

Need An Oil Change?

News

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New exec at Big Bros & Sisters



JANNA GENOVESE is the new executive director at Big Brothers Big Sisters in Placerville. Genovese moved from Sedona, Ariz., to Placerville. Democrat photo by Krysten Kellum

In early January, the former executive director of Big Brothers Big Sisters, Deborah Jones, gave up her position in order to retire.

The new woman in charge is Janna Genovese. She's been working with the organization

for three-and-a-half years now.

"I applied for this job because I really care about children's lives and I want to serve as many children as possible," said Genovese.

The organization, which chartered in El Dorado County in 1977, currently has 139 children matched to a Big Brother or a Big Sister, but only on the Western Slope.

One of Genovese's new tasks as executive director is to raise funds in order to be able to reach kids in the Tahoe area.

"Our goal this year is to have 153 children matched by the end of this year," said Genovese.

But serving these children is not only a question of financial but also of human resources.

"We always have need for Big Brothers and Big Sisters, but especially for Big Brothers," said Genovese.

More than 50 percent of the children who take part in the programs of Big Brothers Big Sisters are boys. "The reason for that is, that boys act out when they have problems, unlike girls who are usually just quiet," Genovese said..

Big Brothers Big Sisters offers three different programs: community-based, school-based and site-based.

In the community-based program the child and the mentor meet about 10 hours per month, and just hang out together or do some special activities, e.g., going to the movies or to the museum.

In the school-based program the Big and the Little Brother or Sister meet once a week in the child's school for one hour. They have lunch together and the Big Brother or Sister can help the child with learning or with his or her homework. Big Brothers Big Sisters are active in 13 schools on the Western Slope.

In the site-based program, the matches meet in Boys & Girls Clubs, an after school program for children. The Bigs who are in the site-based program are usually high school students, who help their Little Brothers or Sisters with their homework, or work with them on special projects.

“It’s also one of my new tasks to expand the program on the Western Slope,” said Genovese.

One new program that Big Brothers Big Sisters is just implementing is called “Reading is Elementary.” This program also takes place at the Boys & Girls Clubs and is funded by United Way Sacramento. As the title implies, this program is all about improving children’s reading skills. The Little Brothers and Sisters practice reading with the help of their big mentors.

A study, made by Public/Private Ventures, has shown that the Big Brothers and Big Sisters have a positive impact on their young partners. The children who were in Big Brothers Big Sisters programs are less likely to take drugs or use violence.

The match ends as soon as the “Littles” turn 18, but many of them continue to see their mentors.

“One of our former mentors is still in touch with the young man that used to be his Little. His Little went to West Point and graduated there and in March he will come to visit his former mentor for one week in El Dorado Hills,” said Genovese. “Many of these matches are lifetime relationships.”

If you are interested in enrolling your child into a Big Brothers Big Sisters program, donating money or becoming a volunteer, you can get more information at bbbs.org or at mentors4youth.com.



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