



### Mentoring Generations

When Jim Elliot picked up a local Western Star over 25 years ago he was not expecting to devote a lifetime of positive influence. However, when he saw there was a need for adults in the Warren County area to serve as mentors to young children, he decided he wanted to be that difference in their lives. Soon Elliot became a mentor with Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Warren and Clinton Counties (BBBS). “ I can remember the great times I had with my own children and decided that as a mentor I can share those with experiences and add more to a child who may not otherwise have that opportunity. My little brother always enjoyed going to baseball games and fishing, but especially enjoyed spending time at the house interacting with the rest of my family” says Elliot.

During the years of Elliot’s mentoring, other members of the family would grow to be influential to the children of Big Brothers and Big Sisters in the Lebanon area. Daughter Janette received her degree in social service and was soon hired as a caseworker for the organization. “ I saw my father mentoring all the time, even when I was in college, his little brother would come with him to visit. I believe it is important for children to have someone to look up, to share experiences with, and hopefully those lessons learned will stick with them through life.” It was not long before Janette would pass this invaluable gift to her own children.

Today, Janette’s daughter, Elliot’s granddaughter, Lindsey has been handed the mentoring torch. She has been a mentor in the School Based Mentoring program with BBBS for several months and has already seen a major difference in the attitude of her little brother Austin. Volunteers in the School Based Mentoring program meet with their little brother or little sister for one hour a week during the academic school year. Matches spend time playing educational games, working on homework, and developing a friendship. During the summer months, matches also participate in three field trips to sustain this friendship while school is not in session. “ When I first met Austin he was very shy and would not even look at me. Now he finally smiles and laughs with me. His teacher says he gets excited on Thursdays

because that is when we meet for one hour each week. It's a two-way relationship- for Austin it makes him confident and for myself it's something positive to spend my time doing" says Lindsey.

It's the kindheartedness of families like that of Jim Elliot's that has enabled many children in the area to reach their full potential. When asked about encouraging others to mentor Janette adds, " I strongly encourage young adults to participate in a mentoring program such as BBBS because it is a great experience and provides individual responsibility and commitment to those volunteers. When you start young, mentoring gives you the capacity to be a leader not only to peers but also to your community. During the course of your life you will spend some time volunteering and mentoring with BBBS is a great beginning".

Elliot encourages more local citizens to support non-profit agencies such as BBBS. "Most credit should go to BBBS and the community that supports the organization. If it was not for the staff that truly believe in the positive outcomes of mentoring and the commitment they have to making the program grow people like me would not have the opportunity to share those experiences with a child. I remember when I started in 1982 with BBBS there were no more than 4 to 5 matches and to see the organization grow to having over than 120 today gives me a great feeling because I know the community has stepped up to help children in the community. I encourage more to get involved because obviously there is still a need". (Note: There are currently 75 children awaiting a Big Brother/Big Sister/ Big Couple in Warren and Clinton Counties.)

For more information on how to get involved with Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Warren and Clinton Counties please call 513.932.3966 or visit the website: [www.bbbswarren.org](http://www.bbbswarren.org).