

Who's new

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

Gary Langridge

Gerhardt van der Westhuizen

Philip Scothern

James Porter

John Kennedy

Peter Mortimer

Roy Adams

John Butt

Steven MacDougall

Stu Tutt

Geoffrey Hill

Denis Williams



this issue

Feature stories **P.1**

Editorial & stories **P.2**

Stories and reviews **P.3**

The back page **P.4**

Transitions to Manhood

It is difficult to call Eric my Little Buddy as he stands about 6 inches taller than me at 6 foot 4 at aged 14.

Eric and I have spent the last 3 years doing lots of activities together. I am proud to see Eric developing into an admirable young man. He is admired by his mum as a kind, sensitive son who's a trier and has dreams to be great. He is admired by his school friends as fun to hang out with. Eric is admired by his teachers as someone who is willing to put in the hard work to achieve at school. He is admired by his soccer teammates as the goal keeper who consistently keeps the team in the game.

My role is simple. I let Eric know that he is okay.

Eric has always been a nice young man who is polite, willing to learn new sports, crafts, hobbies. Like all of us he has dreams and seeks answers for his future. Through the activities that we do together and the occasional cafe visit on a rainy day, I share with Eric what my experiences were as an 11 year old, 12 year old etc. I didn't have all the answers. I put on a brave face around friends, enjoyed my achievements, but had dreams and fears like any normal boy growing up. Eric gets that it is okay to feel how he feels.

Eric transitions through these growth phases knowing that he has a Big Buddy giving him the nod that things are going okay. His mum will keep him healthy, loved, well fed, in education, and hopefully in bed at an agreed time.

I don't have such great responsibilities to Eric. My only commitment and reward is shared time, quality time. We set our own rules together and our interaction when he was an 11 year old is now different to what a 14 year old enjoys. We don't work off a template or plan, we just agree to both put time aside to let the Big

Buddy philosophy take its course.

I first became involved in Big Buddy as I saw young men with talents selling themselves short and sometimes leading themselves down destructive paths. This is very sad. Society places great expectations on young men. The only way to gauge if they are on the right path is to stand aside a model of how they see themselves as a man. Most young men will get this natural gauging and development through interaction with their father. When there is no father figure there is not enough of this type of feedback. A Big Buddy or a mentor fills this gap.

I am proud to be part of Eric's successful transition to a young man from which society will benefit from his enthusiasm, raw talent, sense of humour and sensitivity.

One will never know if or how Eric would be different without a Big Buddy influence, but I can comfortably say that, ignoring individual stories, on the law of average, a Big Buddy relationship can only reduce the number of sad stories about young men. This positive outcome not only benefits a young man but improves the quality of life for his mother, relatives, friends, girlfriends, teachers, teammates, and for his own children one day.

For the commitment of a few hours a week, with the assistance of the Big Buddy programme, so many more success stories will come out of New Zealand.

Christian (Big Buddy of 4 years)



Christian and Eric on the soccer pitch

A Heart Story

Without a Big Buddy there's a hole in you, then it's filled when you get a Big Buddy. He's not your dad but that's alright because he can take you where you want, not where he or your mum wants. The way it's changed my life is like you buy something you love. It's awesome. When I did not have a Big Buddy I was angry and sad but now I'm more happy than ever!

My Big Buddies name is Don. He's nice and kind. What he means to me is like half my heart and without him I only have half a heart. With him it's filled. He means so much to me and he takes me everywhere, movies, beach and much more. I love him to bits. I hope you get someone like him. He's old but that's alright.

Every year there's a Big Buddy Day Out where all the Big Buddies and kids come to a beach. First you say your name and they say theirs and then you talk about your life and about you, so please join. Have some fun and get a Big Buddy. It's alright. Thank you for reading.

Taylor Bond

Editorial

Now comes the cold winds, the rain, longer nights and the shudder that runs through the soul of a summer lover like me. Then I read the many stories coming into us from our Big and Little Buddies. I hope we can fit them all in here because for me, they warm up a cold dark night, brighten a bleak rainy day. They warm me up from the inside and give me great hope for our world. These stories say so much more than I can so I will keep my words brief – and I don't find that easy!

The big news is we are inundated with men wanting to become Big Buddies based on our recent radio ads, stories in the press by media person Ruth (watch out for us in Women's Weekly), Facebook, and who knows what other whispering winds. It's all working so well we are struggling to keep up with inquiries and are busy getting more people on board to help.

Funding it all is not getting any easier but hey, our supporters keep stepping up and some interesting corporate sponsors are showing strong interest, but more on this next time.

While our direct approaches to government have shown little fruit, I am confident our work in the world will find the right supporters. Those who, like me, are motivated to help warm the world up - from the inside.

Wishing you a wonderfully cold autumn - warmed from the inside out.

Go well Friend, Richard

New Year at Matarangi

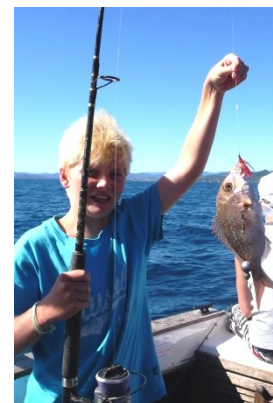
My wife Beth & I rented a house at Matarangi Beach over New Year & we invited my 'Little Buddy' Branson (12) to join us for a few days.

Branson caught a ferry on his own from downtown Auckland & we picked him up at Coromandel wharf. We had access to a lot of sporting equipment at the house we rented, but by far the most utilised was the table tennis table. I was predicting that I would give him a towelling, but unbeknown to me, Dilworth School which Branson attends as a boarder has a table tennis table & he was well practised I can assure you. We must have had 50+ very competitive games over 5 days, during which time we both improved considerably. After each set of the best of 5 games, we would head down to the beach for a swim in the surf to cool off & have body surfing contests. We discovered later that there were heaps of sharks in attendance this summer but they didn't bother us, thank goodness.!

On day 4 we were both invited to go fishing on a friends boat. This was the highlight for Branson as he had never fished from a boat before. It was quite a day as it turned out. We were drift fishing with a sea anchor out in 40 meters of water about 5km off shore. There was not much action. As luck would have it Branson was the first to land a fish, the last to land a fish & the one who caught the biggest fish. But what really made the day for us both was 2 significant events. Firstly, a pod of around 50-60 dolphins swam past almost in a line. They appeared to be herding fish as a group. It was most impressive. But the 2nd one took the cake. About an hour later a 8-10 metre Minke Whale swam close by us. For some reason it took some interest in us & cruised up close to the boat before diving under us. Then Ray the skipper's rod started peeling out. Ray had foul hooked the whale. Needless to say it snapped the line but we caught the incident on video & relayed the story once we got back to land.

We all had a great few days biking, walking, playing, fishing & swimming.

Geoff (Big Buddy of 4 1/2 years)



Branson with his catch

Still discovering 5 years on...

From Blake... Harley and I have been together some years now. He's the sort of guy who is stable, reliable, and I know he's always there for me. He has a lot of life experience and opens my eyes to interesting places and opportunities. A recent trip we really enjoyed was the D.O.C. protected Tiri Tiri Matangi Island. This island is a step back in time with abundant colourful bird life. We tramped forested board walks and tracks with lots of stitchbirds, rifleman, and the North Island robins flying around us. We saw blue penguins, the world's smallest, in their nesting boxes. But the bird with which I was really taken was Greg, a friendly Takahe. This bird was quite socialised, the guide telling us of him liking ham sandwiches. Guess what I had for lunch that day? Of course I couldn't give him any. After lunch at the Tiri Tiri lighthouse, one of NZ's oldest, built 1864, Harley and I swam in the crystal clear waters, refreshing! Harley is always planning trips like the Glenbrook Vintage Railway and Waiuku Historic Village. These are experiences which I'll take into adult life and re-live.

From Harley... During our first two or three outings Blake made comment that he was an 'unlucky' person. I determined at that stage this was a perception I could change. I believed that Blake, given a range of different activities and places to go, would see life from a more positive viewpoint. Blake has developed a range of beliefs in himself over several years. Beliefs such as: "delivering community papers will give me the opportunity to buy a car, doing well at school will give me career options and a chance for a good job, travel and relationships". Also, a belief that, "I can sink the putt, bowl the tenpin ball, set up a fishing line, bake the muffin, pot the billiard ball or walk the track". He is now at the stage where he is putting these beliefs into action and thus determining his future.

I have made some discoveries about being a Big Buddy including: my reliability, a supportive Mum (Anita) with her trust of me with Blake is of key importance. Also, both us both having fun outings and on occasion expanding my activity horizons are also a vital part of being a Big Buddy.

Blake and Harley



Tiri Tiri Lighthouse taken by Blake

Can we assemble it? Yes we can!

Over summer there was a major construction project at Milford. We had purchased a garden seat that came flat packed and so we put together the construction team of Ross and William to assemble it. Equipped with screw driver and spanner we laid out all the parts on the garage floor. Construction took 40 minutes with lots of advice from William on team work! Once completed it was time for a cool drink followed by a swim at the beach. It was then home to test the bench (as pictured) and have a relaxed evening meal.

Ross (Big Buddy of 18 months)



Ross and William, project complete!

Big Buddy Day Out - Review

The Big Buddy Day Out this year was almost a non-starter. It was the day after the massive earthquake in Japan and we had concerns about any Tsunami potential in the Pacific. However, after getting readings from several quarters, we gave it the green light and 130 of us (great turnout) assembled at Long Bay at our regular site on a beautiful sunny day. We stayed around the main area connecting and playing ball games until after lunch.



Doing the sums we ordered 350 sausages to cook up this time (hungry lads!), thanks to Tony D'arcy and Andrew at the Milford Butcher. That's a lot to get on a plate, and plenty of salads and bread to prepare, so thanks to everyone who lent a hand so willingly. In the afternoon we declared the beach open, and many little and big boys went for their first jet ski ride. Mal and the team are such a special part of the day and have been part of these events for 6 years, much appreciated guys! Foodtown helped out with drinks and we had plenty of ice left over to have an impromptu ice battle at the end of a hot afternoon.

Strange how the boys like getting the Big Buddy staff soaked, just wait till next year!

One comment I recall from a Big Buddy is that it was good to see how long some of these matches have been going. It inspired him, and it continues to inspire us with the generosity of the men we have in our community. We look forward already to next year and the numbers expanding even further.

Martin - North Shore/Rodney Coordinator



Geocaching fun

Hello everyone, Jasper Lil Buddy and Bern Big Buddy here up north at Matakana/Whangateau. We meet most Sunday afternoons and have played frisbee, computers, lots of music (keyboards, harmonica, ukulele, guitar) and walks. We read in a Big Buddy email about "Geocaching" and decided to Google it.

You need a GPS device, like a smartphone or car GPS. All around the world people, 'geocachers' have hidden a cache and describe the coordinates on the website www.geocache.com. Well, we don't have a GPS device...yet, but we DO have google maps and each Sunday we go exploring for a nearby geocache. So far we have found SIX! There have been three others we can't find yet, but we will. These caches are like a treasure hunt. When you find it, camouflaged in a tree or under rocks or any cunning manner, there is a piece of paper to sign. When we get back to a computer we log in, and record that we have found our cache.

It's amazing how clever some people are at hiding things. "Muggles" are people who don't know about geocaching, and when we sign the paper we always write after it "TFTC" which means "Thanks For The Cache". Just in our neighbourhood alone there are between 20 and 30 caches and there are thousands all around the world.

It's fun looking for a cache, but it's REALLY about exploring and visiting places together and now we're saving up for a GPS.

Jasper and Bern

My Favourite Bloke Alan

I was first introduced to my favourite bloke Alan in April 2009. He has taught me some life lessons and done cool things with me on Saturday mornings. We made a small dam in a fresh water spring down at the Manukau bridge and went going go-carting on my 10th and 11th birthdays. I like Alan because he always makes time for other people, and he is a great influence in my life. We both share an interest in computers and technology and we enjoyed going to the Breakers basketball games last year. We've made a scratching post and re-furbished a cat house for my kitten recently.

My dad lives in Canada and I haven't seen him for 2 ½ years. I really miss him but I'm really lucky to have Alan as my Big Buddy. We have bonded and have a great relationship.

This photo was taken in front of the engine of the new Air New Zealand Boeing 777 at Auckland airport. Alan took me along for the open day.

Yours Sincerely, Morgan



A real intrepid journey

Mike and I have been buddies since Feb 2009. I am now 11 years old and Mike says he is somewhere north of 60, so he has been around the traps a few times.

We spend most Saturday mornings together and we have enjoyed a lot of interesting and often exciting experiences. Some of which includes visits to the zoo, Kelly Tarltons, the museum, beaches, horse rides, boat rides, Butterfly Creek and best of all, kayaking at Okahu Bay.

Mike and I have been kayaking 3 times now. I've never done this before, so for my first time, I was a bit nervous, but Fergs Kayaks makes sure you are fitted out with a life jacket. Mikes hires a two man sit on top kayak. I sat up at the bow and Mike sat at the stern. We each had paddles. Once I got use to the motion of the waves I started to get the hang of things, and began to enjoy it. We paddled all the way out to the wave screen, where, to my surprise, we discovered seagulls on the polls nesting. We could see the baby seagulls and the adults got aggressive when we got close. Mike explained that it is important that paddling is done in sequence and if I slacken off, he'd yell for me to dig deep. It has been fun but we get wet backsides. Mike reckons that soon we can have a kayak each and our long term goal is to join one of the Fergs' Kayak excursions to Rangitoto Bay. That will be a real intrepid journey!

I think Mike is a good guy to hang out with. He likes to sing in the car and talk loud, but he's a good person when you get to know him a bit more. He usually buys me a Coke and even nick names me 'Marchello'. When Mike can't make it on a Saturday because of other commitments, he always sends me a postcard, which I am always excited to receive.

I would like to go to Kiwi Valley Farm Park with Mike some day and go into the maze that they have there. The last two years for me has helped me to be more confident as a person and to enjoy more experiences. Mike reckons that it's been good fun too.

I would really like to thank Mike for being my Big Buddy and I always look forward to the next adventure we have, regardless of what it is.

Written by Marcel Kerrigan – 'with the help of my famous buddy Mike'



Mike, Marcel and Max the family dog



How to donate to Big Buddy

Donations to support the work of Big Buddy are much needed and very welcome.

Ways to donate to us:

- See our website, www.bigbuddy.org.nz to donate online with a credit card.
- Download an automatic payment form from our website & become a Big Buddy monthly donor supporter.
- Simply send us a cheque, (write your name and address on the back so we can send a receipt).
- Make a donation direct into our bank account:
12-3039-0172153-02
(Please put your name in the reference box and email us your address details so we can send a receipt).

All donations go towards the work of screening, matching and supporting Big Buddy relationships and expanding our outreach to the many fatherless boys in the community.

A special trip to South Africa

After being matched up for 2 years and considering how well my Little Buddy Cody gets on with my family, we asked him to accompany us to South Africa in November last year. We were away for 6 weeks and returned in January of this year.

We were touched by Amanda's willingness to send her son with us to such a far away place, and trusting us to look after him. We had a most marvelous time, with Cody enjoying the African cuisine and breathtaking beauty of Table Mountain. Everywhere we went our family and friends took an instant liking to this fellow, some even wanted to keep him! Cody also learnt some local traditions and some Afrikaans words too.

Andre (Big Buddy of 2 1/2 years)



Cody (left), Andre and his 2 sons

Wellington Update

Greetings from the capital! Well it's been a hectic 2011 so far with record numbers of enquiries coming into the Wellington office. That means lots of work processing Big Buddy applications and has forced us to seek out some assistance. So a big thanks and welcome aboard go to Big Buddy Sean Adams who has stepped up to help. Sean has taken on the important task of talking to the character referees each applicant provides for the screening process. So far he's been cranking through them and this has allowed me to stay on top of the flow of applicants. In fact he's been so good that now the Auckland crew have decided to poach some of his time. Fabulous work Sean!

In other news, we've got some great new matches up and running this year with plenty more in the pipeline as we head into winter. It's great to hear the stories coming back of the fun being had and the connections that are growing. In other news, my lovely partner Jane had a quiet word at her work about what we do and next thing we know I have \$1700 in cash to deposit into the Big Buddy bank account. Thanks Jane you sweetie and thanks to all the staff at Unilever Petone who gave so generously.

So as the dark nights close in and the weather begins to test us, I'll be keeping warm on the knowledge that there are always more good men stepping up to mentor the young fellas, and always more people wanting to help us do the work we do.

Kia kaha, Scott



Sean Adams showing his colours!



Big Buddy is now a registered charity with USave - www.usave.co.nz

USave is a NZ based online shopping site that donates 25% of all sales commission to the charity of your choice (us we hope!) and they donate a further 25% to a general charity fund. As well as new items they have a Garage Sale section, a bit like Trade Me. We honestly don't know how good this site will be but figure it's worth a look. If you decide to use it, we would really appreciate your feedback on it.

Cheers, Richard

PETER CROPPER - My Big Buddy

Peter is my mate
And he's never late
Meeting up with me
Each week we do something together
Walking the dog,
Playing tennis, making jam
Watching cricket, climbing mountains
Writing to each other
Peter is cool, never a fool
I beat him at tennis each time we play
And I am very happy to see him any day
He's the best buddy for me
Even though I punish him at tennis
And regularly wrestle him
I am so glad that he came into my life
He is helping me grow into a responsible man

Antony Hunt

Big Buddy

Auckland – Head Office

CEO – Richard Aston
Ph 09 838 4448
PO Box 83 031, Edmonton, Auckland 0652
40 Strid Rd, Te Atatu South, Auckland

East & Central Auckland

Co-ordinator – Steve Sobota
Ph 09 838 4448 ext 2

West & South Auckland

Co-ordinator – Stephen Bell
Ph 09 838 4448 ext 3

North Shore – Rodney

Co-ordinator – Martin Hosking
Ph 09 488 7181
PO Box 33 059, Takapuna, Auckland 0740
99B Hurstmere Rd, Takapuna, Auckland

Wellington

Co-ordinator – Scott Savidge
Ph 04 384 4888
PO Box 9370, Marion Square, Wellington 6141
12 Brooklyn Rd, Aro Valley, Wellington

Email inquiries to: info@bigbuddy.org.nz

www.bigbuddy.org.nz