



Erin Allsop (standing at left), president and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Central Ohio, addressed Circleville Sunrise Rotary club about mentoring opportunities. Erin has been visiting Rotary clubs in the agency's five-county region.

GET TO KNOW...

Big Brothers Big Sisters

Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Central Ohio is a local non-profit agency that creates and supports one-to-one mentoring relationships to ignite the power and promise of youth.

Erin Allsop, president and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Central Ohio, said the agency is serving more than 200 kids in Pickaway, Ross, Fayette, Highland and Pike counties. Through a positive relationship with a trusted adult, the agency gives kids the encouragement and support they need to break cycles of addiction, poverty and abuse.



As part of the nation's largest donor and volunteer supported mentoring network, it matches adult volunteers (Bigs) and children (Littles).

"We develop positive relationships that have a direct and lasting effect on the lives of young people," Allsop said at a recent meeting of the Circleville Sunrise Rotary club.

Enrolled youth between 7 and 14 years old are invited to participate in all agency-sponsored events until they have the opportunity to be matched in a one-to-one relationship with an adult volunteer.

Adult volunteers are asked to commit to at least one hour per week for a minimum of a year.

Once screened, volunteers will be matched with a child and then begin building a friendship with that child and his/her/their family through planned activities and outings.

Learn more at www.bbssco.org or call (740) 773-2447.

Homelessness affects youth

By Dawn Whiteside
McKinney-Vento Liaison

The county Point In Time count, which took place Jan. 24, is an annual count of individuals sleeping in unsheltered locations.



This count provides an accurate record of what homelessness looks like in our community, which helps identify areas of need, for planning purposes.

The data is then used to re-request funding and to ensure funds are allocated to the areas with the greatest needs.

While the count is of all homeless, it's important to note that young people are among them. As I wrote last month, being homeless can be detrimental to getting a good education, as students who are homeless may not be getting the sleep and meals they need to function at school.

Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago reported in 2018 that [rural communities often lack services](#) to help homeless youth.

According to [Schoolhouse Connection](#), which has a Web site full of great resources:

"Children and youth who experience homelessness are far less likely to complete high school than their peers, which in turn makes them 4.5 times more likely to experience homelessness as young adults. Lack of a high school degree or GED is the single greatest risk factor associated with experiencing homelessness as a young

adult.

This vicious cycle is one of the root causes that perpetuates homelessness in the United States — a cycle that has been exacerbated by the pandemic and its associated continuing challenges for students and schools."

Check out Chapin Hall's resources on [youth homelessness in the country](#).

In the county's Point In Time count, more than 500 people were counted as homeless. Other statistics from the count:

- 212 children in Pickaway County schools have a lack of "fixed, regular or adequate nighttime residence."
- 193 people in treatment facilities
- 58 people in shelters
- 23 people living out of motels
- 14 people living in their car
- 4 campers with an unknown number of people
- 13 people living outside
- 8 people who visited the drop-in center
- 3 people living in abandoned buildings



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