



Stephanie Rawlings-Blake

Mayor,

Baltimore City

250 City Hall · Baltimore Maryland 21202 · 410-396-3835 · Fax: 410-576-9425

Better Schools. Safer Streets. Stronger Neighborhoods.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, October 26, 2010

CONTACT

Ryan O’Doherty

(410) 818-4269

ryan.odoherty@baltimorecity.gov

Mayor Rawlings-Blake Announces Mentoring Initiative Targeting At-Risk Youth

Mayor seeks mentor matches for waiting list of 235 children in key neighborhoods with historically high rates of violence; Comcast, Johns Hopkins Hospital, others pledge support to the effort.

BALTIMORE, MD. (October 26, 2010)—Today, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake announced a new, targeted effort to match adult mentors with children in eight Baltimore neighborhoods with historically higher rates of juvenile crime. The Baltimore City Mentoring Initiative, a public/private partnership between the Mayor’s Office, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Maryland, and other partners, has identified a waiting list of 235 children living in the East Baltimore, McElderry Park, Belair-Edison, Coldstream-Homestead-Montebello, Central Park Heights, Cherry Hill, Harlem Park, and Poppleton communities.

“This is new data-driven approach to mentoring that will first focus on communities in Baltimore where there is an intersection between high of numbers of children on the mentoring waiting list and violent crime,” said Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake. “This initiative represents a call to action for those that work and live in Baltimore City because our children need adults to step up and volunteer to serve as role models, guides, and friends.”

Partners in the Mentoring Initiative include Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, Comcast, EBDI/Elev8 Baltimore, Baltimore Community Foundation, and the Greater Baltimore Committee.

Comcast is the founding partner of the Baltimore City Mentoring Initiative providing a \$50,000 grant over 2 years from the Comcast Foundation to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Maryland. Comcast is also providing in-kind support including production and airtime for public service announcements and Comcast Newsmakers as well as volunteers for the program.

“We at Comcast believe that mentoring relationships can play a critical role in improving the lives of at-risk children by helping them develop and succeed,” said Fred Graffam, regional

senior vice president of Comcast. “We hope that our contribution will not only allow for expansion of the mentoring program in Baltimore but that it will also encourage other local businesses to contribute to this important cause.”

Johns Hopkins Health System has agreed to identify matches for the 82 children on the waiting list who live in East Baltimore by hosting recruitment sessions and encouraging employee participation.

“Johns Hopkins has had a formal mentoring program since 1993. When we recently learned that there were 82 youth in East Baltimore alone in need of mentors, we were happy to join in support of the Mayor’s Baltimore City Mentoring Initiative by looking to our workforce to help find those mentors,” said Ronald R. Peterson, president of The Johns Hopkins Hospital and the Johns Hopkins Health System.

“This campaign is directly targeted at preventing violence involving youth by strategically and sustainably addressing the need for mentoring in the most troubled neighborhoods in Baltimore City,” said Robin Tomechko, President & CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Maryland and the Maryland Mentoring Partnership. “We are thrilled by this unprecedented, groundbreaking collaboration between Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake and Big Brothers Big Sisters.”

“The recent merger of Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Maryland Mentoring Partnership provided us the unparalleled opportunity to reach more at-risk youth directly and in coordination with other mentoring service providers,” said Jason Pappas, Chair of Big Brothers Big Sisters and The Maryland Mentoring Partnership Board of Directors. “The Baltimore City Mentoring Initiative is, in many ways, the realization of the potential created by the merger. We thank the Mayor for her vision and leadership of this initiative.”

A map of the targeted neighborhoods is here:

<http://www.baltimorecity.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=e2gHbX37VqM%3d&tabid=1003&mid=1770>

For more information about the initiative, or if you are an adult interested in mentoring opportunities, visit www.youthbmore.com.

###

Visit our Website @ www.baltimorecity.gov

About Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Maryland Mentoring Partnership:

Big Brothers Big Sisters and the Maryland Mentoring Partnership are now officially operating as one organization. This combination unites the two largest and most experienced mentoring organizations in Maryland-- Big Brothers Big Sisters in providing unparalleled quality in direct service mentoring support, and the Maryland Mentoring Partnership in providing expert training and technical assistance. As a single entity, the organization is uniquely positioned to provide at-risk and high-risk youth with the mentoring relationships and comprehensive support they need to succeed. The organization will expand the number of enduring mentor/mentee relationships that exist, and help more children improve academic achievement, raise self-esteem, develop career options and make purposeful life decisions. For more information, to volunteer, or donate, visit www.biglittle.org

About the Comcast Foundation:

The Comcast Foundation was founded by Comcast Corporation in June 1999 to provide charitable support to qualified non-profit organizations. The Foundation primarily invests in programs intended to have a positive, sustainable impact on their communities. The Foundation has three community investment priorities – promoting community service, expanding digital literacy, and building tomorrow’s leaders. More information about the Foundation and its programs is available at www.comcast.com/community.

About The Johns Hopkins Hospital and the Johns Hopkins Health System:

For more than a century, Johns Hopkins has been recognized as a leader in patient care, medical research and teaching. Today, Johns Hopkins Medicine is known for its excellent faculty, nurses, and staff specializing in every aspect of medical care. The Johns Hopkins Health System includes three acute-care hospitals and programs for local, national, and international patient activities. More information can be found at http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/the_johns_hopkins_hospital/jhhhs.html.