

## PRESS RELEASE

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## YOU can make the difference!

JACKSON (January 21, 2015) – January is National Mentoring Month. Mentoring works in many ways, but most impressively when it is in an organic, supported, developmental, relationship. Throwing two people together doesn't make them a good match. Establishing a framework for success is probably the most important aspect of successful mentoring. This is what Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) does best! Matching adults with young people in enduring and beneficial relationships.

### 2014 Jackson County Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth Report (MiPHY) - High School Students

- **59.0%** say that it's easy to get alcohol;
- **37.8%** believe some of their friends had been drunk recently
- **28.8%** have been drunk
- **14.8%** have been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property by someone during the past 12 months

By establishing an enduring friendship with an adult who not only cares but is involved, a young person's ability to make healthy choices is positively affected. Mentors increase hope for a bright future in many ways:

- expressing interest and empathy
- challenging and inspiring a young person to improve
- providing guidance and encouragement
- advocating for the young person
- respect
- sharing routines
- family involvement
- cultural and community passions
- listening actively

The long term positive effects are amazing! By working within the Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition, the Health Improvement Organization, the Cradle to Career initiative, local school districts, businesses like Eaton Corporation and Consumers Energy, and local non-profits like Community Action Agency the impact is being felt county-wide! Indicators reported through the 2013 BBBS National Youth Outcomes Report show:

- *Educational attainment:* better educational expectations (85-87%)
- *Healthy lifestyles:* reduced risky behaviors (90-94%)
- *Positive behavioral choices:* improvements in four targeted outcome areas simultaneously (96%)

**How might this help our community?** To quote two great authors, "Really great people make you feel that you too can be great." ~*Mark Twain* and "Motivate others to be who they want to be. We all want to feel that we matter. Show someone else they do, both by believing in their dreams and recognizing how they make a difference right now. The most powerful difference we can make in this world is the one we make supporting each other." ~*Lori Deschene*. *Hope in the future affects every area of life for a young person and impacts the community around them long term!*

### **More information about:**

- Jackson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition and its activities, please contact Amy Swartz at (517) 796-5131 or via email at [aswartz@uwjackson.org](mailto:aswartz@uwjackson.org)
- Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programs in Jackson County, please contact Melissa Laird at (517) 784-7181 or via email at [mlaird@bbbsjackson.org](mailto:mlaird@bbbsjackson.org)

Information sourced from the 2014 MiPHY Data Reports and the 2013 BBBS National Youth Outcomes Survey

*Our efforts are funded through Community Mental Health Authority of Clinton, Eaton and Ingham Counties, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Michigan Department of Community Health.*