



## CONTACT

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### **Play It Forward Campaign Launches to Recruit Youth Mentors for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri**

**ST. LOUIS – September 6, 2022** – Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO) announces Play It Forward, an aggressive mentor recruitment campaign striving to generate 120 applications in 60 days. With mentor applications down more than 50% since 2020, this effort is critical. The effort seeks mentors for youth in St. Louis City/County, St. Charles County, Cape Girardeau County, and Scott County.

What happens when you play it forward? You awaken joy — in yourself and in those around you. You produce a wave of goodwill through play. With this campaign, BBBSEMO aims to spark that playful spirit that lives inside all people at every age.

“It’s definitely a sprint,” says Ericka Sanders, VP of Community Outreach & Mentor Recruitment. “We’re running fast and hard on this goal because every kid who wants a mentor deserves one.”

“This campaign comes at a pivotal moment. COVID reduced our mentor applications by 50%, and supporting our youth has never been more vital,” Sanders says.

“So we’re making ‘Play It Forward’ a happy, vibrant invitation to those with a heart for kids to become a Big. We all had someone who took an interest in us when we were younger, and we believe today’s youth have a right to experience that same feeling. But there’s no time to waste, we need to act now.”

The Play It Forward mentor recruitment campaign continues through November 2022. It will include several in-person events to drive awareness. To sign up to become a Big, visit [www.bbbsemo.org](http://www.bbbsemo.org).

For more information about ways your organization can support Play It Forward, contact Ericka Sanders, VP Mentor Recruitment and Community Outreach at [esanders@bbbsemo.org](mailto:esanders@bbbsemo.org). To schedule an interview with Ericka, key staff, or an active Big Brother, contact Elaine Cha, Senior Manager of External Communications at (314) 626-3723 or [echa@bbbsemo.org](mailto:echa@bbbsemo.org).

#### **About Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO)**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri serves youth and community since 1914. With 1,000 active matches in its one-to-one mentoring program, youth outcomes are improved. Its one-to-many initiatives broaden the scope of service and include the ABCToday initiative in 17 schools; its Big Futures program serving alumni Littles ages 18-25; its recently launched group mentoring cohorts and its community-gathering space at Anew. The agency supports children and families in St. Louis City and County; St. Charles and Jefferson Counties; and Cape Girardeau and Scott Counties. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri is a proud member of the United Way. For more information, contact Kristy Fairbanks at [media@bbbsemo.org](mailto:media@bbbsemo.org) or phone (314) 615-1048 or visit [www.bbbsemo.org](http://www.bbbsemo.org).