

Big Brothers Big Sisters seeking more volunteers

- Jomay Steen, Journal Staff Writer
- Sep 10, 2005

RAPID CITY - One of the reasons a South Dakota School of Mines & Technology computer science major enrolled in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Black Hills Campus Kids program was because he knew first-hand the organization's positive effects on the life of a child.

David Grieser, 22, of Rapid City, and eight other Tech students filled out applications Thursday at Tech's Student Organizations Fair to become mentors to the 24 children, who will participate in the program.

In a hectic junior year, Grieser said his childhood experience motivated the computer major to apply for a second year as a mentor.

"I had a Big Brother," he said.

Chad Catron, program/activity coordinator at Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Black Hills, said there are currently 83 children needing mentors.

To boost student mentor recruitment, Catron will give three presentations in psychology classes next week. The first presentation begins at 10 a.m. Monday, Sept. 12, in Dr. Jim McReynolds' abnormal psychology class; the next at 9:35 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 13, in psychology 101 classes, Catron said.

"Dr. McReynolds is a huge advocate of our program," Catron said.

Beginning Oct. 4, Campus Kids will meet Tuesdays from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. with the exception of finals week and Christmas break on the Tech campus.

Christina Schmit, student activities/Leadership Center director, said that the mentoring program offers an opportunity for the children and the Tech students.

The children are exposed to different cultures, meet new people and experience a segment of campus life, she said.

"These events impact children's minds, planting a seed of what college is," she said.

Schmit said it also broadens the mentors' experience.

"I think it causes students to think outside of their campus community. It causes them to look beyond themselves and plants a seed of what mentoring is, too," Schmit said.

Grieser volunteered last year, helping his little brother do homework, talking about his day, playing some games and even sharing a meal, all while on campus.

He considered volunteering in the regular Big Brothers Big Sisters program, but scheduling conflicts and limited time made it difficult, Grieser said.

"Campus Kids lets me be a Big Brother while fitting into my schedule," he said.

By design, the mentoring program caters to the students' limited time and budgets.

The program provides the weekly activities, games and meals, Catron said.

"All that's done for them, they basically show up and mentor," he said.

Besides the traditional program, which matches children with a mentor for weekly or bi-weekly meetings, there are the Mother Mentor, Big Couple/Big Family, School Mentoring and Student Volunteer programs, as well as other programs.

"I never turn away an application," Catron said.

Catron wants all people of all ages to consider some of the different program options offered by the organization to match children, ages 5 to 15, with a mentor.

"We have a wide variety of programs," he said.

To volunteer or for information, call Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Black Hills at 343-1488.