

'Big Brothers' Groups Aid Fatherless Boys

By HAL FISHER
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"I've been involved with a lot of charitable organizations but I wanted to participate more actively. With this my participation is not just lip service. Outside of my family, the reward from this is greater than anything I've experienced." Robert Fogel of Torrance was speaking of his role as a "Big Brother."

Big Brothers? "I think I've heard something about them," you say. "Just another one of many charity outfits and I gave at the office." Well, let's look and see.

Actually, there are three "Big Brother" organizations. The Big Brother idea was launched in 1904 by a men's club at the Central Presbyterian Church in New York City. They came up with the "One man — One boy" concept to help fatherless slum children in their area. The idea took hold and the Big Brothers of America was the eventual result.

Not many years later the Jewish Big Brothers and the Catholic Big Brothers were formed. Although originally started to aid slum children,

the programs now involves fatherless boys of any economic background who need the companionship of a mature male.

In Southern California, the Big Brother movement first appeared with the Jewish Big Brothers in 1915, then the Catholic Big Brothers in 1926. Last to be formed was the Big Brothers of Greater Los Angeles in 1954, which is non-sectarian.

The three organizations are in no way in competition with each other and do not duplicate each other's efforts. Because one of the procedures of the movement is to match boys and men of similar religious backgrounds, separate offices have been maintained, but there is complete communication and co-operation between the three groups.

All three are privately funded organizations and do not receive tax money. Funds are raised through individuals and groups. Money is received from such sources as the United Way and money-making projects such as the Catholic All-Star Football Game held each summer.

However financially stable they are, all three groups share one problem: the crying need for more volunteer "Big Brothers."

"Little Brothers" are not in short supply! The "Little Brothers" are fatherless boys between the ages of 8 and 18 who come from homes that have been fatherless through death, divorce, or desertion, and in some cases where the father is missing for medical reasons.

Although some boys are referred to Big Brothers by the Juvenile Courts, most "Little Brothers" do not fall into the category of delinquents. All three groups have a backlog of "Little Brothers." The Big Brothers of Greater Los Angeles received 1,073 Little Brother applications in 1967, but could only place 413 with Big Brothers.

Who can be a "Big Brother?" They're doctors, lawyers, truck drivers, entertainers, politicians, auto mechanics, professional athletes, salesmen. They're single, married, childless, and fathers. There is no maximum age within reason, and although 21 is usually the

students have been "Big Brothers." All they have in common is concern.

"How do you get started?" Catholic Big Brother Nick Parise of Redondo Beach heard about the program through his church. Jewish Big Brother Robert Fogel of Torrance saw a film on the United Crusade which mentioned Big Brothers. Air Force Lt. Gary Zura of Torrance heard about Big Brothers of Greater Los Angeles through a TV spot announcement.

After hearing of the program each man called the Big Brother organization of their choice for further information. Each Big Brother outfit has a staff of trained professional counselors whose job it is to match Big and Little Brothers. After a series of written forms and personal interviews the prospective "Big Brother" is introduced to a Little Brother and his mother. They talk together and if they both agree they become a team.

The time which Big and Little Brothers spend to-

gether is worked out between themselves. The organizations recommend regularity but the frequency is variable.

Robert Fogel spends every other Saturday with his "Little Brother" while Nick Parise spends most of his free time with his. Gary Zura sees his "Little Brother" three or four times a month, usually on weekends.

How they spend their time together is also decided by the pair. It may include surf fishing, tossing a ball around, or just talking. A man doesn't get paid to be a "Big Brother" and it costs him money for tickets to ball games, movies, and trips to the beach. But the reward he gets from seeing a smile on a boy's face and knowing maybe he contributed to making a boy into a well-adjusted adult can't be measured in dollars and cents.

Don't get the idea that in-

volvement in the program will bring instant joy. Fogel says, "It may take up to two years to build a good rapport between the man and boy." Although it seldom happens, either one can pull out at any time. Fogel thinks this is good because, "the boy knows his mother and teachers are stuck with him, but Big Brother is there as a friend."

There are also things a "Big Brother" does not do. He is not a Pop psychologist. All three organizations have trained professional counselors to help the Big and Little Brother with any problem and they report on their progress to these counselors periodically during their association. The "Big Brother" is not a member of the "Little Brother's" family circle. Having no legal authority over their charges, a "Big Brother" can only use patience, understanding, and good will—and most of the time these are enough.

As time goes by the "Little Brother" may spend less time with his "Big Brother" and the formal commitment ends when the "Little Brother" reaches 18. But the relationship can last just as long as friendship. As for commitment to the program: Nick Parise is encouraging his friends to join Big Brothers; Robert Fogel says, "It's a great personal satisfaction." Gary Zura feels that, "If you want to give of yourself, Big Brothers is the best way."

If you'd like to become a "Big Brother" or for further information call the organization of your choice. Catholic Big Brothers at 385-7211; Jewish Big Brothers at 663-8484; Big Brothers of Greater Los Angeles at 385-8005.

All three Big Brother Organizations share the same slogan which sums up the program very well. "No man ever stands so straight as when he stoops to help a boy."



Taking the Plunge

Air Force Lieutenant Gary Zura, 23, adjusts skin-diving gear for his "Little Brother" Ted. Gary a Torrance resident, an enthusiastic scuba-diver in his spare time is teaching Ted the basics of the sport in his apartment swimming pool. Gary and his new bride saw a plug for Big Brothers of Greater Los Angeles on television. Gary says, "It's a great program and I think a good bridge in the 'Generation Gap'."

*'No Man Ever
Stands So Straight
As When He Stoops
To Help A Boy'*

Press-Herald Photos
by
Hal Fisher



Future Jack Nicklaus

During a round of miniature golf Robert Fogel lines up a putt for 10 year old Billy. Bob and Billy have been a "One man-One boy" team for 16 months now. About youth today Fogel says, "You get involved or you have no right to criticize them." Jewish Big Brother Fogel is married with 2 teen-age daughters at home.



Where to Now?

After polishing off a lunch of burgers and malts Jewish Big Brother Robert Fogel and "Little Brother" Billy discuss what they will do with the rest of their Saturday. Long time Torrance resident Fogel is manager of Employee Relations at Harvey Aluminum. Fogel says, "Part of our fun is deciding together how we will spend the day. One of the most important things is being a good example to the boy."



Like So!

"Little Brother" Harold watches as "Big Brother" Nick Parise prepares his rod before they leave for a little surf fishing. "People complain a lot about what's wrong with youth," says Nick, "but it's real easy to pass the buck when it comes to doing something to help."



Go Out for a Long One

Catholic Big Brothers Nick Parise, 30, of Redondo Beach hikes a football to 13 year old Harold his "Little Brother". Nick and his wife are newcomers to the area. Nick is from Long Island, N.Y. where he was involved in other youth work. Nick says, "You just have to go down to the main office once to really get hooked on the program." Nick is a computer operator by profession.