

Issue 3, Spring 2005

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Big Buddy Community News

What's coming up

Summer! Swimming, mucking about in the water, long evenings, barbies, cold drinks and all that warm sun. Yes, bring it on!

Next Training evening for Buddies is 23rd November and is another full group.

What's happened

Big Buddy in the news:

TV1s Close Up. Follow up to the Big Buddy story featuring Troy and his boys.*

Not much else really, trying to hold back on publicity at the moment!

* see editorial for more on Troy's story.

New mentors

Lots more men are volunteering to become mentors. In fact we're a bit overwhelmed with new guys! It's all good though and so heartening to realise there are so many great men out there who want to help.

Big Boys Toys

A big thank you to the organisers who gave us free tickets for our Big Buddies.

Who's new

In this issue we welcome the following Big Buddies who have been matched with a little buddy:

Reg Price
John Paton
Ron Hill
Dan House
Eddie York
Chris Moller
Dale Prosser
Charlie Waetford
Barry Twydle

Editorial from Richard

Spring has sprung up and done nearly gone while summer is poking its warm sunny face over the fence. In terms of our work, it still feels like spring; ideas and projects are budding up, we are growing flat out like spring grass and we are planting the seeds of funding that we hope will flourish into a summer harvest.

A follow-up to Troy's story featured in our last newsletter. As you remember, Troy is dying from Motor Neuron Disease and was looking for a Big Buddy mentor for his twin seven-year-old boys. We are very happy to announce we found the man and he is now mentoring Troy's boys. As it turns out, he is an existing Big Buddy of three years, with a teenage Little Buddy and they are doing it together as a team, along with support from the Buddy's wife and Little Buddy's mum. Talk about a whanau approach but hey; taking on twin boys is no trivial task, so we think this will work well. Troy is very happy, as is his wife Elissa. We are quite deliberately not mentioning names here; after the TV exposure the publicity spotlight got a little too warm for the boys, so we all agreed it was in their best interests to keep it all low profile now that they are matched up with a Buddy. The many calls and letters of support for Troy and Elissa were well received - it meant a lot.

Troy has a few old army mates who are setting up a big fundraising drive around Iron man type events to raise funds for Big Buddy, which will culminate next May with them doing the Gobi desert race - a major international event for extreme athletes. They are calling it Troy's March. Good on them! It's classic good bloke stuff; if you can't directly help an old mate who is dying, you help his boys. More updates on this later.

We are expanding! Not that way, actually I'm losing weight, but Big Buddy needs to get bigger to cope with the demand. Our last bit of publicity bowled us over with the numbers of

Cool stuff to do

In this wee column we highlight a few interesting and low cost things Buddies can do together. This one is not so much a suggestion but an idea of the attitude it takes to make a difference. Cyril told me once he was driving around the waterfront with his Little Buddy and he asked him if he fancied a hot Milo. The boy said yes, but puzzled how that would happen. No worries. Cyril stopped the car, whipped out a primus, billy, milk and Milo powder, cranked the primus up and within a few minutes had two hot Milos ready. His Little Buddy asked if it was illegal! No, but it tasted good. Hey it's a guy thing!

Here's some other ideas from our collection.

Visit the local fire station and ask to look at the fire engines, you may be lucky and get to sit in one.

Visit your local police station and ask to be shown around.

Go to a car sales yard and take a new car for test drive, aim high and try a new Porsche.

Go to the beach and build a really huge sandcastle; if you are brave enough get sleeping bags and sleep in your sandcastle overnight - wake up in the morning feeling like kings!

Teach him how to light a fire, in any conditions .

And if all that seems a bit too much its time to just hang together and do absolutely nothing — bliss!

Web site update

We have added a donation button to our web site.

In partnership with Fundraise Online, we can now accept credit card donations online, including issuing tax receipts etc. Fundraise Online also offers a way individuals can fund raise for us through sports events. Our first one was Donald Roxburgh, who ran for us in the Auckland marathon, raising \$400 online, thanks Don.

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Stories of hope, from the Big Buddy files

Real life stories from our files. (Names have been changed to protect privacy)

Simon's story

Simon was a young seven-year-old when we matched him to John, an enthusiastic man in his early thirties. Simon lost his dad a while ago and as he grows up, is losing his memories of him. What memories he has left are now somehow tied up in a special soft toy he keeps in his bedroom and he is often found stroking this toy and quietly crying. Having to cope with his grief and problems at school meant life had become a bit serious for this boy. At the first match meeting Simon was a little shy with John at first but it wasn't long before the two of them were rolling around on the floor playing with fire engines and trucks; making so much noise that Simon's mother and I had to find a quieter place in the house to talk. I was thinking that maybe life had been getting pretty serious for John as well, what with career changes and job hunting, so the chance to just play was too good to miss. He needed some levity too.

Footnote: After six months John accepted a job offer in another city and reluctantly asked to close the match. A month later he called me to say he had missed his visits with Simon too much and was still calling him weekly and travelling back as often as he could afford, to see him. He thought he could end the relationship but his heart had other plans.

Big Boys Toys update



As mentioned on Page one, the organisers of this event gave us free tickets for those Big Buddies that wanted them. They were well received and we thank them for their generosity. They also offered us a place to put up a stall and information centre but unfortunately we had to forgo this offer at the last minute; we just didn't have the people and equipment to do a good job of it and decided we either do it well or not at all. Next year will be a different matter. We want to have good display equipment, an awning etc and plenty of people to man the stall. So once again a big thanks to Brett, the organiser of Big Boys Toys, for his support.

You...

Yes we would like to hear from you! Send us an email, letter or phone call if you have something to contribute to this news letter or suggestions of what you would like to read here. We will be sending this out every season the next one is the Summer issue due out around February next year.

Funding update

As promised in our last newsletter and update of funding our planned expansion. ASB Trust are now considering a proposal we put to them for an expansion of Big Buddy across the Auckland region, employing more coordinators focused on the different regions of Auckland. We won't know the outcome until next newsletter but initial feedback is very good. We are also getting great support from other funders notably COGs, mucho appreciated.

"Hope is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart. Not a conviction that something will turn out right, but a certainty that something makes sense, regardless of the outcome."

Vaclav Haval

What about girls?

Yes, we have been getting an increasing number of inquiries about mentors for girls. These are inquiries from women who would like to mentor girls and from caregivers who would like mentors for their girls. We have even had several requests for male mentors for girls from mothers of fatherless girls.

In terms of women mentors for girls, we have thought about it and to be honest, it is not high on our priorities right now but we are happy to help any women's organisation set up a buddy programme for girls.

Male mentors for fatherless girls is an area we should look at but again, given our current workload, it is not high on the list. Interestingly, we have noted a sort of overflow effect when a Big Buddy is mentoring a boy who has sisters. One of our mums said in her testimonial, "Even my daughter gets exposed to a good man that takes an interest." Others have included a sister with the Little Buddy for a special event. The importance of a father figure in a girl's development is also reflected in new research.

...editorial from Richard

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fine men out there wanting to become Big Buddies. We need more coordinators to work with mothers, boys and mentors and we need them spread over the four quarters of Auckland. I am working hard on the funding of this but right now I am on the look out for potential coordinators; if you know of people interested in our work who have some counseling and social work skills, please ask them to contact me. I am not so much interested in qualifications as personal qualities; this is very much a people business and who you are counts as much as what you know. I am especially looking for people in North and South Auckland. We are also looking for two trustees for our trust board, so if you know someone with business experience or director skills we'd love to talk to them.

I'll update you on progress in our next newsletter, the summer issue due out around February next year. Until then, I hope the summer unfolds well for you.

Go well friend.

Good Men Needed

To become mentors to fatherless boys

A Big Buddy *can* help make a profound difference to a fatherless boy's life and enrich his own.

Know of a man who wants to make this difference? Ask him to contact us.