



TrueNorth has been providing youth mentoring services for the past 40 years. We feel these years have brought us much knowledge and the understanding how changing and evolving is the best way to meet the needs of today's youth.

We are excited to announce a change that will bring greater opportunities to the youth we serve through our mentoring programs. Our change didn't come lightly though and after much discussion and careful consideration, the Board of Directors, Program Committee, and staff have decided to disaffiliate from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. This means we have discontinued our relationship with Big Brothers Big Sisters, but are excited to continue our mentoring programs as TrueMentors.

You probably have questions about the name change. Following are answers to the most commonly asked questions.

Why are you changing your name to TrueMentors?

Our relationship with Big Brothers Big Sisters of America has been positive and their program is exceptional. It is however modeled after an urban or suburban population model – one that does not accurately represent the unique challenges we face in rural Newaygo County. While having the Big Brothers Big Sisters name associated with our program provided brand awareness, it was placing a financial strain on services to youth. We were also unable to offer programs that fit our needs if they didn't fit within the constraints of BBBS of America program guidelines.

Doesn't BBBS of America provide your mentoring programs financial support?

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Newaygo County *did not* receive funding from BBBS of America. In fact, we were required to pay BBBSA to be an affiliate, but there was no financial benefit from it. Basically, we were paying to use their name and images, and soon would need to pay to utilize their mandatory database that is cost prohibitive, especially for a rural affiliate. By disaffiliating from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, TrueNorth will be save in the first year \$14,000 for affiliate fees, database start-up, and mandatory national conference travel and registration. Thereafter, we will save \$6,000 per year for affiliate fees, national conference, and database maintenance fees.

Will your programming change?

Yes, but in a positive way. TrueMentors' programming will look the same as it has in the past, just without the affiliation to Big Brothers Big Sisters. Our mentoring services and the Parks in Focus program will fall under the umbrella of TrueMentors. It's important to note that the name change will not affect our service delivery and quality of service, in fact the change will allow us greater flexibility to provide mentoring programs that better fit today's lifestyles and needs for both our mentors and mentees.

We are excited to be able to provide quality, professionally supported mentoring to the youth of our community, without restrictions. We are a member of Mentor Michigan, and will continue to provide extensive background checks for all of our Volunteers, Board Members, and staff. Our knowledge and understanding of mentoring programs began in 1976.

TrueNorth 's Mentoring History

- **1976 - 1998** **Youth Connections**
- **1998 - 2016** **Big Brothers Big Sisters**
- **2016 and forward** **TrueMentors**

What about your events?

Our events are important to our financial stability and we will continue our annual fundraisers, including our signature Bowlapalooza event in April, Krop for Kids in February and November, and our Mom to Mom Sale in August. We hope you will join us for these great events in support of TrueMentors!

Will staff change?

No, our staff will not change. Samantha Ruthven will continue as the TrueMentors Program Director, with Lisa Daniell providing leadership support.

Additional Questions?

We hope we can count on your continued support so that every child that needs a mentor can have the opportunity for that meaningful, and life-changing, relationship. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Samantha at sruthven@truenorthservices.org or (231) 924-0641, ext. 109.

