



May 31, 2005

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Dear Colleague:

During the past decade, mentoring has become a major element of most social policies and initiatives for disadvantaged youth. A significant reason for this prominence has been the effort of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA), the largest and most well-known mentoring organization in the United States, and the evaluation evidence that its community-based mentoring model has powerful impacts on young people.

But community-based mentoring attracts only certain kinds of volunteers—those willing to pick up a youth at his or her home and spend an afternoon a week in various activities in the community—and engages only those youth whom a parent or guardian refers for mentoring. In an effort to expand the number of volunteers willing to mentor, and the number of youth referred, BBBSA and several of its member agencies developed a school-based mentoring model in which mentors agree to spend weekly time with a youth on school premises—and in which teachers refer youth who could benefit from mentoring. This model represents a major portion of mentoring's rapid growth over the past five years, and it has received substantial federal support through the Department of Education.

Does the school-based model of mentoring also have significant impacts on young people?

That question will be answered more definitively in several years, at the completion of an impact study undertaken by P/PV in cooperation with BBBSA and several of its local member agencies. That study is funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies, Philip Morris, U.S.A. and the William T. Grant Foundation.

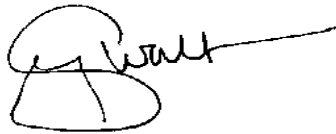
At P/PV, before undertaking an impact study, we like to examine a program for its strengths and weaknesses, to see if it merits a more rigorous study, and to determine what impacts to look for.

The enclosed report by Carla Herrera, *School-Based Mentoring: A Closer Look*, is the culmination of our preliminary investigation of school-based mentoring, which began in 1999.

This preliminary look is very encouraging. The closeness of the mentor-mentee relationships that developed, and their potential for impacting school behavior and relationships, are positive early signals. The new group of volunteers reached by this approach, their commitment to continue with mentoring, and the new group of youth referred by teachers also indicate that this new model is not simply a substitute use of limited resources for mentoring, but rather an expansion of those resources, and of the youth served.

I hope you find this information useful. For us at P/PV, it indicates that mentoring's potential for innovation and new areas of growth has only begun to be tapped.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Walker", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gary Walker

President