

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri Partners with Community Leaders & Influencers to Impact Black Youth

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Nuanced Partnership involving Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri, The School District of University City, and other Community Partners are Making a Difference

St. Louis, MO (April 11, 2024) -- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO) hosted the kick-off event for the Black 365 initiative, which seeks to enlist 300 Black volunteers in 65 days to mentor Black youth.

“Our youth have spoken, and they seek the guidance and affirmation of their distinct experiences in the Black community”, Slaughter said. “We are thrilled by the success of the nationally recognized, school-based ABCToday program in University City, the Big Futures program which prepares and serves teens and young adults in St. Louis, St. Louis County, and beyond, and the momentum of the recent kick-off of the Black 365 initiative, which aims to increase the number of Black volunteers who share and can relate to the lived experiences of Black youth.”

BBBSEMO has been known for its one-to-one mentoring program which reached more than 1,500 youth in its service region. Roughly 100 youth in The School District of University City are connected to BBBSEMO resources. “The youth in St. Louis County have tremendous promise and potential, and they are the future of St. Louis County,” said County Executive Dr. Sam Page. “The mentorships and programs provided through organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri help prepare our next generation for success.”

It is a known fact that school attendance and academic performance in math and reading are critical to ensuring students are prepared for their transition into life after high school. The partnership between The School District of University City and BBBSEMO through the ABCToday program addresses those areas directly – Attendance, Behavior, and Course Performance in reading and math. This collaborative partnership, which involves a constellation of relationships, organizations, and experts, meets the needs of our students and serves as a template for other forms of community partnership.

BBBSEMO’s ABCToday program was named by Johns Hopkins University, Civic Enterprises, and the American Association of State Colleges and Universities as a National Best Practice. As a school-based group mentoring program, ABCToday reached nearly 7,000 students in 16 schools. 2024 marks the 10th anniversary of the Big Futures program, which was designed to deliver coaching to youth ages 18-25 as they pursue education in a college/university or trade school, enlist in the military, and/or living wage employment.

The Black 365 campaign was initially launched in 2023 in response to feedback from youth that mentorship from adults who relate to their lived experiences was needed. BBBSEMO partnered with community organizations and influencers to recruit 300 Black volunteers in 65 days. This year, BBBSEMO launched a follow-up campaign on April 1 with the endeavor to recruit Black volunteers.

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For more information about Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO) and its programs, visit <https://www.bbbsemo.org/>.

For media inquiries, please contact:

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About Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO):

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Missouri (BBBSEMO), located at 501 N. Grand Blvd in St. Louis, has served youth and the community since 1914. Through BBBSEMO's 600 active matches in its one-to-one mentoring program and signature one-to-many efforts, youth outcomes are improved. BBBSEMO's initiatives encompass support for education and workforce development; these include ABCToday (in 16 schools, K-12), Big Futures (young people ages 18-25), and its newest initiatives in Group Mentoring for youth in middle school. The comprehensive work of the agency serves more than 8,000 people which includes 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 (BBBSEMO) is a proud member of the United Way.
