



# Building Life Skills

## August Commitment to Learning

Young people develop a lifelong commitment to education and learning.



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 Lorain County Children Services  
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## 40 Key Building Blocks to Help Kids Succeed

Search Institute has identified 40 building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring and responsible. These building blocks are referred to as “assets.” Local schools have united in identifying monthly “asset” themes for schools and communities to help kids reach their potential.

### Paying Forward a BIG commitment to education

by Lise Day  
 Big Brothers/Big Sisters  
 President and CEO

“Jeremy Dunn doesn’t have any younger siblings of his own, but you’d never know it by seeing him with his Little Brother, Clarence,” said Big Brothers, Big Sisters President and CEO, Lise Day. Jeremy and Clarence are always laughing and joking around together, whether they’re drawing, playing basketball or even doing homework. They have been “matched” for almost three years in the after school program at Franklin Elementary School in Elyria.

In that time Jeremy has proven himself to be a dedicated and caring mentor. So much of what he does is with his Little Brother in mind. Shortly after they were introduced by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lorain County, Jeremy got a new job and thought he wouldn’t be able to continue mentoring Clarence. But nothing could keep this pair apart! Now, in addition to seeing each other at the afterschool program, they hang out in the community in the community based program.

When Jeremy ran into a problem with his cell phone service, he shared with his after school site coordinator that one of the first things he did was look for apps that would allow him to keep in touch with Clarence despite being without a phone.

The changes in Clarence are apparent: There’s the improvement in grades – because Jeremy encourages Clarence to do his homework, making sure to make it fun and providing plenty of snacks. Although he’s doing better in school, Clarence never feels as though their friendship is conditional upon how he does in school. Clarence comes to the afterschool program on time or early most days; in previous years that was rare. It’s probably because he knows his Big Brother is one of the first people at the program each week and is going to be there waiting for him. And then there’s how much happier Clarence seems since he’s been matched with Jeremy, a joyfulness that you



**Big Brother Jeremy Dunn goofs around with his Little Brothers, Clarence and Aden who proudly is holding a spring craft project.**

really can’t measure or count, but you can know is there all the same.

It’s a happiness he wants to share. Last year, Clarence turned fourteen and was old enough to become a mentor himself in the same school program where he met Jeremy. Together, Jeremy and Clarence began mentoring an elementary student named Aden. We look forward to seeing the BIG changes in Aden, he is already having a wonderful time with these special mentors!”

**Big Brothers Big Sisters volunteers change children’s lives in immeasurable ways, but some of the changes are measurable.**

“Typically, we see improved grades, attendance and stronger relationships with peers and teachers after just a few months of mentoring. As the relationship deepens, these outcomes become stronger and more lasting, says, Day. The volunteers have been amazing. Last year 20% more kids were mentored than the year before. This year we are adding three more schools to reach even more kids who need and want mentors.”

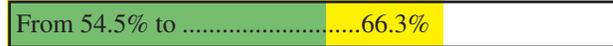
- Sidekicks Sites:**  
 Franklin Elementary, Elyria  
 Washington Elementary, Lorain  
 Powers Elementary, Amherst  
 Tennyson Elementary, Sheffield Lake  
 Erieview Elementary, Avon Lake  
 Westway Gardens, Elyria  
*Plus two new locations to be added this year*

Lunch Buddies are in too many schools to list.

**EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS**  
 20% improvement



**ATTITUDES AND COMPETENCIES**  
 22% improvement



**RISKY BEHAVIOR AVOIDANCE**  
 15% improvement



If your school is interested, please call 277-6541  
**Big Brothers Big Sisters is adding locations for this valuable programming during the upcoming school year.**

**High School Students are eligible to mentor in the weekly Sidekicks program, which consists of homework help, games and activities and a regular reading buddies component. Adults may choose Sidekicks, or become a Lunch Buddy, meeting the child for half an hour to forty five minutes during the school lunch period. Attendance on the day they know to expect their lunch buddy makes a sudden improvement in this program, in addition to the typical mentoring outcomes.**



**Big Brothers Big Sisters**

Call 277-6541 to learn more, or visit [www.BIGlorain-county.org](http://www.BIGlorain-county.org). Big Brothers Big Sisters is a member of the Mental Health Network of Lorain County. This Network of agencies is funded by The Lorain County Board of Mental Health which provides a comprehensive system of mental health services to Lorain County residents regardless of ability to pay. For more information call 440.233.2020. Visit the website at [www.LCMHB.org](http://www.LCMHB.org) for a complete listing of services or to take a free online depression screening.