



BBBS of Mercer County Seeks 'Great Guys' to Mentor

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Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mercer County has launched a recruitment campaign called “Great Guys Mentor” with the goal of encouraging more men to volunteer as mentors. The organization is calling on men of all ages and backgrounds to step up and make a positive impact on the lives of young people in their community.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on volunteering in the US, with many people unable to volunteer due to social distancing measures and other restrictions. According to a recent report by the **Corporation for National and Community Service**, volunteerism in the US declined by 4.3 percentage points in 2020, the largest year-over-year decline since the organization began tracking volunteerism in 2002.

“One in three young people grow up without a mentor today,” said Executive Director **Kate Noonan**. “Mentoring is a proven intervention that reduces the number of youths disconnected from school and work and increases their social and economic mobility. Male mentors are critical to our program and our community.”

The “Great Guys Mentor” campaign aims to raise awareness about the need for male mentors and to encourage men to volunteer and become BBBS-Mercer Bigs. BBBS-Mercer currently has a waiting list with nearly 50 boys and young men — some of whom have been on the list for more than a year — who are desperately hoping to find a mentor. The campaign will include outreach to local businesses, churches, sports groups, influencers, community organizations, and social media platforms.

“We know that the pandemic has made it more difficult for people to volunteer, but we also know that there are many Great Guys out there who want to make a difference,” said **Tara Belford**, BBBS-Mercer’s Director of Community Based Programs. “We want to show them that they have the power to positively influence a child’s life by reinforcing and encouraging a young person’s better instincts. And that it doesn’t take a huge time commitment but comes with amazing rewards.”

Noonan added, “We believe that by highlighting and celebrating those Great Guys in our community who have made time to mentor might just convince some other Great Guys to sign up.”

Mentoring as a Big with BBBS-Mercer requires a minimum commitment of five hours a month over the course of at least one year. As Flint Lane, CEO and Founder of BillTrust commented, “I am a better human, dad, and CEO because I mentor.”

BBBS-Mercer Great Guys Mentor Campaign will officially launch in June 2023. Expected participants include William Salcedo, current President and CEO of BBBS Coastal and Northern NJ; Mercer County Commissioner Samuel Frisby; and President/CEO Princeton Mercer Regional Chamber Hal English, along with former Bigs from around Mercer County.

To learn more about BBBS-Mercer, visit www.mercerbbbs.org.



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