

Being a Big Brother or Sister well worth the time

- Lynn Taylor Rick, Journal staff
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Paul and his Big Brother mentor Tom Snyder eat at Planet Hollywood on the Hawaiian island of Oahu. Snyder became Paul's big brother through Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Black Hills three years ago. In February, Paul went with Snyder and his wife on their vacation to Hawaii. (Photo courtesy of Tom Snyder)

If Tom Snyder could tell people one thing about Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Black Hills, it's this: It doesn't take as much time as you think, and it's well worth it.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Black Hills matches volunteer mentors with children in the community. Currently, there are 90 children waiting for a mentor, said Mary Victor of Big Brothers Big Sisters.

There are various volunteer options within the organization, including becoming a big brother or sister, becoming a big family, student volunteering and mother mentoring.

Mentors are required to be at least 16 years old and willing to spend a couple of hours every week or every other week with a child or new mother.

They must be willing to commit to at least one year of mentoring.

As an added benefit, a slew of local businesses offers discounts to volunteer mentors and their children. For instance, Carmike Cinema offers a \$5.25 admission for the big brother or sister, and the little brother or sister is admitted for \$1. Bear Country offers free admission to those in the program, and the YMCA provides its facility to those in the program.

Victor says the most important thing for people to know is that they don't have to do huge things or spend a lot of money with their "Littles." Even a simple walk in the park is enough.

For a complete list of volunteer requirements or to find out more about becoming a mentor, to go www.bigmentors.com or call 343-1488.