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October 24, 2019 Dina Gentry

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## EDCOE Bigs make a difference

El Dorado County Office of Education (EDCOE) team members are volunteering their time to make a positive impact through Big Brothers Big Sisters of El Dorado County (BBBS). In September, six Indian Creek Elementary School students walked across the street to EDCOE, located on Green Valley Road in Placerville, and enjoyed lunch with six EDCOE Big Brothers and Big Sisters. After eating, the matched pairs participated in fun activities and games until their lunch break ended, and they returned to school.

“This partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters is significant to EDCOE,” County Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Ed Manansala, said. “I’m proud of our team members who stepped up to make a difference for these Littles. I see this program growing because we are fortunate to have EDCOE employees who are committed to meaningful and supportive relationships with students.”

This summer, BBBS and EDCOE partnered to initiate a Beyond School Walls (BSW) program at EDCOE located on Green Valley Rd. in Placerville. Twice per month during the school year, Bigs and Littles will meet for lunch at EDCOE and build consistent relationships that provide self-confidence, a sense of stability and professional role models for Littles. EDCOE BSW Bigs include Jenny Pettit, Jason Whelihan, Jana Rapetti, Brittany Wood-Massey, Angela Chance and Randy Diez. Director of Child Development Programs, Jenny Pettit, expressed, “The lunch was such a fun time, and I absolutely love my Little! She is outgoing and has a spunky attitude, so we clicked well.”

Prospective Bigs undergo a comprehensive application process in order to be considered for the program. Once individuals are accepted, BBBS team members take a great deal of care interviewing Big and Littles so they are properly matched. BBBS team member Chelsea Jolly explained, "BBBS makes matches based on a host of different criteria that is obtained during the enrollment process; we analyze several compatibility factors (i.e. personality, temperament, interests, etc.), the support needs of our Littles, our volunteer's strengths/experiences/preferences--all of which contribute to the overall "goodness of fit" that we strive for in creating strong, lasting, impactful relationships.”

Brenda Frachiseur, Executive Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters El Dorado County, expressed, “We feel fortunate to partner with the entire EDCOE team. Their support of the Beyond School Walls Program and the children in our community who are in need, always goes above and beyond. Their involvement as Bigs to these Littles will absolutely be life-changing and we look forward to seeing the potential grow in each child.”

For more information about BBBS and their programs, visit www.bbbs-edc.org/



From left to right: Jenny Pettit, Jason Whelihan, Jana Rapetti, Brittany Wood-Massey, Angela Chance and Randy Diez