

MPP employs a system of well-coordinated, communitywide strategies, including mass media programming, a school program, continuing school boosters, a parent education and organization program, community organization and training and local policy change regarding tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. These components are introduced to the community in sequence at a rate of one a year, with the mass media component occurring throughout all the years.

where active social learning techniques are taught (modeling, role playing and discussion, with student peer leaders assisting teachers). The parental program consists of a parent-principal committee that reviews both school components—mass media coverage and programming, community organization and local health policy change—are used to send a consistent message supporting a norm of nondrug use. All components involve regular meetings of respective deliverers (e.g., community leaders for organization) to review and refine programs.

### Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBS)

Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS), an exemplary mentoring program, is a federation of more than 420 agencies that serve children and adolescents between the ages of 6 and 16, a significant number of whom are from disadvantaged single-parent households. The BBBS program seeks not to ameliorate specific problems but rather to provide a widespread foundation of support in all aspects of young people's lives through a professionally sustained one-on-one relationship between a youth and a caring adult.

In the community-based traditional program, the volunteer mentor commits substantial time to the youth, meeting for about four hours, two to four times a month, for at least one year. During this time together, the mentor and youth engage in developmentally appropriate activities such as walking; grocery shopping; watching television; visiting a library; washing the car; playing catch; attending a play, movie, school activity or sporting event; or just hanging out and sharing thoughts. BBBS has also added a school-based program in which volunteers meet with their Little Brother or Little Sister for an hour each week for such activities as playing educational games, working on homework or crafts or just talking.

Although individual agencies occasionally customize their programs to fit specific needs, the integrity of the program is protected through a national infrastructure that oversees recruitment, screening, matching and supervision in a regulated process whereby adults who are most likely to be successful mentors are selected and matched to adolescents who share a common belief system. Staff supervision and support are critical to ensuring that mentor and mentee meet regularly to build positive relationships.

An 18-month study of eight BBBS affiliates found that when compared with a control group on a waiting list for a match, youths in the mentoring program were 46 percent less likely to start using drugs, 27 percent less likely to start drinking and 32 percent less likely to hit someone. Mentored youths skipped half as many days of school as control youths, had better attitudes toward and performance in school and had improved peer and family relationships.