."

– Mayor Rahm Emanuel, The City of Chicago

Leading by example, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago is linking our mentoring programs to educational success. We are now collecting grades and graduation rates, which show children attended school more, had a better attitude towards school, increased their academic performance, moved on to the appropriate grade level and graduated on-time from high school, as a direct result of our mentoring program.

This is one of many examples of the three key themes of **Talk BIG – Fall 2011**. These can be broadly categorized as: I. Teamwork and engagement; II. Leading by example; and III. There's no time like the present. We hope you enjoy reading these anecdotes about real life role models, as much as we enjoy sharing them.

On behalf of the children we serve at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago, I would like to take a moment and wish you and your family a Happy Thanksgiving. It is because of caring individuals like you that we are able to make an impact in the lives of 1,800 children across the entire metropolitan area.

Whether you are a Big Brother or Sister, a board member, a donor, a program partner or a friend of the agency—you play an important role in our mission of empowering our next generation through professionally supported, life-changing, one-to-one mentoring. It is my privilege to partner with you and provide this important service to our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Art Mollenhauer".

Art Mollenhauer

Chief Executive Officer

Solid start + strong momentum

As a result of the outstanding teamwork of our employees, board and key partners, we have had a RECORD first quarter!

"It is my great pleasure to recognize Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago as one of the Top 10 Agencies in 12-Month Retention Rate for Community Based programs for Q1 FY 2012. This is a significant accomplishment, standing out among the top quality agencies in our network of 360 affiliates. Retention of our matches for at least twelve months is essential to our goal of positive outcomes for every youth we serve. As you know, high retention rates also are a cost-effective way to run our business, since the second year of a match is less expensive than the first year. Most importantly, your high retention rate demonstrates a commitment to our mission to truly provide our youth who are facing adversity with the caring support of an adult in a stable, long-term relationship."

– Karen J. Mathis, President & CEO, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

Additional highlights include:

- We are already serving 971 children with 46 site programs in place including seven new sites
- Our Community Based average match length is strong at 29 months
- We have 46 new Community Based matches, which is right on target
- 26 percent of our children served are Hispanic and we have a 50/50 split of boys vs. girls
- We successfully implemented a new management structure in Site Based programs, finalized Mentoring Children of Prisoners (MCP) program transition and finalized new match support
- We have earned \$956,000 in revenue, which is 97 percent to target and 23 percent above last year from diversified revenue sources – 6 percent foundations, 34 percent corporations, 33 percent individuals, 12 percent government and 15 percent events
- We are debt free, have \$661,000 in cash reserves and 87 days working capital

The bottom line: We have achieved strong momentum on a record prior year, while maintaining diversity across almost a \$1 million quarter, which is close to our biggest ever 2010 year end.

[Click here to view our financial statements>](#)

Changing lives for the better, forever

Our Mission: Empower at-risk youth by providing high impact one-to-one mentoring that enables lifelong success.

"Big Brothers Big Sisters don't distract or discriminate – they treat all children as one, just like biological family. I don't know what I'd do without Big Brothers Big Sisters. They have helped me shape my four grandchildren into young adults I'm proud of."

– Rosie, 86, raising four grandchildren alone

Rosie is an 86-year-old grandmother raising four children between the ages of 12 and 16 on her own. She considers Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago a partner in raising her children. Chris, Isaiah, Jasmine and Pierre have all been matched to caring adult mentors for over three years each. With the consistent support of their mentors they are learning valuable life lessons. They are achieving better grades, being exposed to the workplace and academia, and are seeing the challenges and triumphs of being a parent. These are all things that Rosie could never do by herself.

"I love how Ally is a positive role model. She's very smart and helps me with school. That's what I like about her most."

– Jasmine, 16 years old

"Kristy and Nathan show me what it's like to be good parents."

– Pierre Jamie, 12 years old

"Brian gives me lots of good advice. My favorite memory is visiting the Haunted House on Navy Pier with him."

– Isaiah, 14 years old

"Nick helps me a lot. He pushes me to be the best I can be."

– Chris, 14 years old

[Click here to learn more about Rosie, her family and how you can help>](#)

Teamwork and engagement

The Board stepped up smashing its end of year challenge!

The Board portion of our year-end campaign resulted in \$277,000 comprising \$179,000 from 33 board members' gifts, a combined \$58,000 contribution from the Board Chairman and the CEO plus a \$40,000 matching grant from an anonymous donor. This smashed the \$195,000 target and represented a 20 percent increase on the year prior. It also represents 18 percent of the annual revenue target.

This remarkable level of teamwork and engagement comes as *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* reported, "A new [survey](#) reports that two out of three Americans (68 percent) say they will cut back on giving to charity in the coming months because of economic uncertainty or personal financial blows.

Despite these challenges, our dedicated Board and employees are leading by example to make our end of year campaign a huge success and we encourage you to do the same.

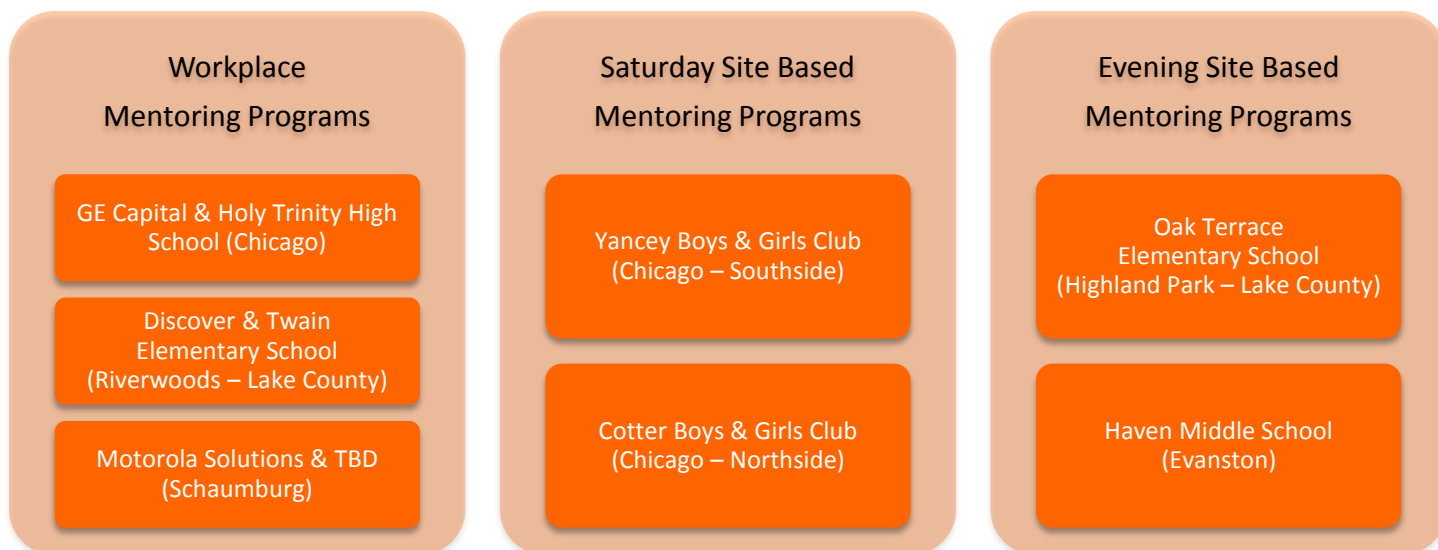
[Click here to be a part of something BIG!](#)

Our site based programs get things started

We have 46 Site Based Mentoring Programs in place including seven new sites. The programs are funded by 38 different corporate and foundation partners. We have 44 different community partners such as schools, Boys & Girls Clubs, and churches.

We offer two core types of donor-funded programs: Community Based and Site Based Mentoring. And no matter when a child enters a program, there's no limit to where he or she can go.

[Click here to learn more about our programs>](#)



Do as I do, not as I say

“I was very proud to have joined the BBBSMC board, but without a doubt, my proudest moment was when GE agreed to provide the financial support necessary to start up the on-site mentoring program at our Chicago offices.”

– David J. Alexander, Senior Vice President, GE Corporate Financial Services, Inc.

Dave Alexander (pictured center) is an “All-Star” team player, who personifies leading by example. Shortly after joining the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago board in September 2011, he established a Workplace Mentoring Program at his corporate offices in downtown Chicago.

Big Brothers Big Sisters “kicked-off” the program with a lunch and learn recruitment drive. 17 matches committed to 90 minutes every other Tuesday from 4:00pm to 5:30pm for a twelve-month minimum. The program is with students from Holy Trinity High School aged 15-17 years old. The key focus of their curriculum and activities is college and career mentoring.

A full interview with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago Board Member Dave Alexander is on the next page.

[Click here to volunteer and Start Something™ today!](#)

There’s no time like the present

Donors rise to the challenge and smash target in RECORD time!

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago, in conjunction with an anonymous donor, launched a two-year \$100,000 challenge grant in March 2011. The aim of the challenge was to raise \$50,000 in the first year and \$50,000 in the second year via two mechanisms:

1. Donations from new donors – ranging from \$500 to \$12,500; and
2. Increased donations from existing donors – ranging from \$500 to \$12,500.

In short, the first year’s target was achieved in less than two months and the second year’s target was achieved in less than six months wrapping up the entire challenge in August 2011, or just 8 months.

This is an encouraging example of “Carpe diem” or “seize the day” in play!

[Click here to Start Something™ by making a donation today!](#)

Spotlight

An interview with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago Board Member Dave Alexander

Questions	Answers
1. When did you become involved with BBBS?	My first involvement with the BBBS organization was back in college at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. I wanted to do some volunteer work, and ended up becoming a Big Brother to a 10-year old boy named James, who was being raised by a single parent in a local public housing project. It was a great experience for me, and I immediately saw the value of what a BBBS mentor can mean to a child's life, in terms of being a positive influence and a role model, when there likely was none before.
2. How did you become involved with BBBS?	Fast forward many years, after moving back to Chicago from overseas, I had always had in the back of my mind getting back involved with an organization like BBBS. My opportunity came during the 2008/09 downturn- all of a sudden I was not traveling as much (OK, not traveling at all for a while!), and I had the time to consider getting back involved. In late 2009 I happened to be having breakfast with a local banker who I had done some business with over the years, and who happened to be a BBBS board member. The question came up would I consider joining the board of BBBS- my decision was quick, and several weeks later I joined BBBS as a new board member.
3. Why has BBBS been such a hit with GE Capital and its employees?	I think the BBBS program ended up having such strong support for a couple reasons. Firstly, GE Capital has a strong culture of volunteerism. Around the world GE employees continue to demonstrate a tireless commitment to working together and delivering great outcomes for communities. Another reason is that the structure of the program is perfect for busy volunteers; meeting with the Little Brothers and Little Sisters is every other week for 90 minutes at our Chicago offices. For many employees that have wanted to volunteer, but did not think they had the time, this structure made it easy to get involved. Finally, I think it ended up with strong GE corporate support because it was right in our strike zone as far as our philanthropic focus on education and community success. The Littles are Trinity High School sophomores and juniors, and our GE mentors will be there to help them succeed in high school, prepare for college and give them some exposure to what life is like after college. In the end it was too successful...we had too many volunteers and actually had to turn some away!
4. What is your proudest moment with BBBS?	I was very proud to have joined the BBBS board, but without a doubt, my proudest moment was when GE agreed to provide the financial support necessary to start up the on-site mentoring program at our Chicago offices. It was a substantial investment, and with the many programs that GE already supported for many years in the Chicagoland area, I was not overly confident that we would receive the approval and funding. In the end, I believe that the focus on education, helping children and strengthening our local communities carried the day. A close second would have to be the overwhelming support that our employees showed in volunteering for this program.
5. If you could leave the readers with three points, what would they be?	As it has to do with my BBBS experience over the years I would say that you should find something that you are passionate about in the community, make the time to get involved, and find a way to make a positive difference in whatever you get involved in, even if it is only in a small way.