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NEWS RELEASE

August 23, 2022 – For More Information Contact CEO Holly Brinda at (440) 371-2285

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lorain County to Offer BIG Futures Career- and College-Focused Mentoring Program

Students at five Lorain County high schools will have a unique opportunity to better prepare for their future success thanks to a new program being offered by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lorain County (BBBSLC). The BIG Futures program will provide students at Elyria High School, Columbia High School, Lorain High School, the Lorain County Joint Vocational School and Wellington High School with career- and college-focused readiness instruction, career-focused mentoring, academic tutoring, social and emotional learning, and career-related experiences and activities – all with the aim of helping students achieve success after high school.

This new program is funded for two years in the amount of \$996,416 by the Ohio Department of Education through the federal Summer Learning and After School Opportunities Grant, with \$36,000 in additional assistance from the cities of Elyria and Lorain community development block grant and American Rescue Plan funding.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lorain County is partnering with these schools, in addition to Lorain County Community College, the Effective Leadership Academy, and Lorain County businesses, manufacturers, trade organizations, health care providers, safety forces, the military, and others to provide this life-changing opportunity to up to 160 high school students. Services will include twice weekly after-school social and emotional and career readiness instruction, hands-on career activities with local employers, tutoring as requested, and mentors assigned to students who share their career interests. A limited number of Lorain County high school students outside these five schools may also be accepted, depending on enrollment.

“Big Brothers Big Sisters of Lorain County is matching teens with working or retired adult mentors with a focus on helping them envision, plan for, and realize success after high school,” explained Holly Brinda, BBBSLC President and CEO. Brinda said the program was requested by parents, teachers, and guidance counselors who saw some high school students failing to thrive during the pandemic, in part due to abbreviated schedules and less access to caring adults available to help them make important life decisions. Participants will receive FREE mentoring and support services for up to one year after high school. “This program is perfect for the teenager who is not sure yet what they want to do after high school. It is designed to help students identify their interests and strengths, set goals, and direct them to community resources to help them realize those goals,” she said. Teens who need support exploring career paths should enroll.

Students will be offered: individualized career counseling; vocational and job training referrals; and assistance with ACT preparation, college and trade school applications, employment

applications, financial aid, selecting a major, resume writing, job interviewing, business etiquette, mock interviewing, military enlistment, financial literacy and more. In addition, FREE BIG Futures outings, activities and experiences will include job and career fairs, career deep-dive classes, social and cultural activities, college and university tours, employer tours, internships and more.

For more information, or to enroll, please call Program Director Karen Lippmann at (440) 277-6541 or visit the BBBSLC website at BigLorainCounty.org and complete an inquiry form. Organizations interested in providing career-focused mentors are encouraged to contact CEO Holly Brinda at (440) 371-2285.

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