



# Mentoring

*What works, who's involved, and how to help*



Photo by Adam Lapierre

**‘You are an important part of some lucky child’s life right now.’**

That’s how Bob Camillucci put it to a gathering of mentors on a recent Saturday morning.

Camillucci, a board member of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Columbia Gorge,

and himself a mentor, was addressing fellow “Bigs” and supporters, but he could have been talking about nearly any program in the community where caring adults meet on a regular basis to provide guidance,

teaching and friendship to young people.

This Kaleidoscope contains three articles on mentoring: A look at what works and what doesn’t; one “Big and Little” relationship; and, on Page B2, a list of many of

the mentoring opportunities available in the local community. (Such a list can never be complete; look for these and others in future Hood River News editions, under our ongoing column “How to Help.”)

## ‘It’s a joy’ to be a ‘Big’

By BEN MCCARTY  
News staff writer

Mike Hendricks is a busy guy. Busy at life, busy at his job, but not busy enough not to make time.

“There’s always a lot to do in life, but if it’s important enough to take on the commitment then we just have to make time,” said the man who was recently honored by Next Door Inc. as the Big Brother of the year for Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Hood River County.

Since moving to Hood River three years ago, Hendricks has gotten pretty good at making time.

He and his “Little” have gone and done everything from sporting events, to concerts, hiking, biking and the movies, and every time he gets to spend time with his Little, Hendricks sees he is having an impact on his life every time.

“I know — not believe, know — that I’m improving my Little. He’s already a happier, more-focused, more-confident and I’d even say better young man than when we met about 15 months ago,” Hendricks said by email from Costa Rica, where he is currently doing a home visit for the Partners of the Americas exchange program.

“His mother’s words that were read when I got the award say so; plus I can see it myself.”

It is reasons like those that have kept Hendricks involved in Big Brothers-Big Sisters off and on for the last 30 years.

He first got involved 30 years ago when he was living in Washington, D.C., mentoring a child who was flunking out of his classes in

seemed to work out.

When he and his wife came to Hood River three years ago, he said he had the chance to re-examine what was important to him and how he wanted to spend his time.

“I knew that being a Big again would be near the top of the list, so I went to The Next Door and they let me in,” he said.

Since he got involved again, Hendricks has helped make new memories, both for his Little and himself.

“One of the very good times, out of many, with my Little was when I wanted to try to take him up Mitchell Point. He’s only 12, and I don’t think he’s hiked much, so I didn’t know how far we’d get. Certainly not to the top and out on the point, for sure. But hey, I was wrong!” Hendricks said.

“Even though it was a windy day, and there was no one else there (the parking lot below was closed for construction, so we had to park by 84 and walk in a bit), he loved it and kept going. Even when we got near the top, and I told him about the crosswinds and to stay low, he didn’t flinch a bit. He went all the way it’s safe (at least in my opinion — not past the big bump), looked down both sides, had some food, talked about the view — was just great about it.”

After finding time in his busy schedule to become a “Big” again, Hendricks said he has enjoyed the experience both for the satisfaction and feeling that he is also becoming a better person along the way and feels good about what he is doing.

Even as he helps others, he gets to have fun himself by trying new things and pushing

## Balloons, not blocks: Mentors use relationships to help youths

By KIRBY NEUMKANN-REA  
News editor

In his National Mentorship Month proclamation in January, President Barack Obama wrote, “Mentors know that helping a child unlock his or her full potential starts with care, guidance and support. find the strength within themselves.”

The mentors with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Gorge, one of the largest and longest-standing mentoring organizations in the area, heard these words at their Jan. 19 “Big Breakfast” event, where Celeste Janssen of Oregon Mentor, with more than 100 nonprofits that work with youth, said that their job is to offer training on best practices on mentor development.

“What I think is most exciting about mentoring is it works — as long as it’s done well,” she said.

“Mentoring provides the power of a relationship and the power of a positive connection to kids, and helps kids deal with a lot of different things and therefore experience a lot of positive results,” said Janssen, herself a longtime Big Sister.

“We see mentoring all over — in schools, churches and community groups, and it keeps coming up as an important youth development strategy,” Janssen said. “Be it literacy, college preparedness, churches or after-school programs, mentors serve young achievers, struggling students, kids whose parents did not go to college, and everything in between.”

According to Janssen, in Oregon there are 59,000 mentorees, served by 22,000 adults.

She noted that BBBS was the first formal mentoring program in the country, starting in 1904 in the Boston area with 39 volunteers. Eight years later, it was operating in 26 cities. Catholic Big Sisters started also near the turn of the century, and the two organizations merged in 1977.

“From my experience I can see how powerful mentoring is ... I’ve been through highs and lows, days when we laughed so hard, and others when I said to myself, ‘I don’t know if I’ve made a difference.’ Five or six years later we’ve seen some things that made us say, ‘Wow, it was really worth it.’”

In his research, mentoring expert David Dubois found that what really matters is not whether it’s in a group or one-on-one; just “Is it high quality? Is that relationship at the heart of it one that will help it succeed?”

Janssen called mentoring a favorite youth strategy for its return on investment.

“It just makes sense,” she said, noting that in a state of California study of 31 youth programs that try to prevent criminal and violent behavior, mentoring was the fifth-most-effective and among the top five of the most cost-effective.

In Obama’s words, “The support of mentors can mean the difference between struggle and success ... I encourage all Americans to spend time as a mentor and to lift all Americans toward their hopes and dreams.”

But some practical considerations must go with the larger sense of purpose surrounding mentoring, Janssen noted.

“What a really good mentor can do is provide skills,” she said. “The skills mentors can provide are friendship, a broadened experience, providing positive opinions of oneself and one’s future, modeling good choices and listening, and modeling life skills such as time management prioritization, conflict skills.”

But there are ways to go wrong. To demonstrate, Janssen used cardboard blocks and balloons to provide what she called “a visual picture of mentoring, the kids we deal with and what they deal with on a daily basis”:

Justine Ziegler, the Hood River County BBBS match coordinator, stood on stage and



Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

**THE LOAD** can be lightened with guidance in life skills. Justine Ziegler of BBBS holds blocks representing life’s challenges. At top, mentor Dorothy Swyers of SMART reads with a youngster; for details on these and other programs, turn to page B2.

Janssen began piling blocks into her arms, calling out what each block represents. It was a long list: *poverty, hunger, a failing school system, physical abuse, peer pressure, death of a loved one, drug use in home, health issues, peer culture that overemphasizes sex, a peer culture that doesn’t value intelligence, single-parent household, chronic debt and financial problems in the household, homelessness, having a parent who was not a graduate of high school, sexism, emotional issues, alcoholism in the home, multiple moves, racism, sexual abuse, having an incarcerated parent or sibling, homophobia, experiencing bullying, experiencing deployment, having dental problems, mental health problems, divorce, neighborhoods with gangs, foster care, adults who don’t understand, “and one of my favorites: just being a teenager.”*

“This is what a lot of kids experience, every day,” Janssen noted. “Just think: A lot of times we talk about kids having a lot of problems. These are adult problems that kids are grappling with. It’s interesting to consider what kids are dealing with. Who can succeed unaided when dealing with these things?”

She said some mentors respond with “a barrage of advice and judgment,” or trying to help by going like this — she attempt to



Submitted photo  
“Big” Mike and “Little”

school.

“I mentored a 14-year-old boy in Washington, D.C., for four years, until he graduated from high school. That felt good, because when we were first matched he was flunking out of a D.C. school — no mean feat, let me assure you!

“I quickly found out that the problem was that he was really smart — and I mean really smart — and was bored out of his skull,” Hendricks said. “Fortunately, I’m not entirely stupid, and we were able to be a pretty good match.”

After that experience, Hendricks got busy with life and with his consulting job. He wanted to be a “Big” again, but it never

himself to find new things to do with his Little.

And that is something he doesn’t at all mind making the time for.

“I get ... the fun of hanging out with a 12-year-old. And that’s not to be underestimated, because he sees the world differently. So many things are new to him, so they become more fun for me, too,” he said.

“Also, thinking of things to do together stretches me to try new things, too. Trust me, I’ll never be a world-class SUP-er! We go to sports events, concerts, hiking, biking, movies, etc., and I always have fun. It’s far from being a burden — it’s a joy.”



# MENTOR

Continued from Page B1

take all the blocks from Ziegler's arms, and most of them fall to the floor — “and trying to take on all her problems and creating a mess — two different ways mentoring does not work.”

Mentors should avoid trying to take the mentee's problems on or take them away but instead to help her develop skills “that help her manage her baggage better,” according to Janssen, who then turned to a bundle of balloons to represent positive outcomes when kids are mentored. She handed Ziegler balloons labeled: *fewer behavior referrals, less likely to use drugs, less likely to use alcohol, more likely to attend school regularly, having positive aspirations for the future, positive self-worth, positive academic performance, closeness to adults and teachers, closeness to parents, closeness to peers, reduction in dropping out of high school, less aggression, less teen pregnancy, less isolation, and less criminal behavior overall.*

This is what she calls the “multimodal” approach. “If we want our mentee to not be a teenage parent, I could enroll her specifically in a class about not being a teenage parent; but what mentoring does is it not only affects whether she is a teenage parent and what her choices are, and it affects the whole broad array of experiences,” Janssen said. “The power of mentoring is that with everything kids are dealing with, they need complex solutions.”

## MENTORING OPPORTUNITIES

### ASPIRE

ASPIRE (Access to Student Assistance Programs In Reach of Everyone) is a program that brings together students, school staff, community volunteers and parents to help students overcome obstacles to their continuing education.

Volunteer mentors, who are trained by the high school staff, provide advising, resources, and encouragement to help students overcome barriers to future career plans.

For more information contact the Summit Career Center, 541-387-5034.

### Big Brothers-Big Sisters of the Columbia Gorge

Every child can be more successful when they have caring adults in their life in addition to their parents. BBBS identifies children who would benefit most from having an additional role model in their lives.

Children with a mentor are more likely to have the self-confidence they need to walk away from risky behaviors and make more positive, healthy choices.

Volunteers are carefully screened by trained staff to ensure safe mentoring friendships and provide training, support, resources and activities for the volunteers, children and families.

If you would enjoy spending about 8 hours a month being a friend to a child, you can be a mentor! No special skills required. Your support can help children have higher aspirations, gain greater confidence and achieve educational success.

Volunteer adult mentors, 18 and over, are matched with children ages 6-14. They spend two hours together each week enjoying fun activities like building a bird house, baking cookies or a going for a hike!

For more information in Hood River and Klickitat counties, call 541-436-0309 or 541-490-9979 (cell), email [bbbs@nextdoorinc.org](mailto:bbbs@nextdoorinc.org) or visit [www.nextdoorinc.org](http://www.nextdoorinc.org).

### Community Education

Do you have special talents or skills you would like to share? Hood River Community Education is putting together its spring/summer course catalog, and is looking for people interested in instructing a class for the community and surrounding Gorge area.

Classes may be held at the instructor's own facility, or at a school location. Instructors set the class fee and determine the optimum number of students for each class.

The deadline to be included in the spring/summer course catalog is Feb. 15.

Information and forms needed to complete and return are available through Community Ed; either stop by the office at 1009 Eugene St. or visit [www.hrcommunityed.org](http://www.hrcommunityed.org).

### Mentor for Success

Mentor For Success, a program of The Next Door, provides caring, trained adult mentors to at-risk teens in Hood River and Wasco counties, to support their successful transition to adulthood.

The mentoring process helps prepare youths for the challenges of being on their own by providing a strong role model, a trusting relationship with an adult and greater connections to the community.

Mentor and mentee get to know each other by planning and sharing fun activities like hiking, making pizza or attending a local event, slowly building a relationship of trust and support.

The mentor helps the teen identify and build upon his assets, connect with resources in his commu-

nity, envision a viable future, and learn skills to support his coming independence.

Mentors commit to spending at least 10 hours a month with their mentees, for a minimum of one year. Mentors are carefully screened and trained, and then matched with a teen based on his/her interests and needs.

For more information email [info@mentor4success.org](mailto:info@mentor4success.org), or call 541-991-8091. Applications may be downloaded at [www.mentor4success.org](http://www.mentor4success.org).

There will be a new mentor training Saturday, Feb. 16, from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Hood River.

### Project Invent

Though currently on hiatus, Project Invent is a concept program for middle school students developed by Holly Higdon-Wood and Wendy Maitlen in 2011. Its goals in the first year were to implement a program and curriculum for the four middle schools in the Mid-Columbia region; two states, three counties, in the 2011-12 school year; and to build scalable national curriculum for middle schools that incorporates STREAM learning concepts: science, technology, reading, engineering, art and math.

The program sought to develop a close network of professional mentors from the larger community, including engineers, designers, scientists, etc., who were willing to meet with students.

Those same professional mentors would be welcome to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with students in Gorge Discovery School, a new charter school co-founded by Higdon-Wood in the last year. The school uses local heritage, culture, ecology, landscapes, opportunities, and experiences as a foundation for the study of language

arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects.

For more information on Project Invent visit [www.projectinvent.net](http://www.projectinvent.net) or email [holly@projectinvent.net](mailto:holly@projectinvent.net) or [wendy@projectinvent.net](mailto:wendy@projectinvent.net). For more information about Gorge Discovery School visit [www.gorgediscoveryschool.com](http://www.gorgediscoveryschool.com). To volunteer as a mentor, contact Aaron Morehouse at 541-436-0707 or [amorehouse@gorgediscovery-school.com](mailto:amorehouse@gorgediscovery-school.com).

### SMART (Start Making A Reader Today)

Research proves that shared book reading and the availability of books in the home during a child's first, formative years are the strongest predictors of early literacy skills. SMART provides both.

The intention of SMART is to provide a literacy experience that entices children into books and reading, supports children's efforts to learn to read and celebrates their successes. The SMART program complements reading curriculum and instruction and is intended to build confident, lifelong readers who enjoy reading and use it as a tool for learning.

The program concept is simple: Pair an adult volunteer with children for two, one-on-one 30-minute reading sessions. Children read with two different volunteers each week for seven months, totaling up to 28 hours of individual volunteer attention. Volunteers model the joy of reading, while supporting the child's efforts to read independently.

To learn more about SMART, visit [www.getsmartoregon.org](http://www.getsmartoregon.org) or call 877-598-4633. To volunteer, call your local elementary school and find out the site coordinator for your area.

## PARKDALE NEWS

# Time go to from sign-ups to roundups; breakfasts, too

By TAMARA EMLER BALL  
Parkdale correspondent

It's a sure sign that spring is on its way in the Upper Valley when it's time to sign up your children for Little League!

This year Parkdale Little League signups are Tuesday, Feb. 5, and Thursday, Feb. 7, from 6-8 p.m. each evening at the Parkdale Community Center.



Tamara Ball

Boys and girls in the community ages 5-12 are eligible to play and the registration fee is \$30 per child.

Practices will start the first week in April and games will run from the middle of April until the middle of June.

For more information or to ask about scholarships, contact Shae Baker at 541-806-3483.

The Kindergarten Round-Up is gearing up at Parkdale Elementary School for children who will turn 5 on or before Sept. 1.

Though sign-ups will be March 4-8, school staff are encouraging parents to make sure they have copies of their children's birth certificates and up-to-date immunization records before registration.

Each child must have the necessary immunizations in order to register for school.

For more information contact the school office at 541-352-6255.

The Parkdale Elementary School Penny Drive was a great success as students and

residents in the community brought in a total of \$497.83 in pennies this year.

The top three classes who brought in the most pennies have won a popcorn party.

Congratulations to Megan Filiault's first-grade class in first place, Cyndi Sischo's second-grade class in second place, and Shannon Monroe's third-grade class in third place.

Students earned an extra recess day sponsored by the PTO for their tremendous fundraising efforts!

Students at Parkdale Elementary will be participating in a “Healthy Heart Jog-a-thon” fundraiser this Friday, Feb. 8, at school.

Instead of getting sponsors, students are asked to bring in Box Tops for Education to receive a special prize.

Each box top is worth 10 cents when returned to the companies by the PTO.

Students will also earn

credit for the laps in their Mighty Milers PE program.

Parents, families, and community members are invited to donate their box tops to local students or bring in any they have been saving to the school office.

The Parkdale Elementary School PTO is gearing up for the annual carnival scheduled for Friday, March 8, this year.

A PTO meeting to discuss the carnival was held on Monday, Feb. 11.

Parkdale Elementary staff and students would like to remind Upper Valley residents to eat out on Thursday, Feb. 21, at Cooper Spur Restaurant.

When you do, the restaurant will donate 20 percent of its food proceeds to the school's playground equipment improvement program.

Local families and residents can make dinner reservations for that night by call-

ing 541-352-6036.

Parkdale Community Church is now holding a Bible study group for the ladies in the valley each Wednesday at 10 a.m. at the church Manse at 4908 McIsaac in Parkdale.

Beth Moore's “The Patriarchs: Encountering the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob” will be the subject of study.

All ladies who would like to join are welcome.

For more information contact Tania Tyrrell at 541-352-6944 or Sandra Willems at 541-352-5569.

This Sunday, Feb. 10, from 7:30-11:30 a.m. Parkdale Grange members will again be serving up a hearty breakfast for the community at the Grange Hall.

Come visit your friends and neighbors and enjoy scrambled eggs, sausage, your choice of pancakes or biscuits with gravy, fresh ap-

plesauce and beverage for \$6 for adults and \$4 for children 5-12.

Children under 4 eat free.

The Mount Hood Town Hall board is inviting residents to attend its meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 12, at 6 p.m. at the Town Hall.

The playground proposal for the grounds will be discussed and board members would like input from the community before making their final decision.

“Improve Your Home Storage” by attending the Upper

Valley Home Extension Group's meeting on Thursday, Feb. 14, at 10 a.m. at the Parkdale Grange Hall.

Getting and staying organized in your home can be a challenge. Learn how to improve your home storage through simple techniques that will make things easier to find and save space.

A heart healthy potluck will follow the meeting and everyone is welcome to attend.

Send news items to: [UVupdate@yahoo.com](mailto:UVupdate@yahoo.com) or P.O. Box 448, Parkdale, OR 97041.



Submitted photo

ON STAGE at Wy'east Middle School Jan. 24, the occasion was the Drama-A-Day class event. Above, Matilda Kahler as Evil McCritch and Jack Lehnher as Sir Hateful perform in “Ten Little Friends In”. Appearing in “Inspector Rousseau Strikes Again!” were Megan Ball, left, Betty Galvez, Bonnie Justin Smith, Zack Jones and Tommy Bernal.





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