

Issue 9, Autumn 2007

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Big Buddy Community News

What's coming up

The next **Induction/Training Evening** for prospective Big Buddies will be 21st June at Big Buddy, 40 Strid Rd, Te Atatu South.

Next Big Buddy **'Monthly Meet'** dates, *July 2 and 6 August*, 7pm at the Grey Lynn Community Centre, 510 Richmond Road, Grey Lynn.

Who's new

In this issue we welcome the following new Big Buddies to the programme:

Brian Windthrop
Noel Austin
Dave Best
David Boyes
Neville Giles
David Grear
Glen McConville
Christian Moy
Trevor Salmon
Ben Evans
Colin Bartrom

What's happened

We've been granted more funds recently for advertising to recruit Big Buddies, especially for West Auckland where there are many boys waiting to be matched. Eventually we hope to have enough funding to advertise regularly in most of the suburban newspapers as well as the NZ Herald.

Who do you know

If you know of a good man out there who would make a fitting Big Buddy now's the time to tap him on the shoulder. Person to person is always the best way to promote what we do.

**If you have a work e-newsletter that has a community focus section or an area in your workplace or somewhere else for displaying Big Buddy material please call us for brochures, display stands and promotional material.*

UK welcomes Big Buddy

I have just returned from a visit to the UK, made possible by the Vodafone NZ Foundation. The UK has a huge range of mentoring programmes with strong government support and so the original idea was to learn from this rich environment. While I learnt much, I also found myself teaching eager Brits about the unique style of Big Buddy. I attended the main national conference on Mentoring along with 350 people from all over the UK. The format included a series of workshops and I put up a workshop on recruiting and screening male mentors. They had a 100 people register for the Big Buddy workshop and had to turn away 50, such was the interest! Like many countries they all struggle to recruit men into mentoring, they only manage 10-20% of men in their programmes. The workshop was well received by most though some seemed a little stunned at the depth of the Big Buddy programme. Our style is very direct and relational compared to theirs, for example they were shocked that we visited potential Big Buddies in their homes and ask personal questions of them! They were also amazed to hear Big Buddy relationships last for many years, where they generally close off all relationships after 9-12 months. I was invited to present to quite a few organisations after the conference, all of them wanting to pick our brains. I'd always thought of ourselves as social entrepreneurs but in the context of the bureaucratic UK environment we are considered very innovative, very leading edge. The contacts I made there are ongoing as UK organisations seek our help to make mentoring more male friendly. Big Buddy is now world famous!

It was really interesting to see the breath of mentoring in the UK and the level of government support for it. They have programmes mentoring older isolated people, young people coming out of prison, migrants trying to integrate in a new country, young mothers and fathers, troubled teens, people with disabilities, young people caring for adults, the list goes on. The government is looking to volunteering generally and mentoring in particular to help with the many social problems they are facing in the UK. The cabinet has an "Office of the Third Sector" devoted to this work so mentoring is very much part of government policy.



One of the UK Gold Star mentoring groups 121 Youth Befriending, Dartford. A wonderful group of people, very innovative in their work.

again in Brixton to be greeted by Jamaicans and loud reggae music, "ave a nice day mun". It's a place of many contrasts and many cultures and an awful lot of people.



Richard with UK conference organiser Jen Sutton who made me feel very welcomed.

On another note some visual highlights; Manchester... young Chinese women talking loudly on cell phone "I told our Ashley bout tat but eees a right plonker wif it". Waterloo station

surrounded by business people in pin stripped suits, then down to the tube and popping up

Editorial from Richard

Autumn has well and truly descended upon us now with the occasionally icy blast from the south to remind us winter is next. I feel a little guilty I hadn't taken advantage of late summer and got in a few more fishing trips in the Big Buddy boat but it's seemed so busy recently. Lucky for the fish I guess but it got me to thinking about time and busyness. It's so easy to be busy filling the time up with things-needing-doing but I forget that I need idle time for my soul's health; time spent just mucking about not doing much at all. Idleness has gained a bad name, undeservedly and I am fearful the art of idling may suffer extinction in this busy multi media world we live in. Idling may go the way of the dodo, unfairly criticised for not being efficient in its survival.



My trip to the UK was in general very busy but I did spend the last 3 days having time out in a remote part of Ireland, staying in a tiny village on the southern coast. Now the Irish, bless them, have not forgotten the idle arts, in fact they are sublime in their practice of creative idleness. A visit to the butcher took an hour chatting about this and that and not much at all. There was nothing much to do there except look out to sea and listen to the wind, oh and eat, and drink the very fine black stuff that Ireland seems to run on. The more Guinness I drank, the more I understood the Irish accent, in fact the more I understood absolutely everything.

So this winter I shall be reviving the ancient art of not-doing-much-at-all. I wish you all an idle filled winter full of not very much except warm fires, staring out at the rain, chatting idly to a friend about not too much, occasionally nodding off into that lovely world between sleep and wakefulness. Ahh ... blissful idleness...

Go well friend.

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.

Big Buddy reaches across the 'ditch'

Some feedback from Cathy, Grandmother and caregiver of Little Buddy Ryan, who wanted to let us know how dedicated and important Ryan's Big Buddy is to him.

"....and may I say that we still have the best Big Buddy in the whole world. Michael Jones commutes from Australia to see Ryan. He has made a lifetime commitment to our family even though he long ago shifted to Australia. Michael takes such a fantastic role with all 3 grandchildren that I am raising. He displays the only "normal" male behaviour in these kids lives and they hang out to see him. Ryan has even been to stay with Michael in Australia for 2 weeks last Christmas. How neat is that? Michael deserves more than a medal for his commitment"



Update from the Co-ordinators

We've been steering the ship for a month while the boss has been away and yes we did turn up to work. In fact it's been a very prolific time. 20 boys have been matched this year already. It's been very pleasing matching some boys who have been waiting a year or longer.

The Big Buddy monthly meetings continue to be a rich source of information and comradeship among the Big Buddies. New ideas, success stories and common challenges get discussed in an informal friendly forum. We warmly welcome any Big Buddies who have not joined us to this point.

We've been in our home in Strid Road for over a year now and with the Tui's currently singing outside in the tree, we feel very blessed to be here. Visitors have commented on the warm environment we've created at 'Big Buddy House'.

We Steve's are enjoying working together, sharing the vision of matching fatherless boys to be uncled, grandfathered and mentored by a good man.

Cool stuff to do

Big Buddy has just purchased 2 fishing rods and reels, plus hooks, sinkers, lures. They're magic rods and should catch plenty of big fish...well, that's what the guy in the shop said anyway. They are available to use now and you can book them through Tony in the office. Head out to one of the many wharfs around the Manukau or Waitamata harbours or take out the boat or kayak.

Big Buddies have recently talked about projects they've been working on with their Little Buddies. A few to mention are:

Building a go-cart. Another Big Buddy pair have designed and are in the final stages of finishing a motorized go-cart. I've seen a few photo's of the project in progress and it looks fantastic. We hope to have their story (and photo's) feature in our next newsletter.

Upgrading an old computer. Why buy new when you can recycle? A Little Buddy had a computer that wasn't up to scratch so together with his Big Buddy they upgraded the memory and hard-drive, dusted it off and cleaned it up, added some new programmes (and games I suspect!) and now it's running sweet. Good effort guys!

Cooking together. A Big Buddy pair decided they'd teach each other some new food recipes. So they go out to buy the ingredients, make something yummy together and best of all, eat it! What a great idea!