

Who's new

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

Frank Slater
Brent Cooper
David Latu
Philip McCabe
Mick Courtnell
Brian Hewitt
Martin Reeves
Steven Heesen
Chris Ten-Wolde
Mark Fleming
Gregor McNee
Jim Williams
Steven Galbraith
Aarron Harland
Oliver Lovell
Bob Lawton
Corey Walbran
Bernard Corston
Andre Wilson
Jeremy Booth
Dave Simpkins
Nelson Wang
Brian Worsfold
Matt Davis



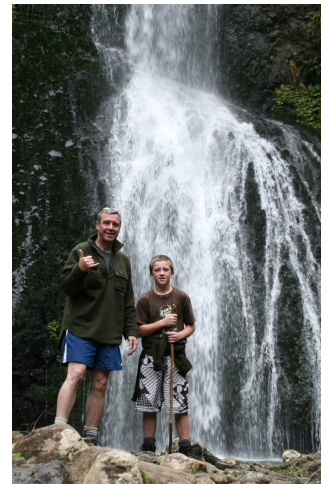
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What I get out of being a Big Buddy

Travis and I have been buddies for over twelve months now. We meet once a week, and because I work irregular hours we sometimes hang out at weekends or after school. By hanging out I mean we enjoy swimming, water sliding at Waiwera, fishing off Cornwallis Pier or Bayswater Marina, tramping through the Waitakere Ranges, climbing Rangitoto, riding our bikes along the water front, mountain biking through Woodhill forest, enjoying a movie, indoor rock climbing or flying one of Travis's "big as" kites, just to name a few!

I remember the first few outings we had together resulted in Travis returning home with an assortment of cuts and bruises. One weekend Travis fell off his bike. We were so busy chatting that he rode off the kerb and straight over the handle bars! The last thing I heard was "Steve do you know...agh!" Then a visit to Woodhill mountain bike park the following week saw Travis 'bunny hop' a pine cone whilst riding downhill at high speed which resulted in one almighty crash and more bruising. All I heard was "woohoo.....agh!" The next weekend saw us hike over Rangitoto and after a hard day's hike in the hot sun we decided to have a swim whilst waiting for the ferry. Sounded like a good idea at the time until Travis kicked a clump of oysters lurking beneath the surface. I can't print what he shouted but the blood flowing from his foot indicated a nasty cut. Travis seemed more worried about the sharks that might be attracted by the blood trail than his actual foot! Anyway Travis now has a number of scars and bruises that he is very proud of!



Steven and Travis at Kitekite Falls near Piha

I personally have had so much enjoyment mentoring Travis. It's the little things, like showing him how to tie a hook to a fishing line, then watching him do it on his own. Not content catching sprats whilst others around him catch Kahawai and Kingi's, Travis ditched the sprat rod and bought himself a surfcaster (with his own hard earned money) which he matched with an old 'egg beater' reel of mine. I'll never forget the smile on his face when he caught his first snapper on his own rod that he had set up and baited himself. This fellow is becoming more confident in his own ability and is developing a very positive 'can do' attitude which was great to see, and now he's a very competent fisherman.

People often say to me "so what's in it for you". Well when your Little Buddy says to you "Steve, I think my dad would be proud of me having a Big Buddy" and I reply "he's looking down on you right now mate" and he smiles.....enough said.

Steven Hogg - Big Buddy

Flight Centre renew their sponsorship

The Flight Centre has confirmed their sponsorship of Big Buddy for another year. They will again donate money and free travel to keep Big Buddy moving forward. We've enjoyed working with them over the past year and look forward to building the relationship. They're good people with good values.

Flight Centre replied on our Facebook page - "We are proud to support Big Buddy for a second year - keep up the great work guys!"

**FLIGHT
CENTRE**
Unbeatable

Richard

Editorial

The cold bones of winter ...

Winter's cold arms embrace us all - from the snowbound silence of the South to wild rhythms of wind and rain up North. We seek what warmth we may find, inside, with each other. We endure - find resilience and prevail. We know in our bones it will pass, spring will come and all will be well. Winter is such a good teacher in the human story.

My father died 2 weeks ago, I held him as he took his last breath and then let the silence after enfold me, it felt like winter. Cold, profound yet offering resilience and hope, we will prevail. Although he was 91 and as they say, "had a good innings", I am now fatherless, the irony of which is not lost on me - considering my passion to help fatherless boys. It's funny how loss can clarify the mind but the loss of my birth father has brought into sharp relief my "other" fathers, older men whose abiding care, attention and interest in me could only reasonably be called fathering. Some are gone and some are living but I remember them well and love them all. It explained why the loss was, while profound, not devastating. It deepened my appreciation of the importance of father figures in a growing boy's life, in a growing man's life. Resilience is in many ways an inner journey but the people who care for us, in the myriad of ways caring happens, are the ones that feed that knowing in our bones, that all will be well in time. The knowing the sun will shine warm again and the world, as always, awaits our enthusiastic participation.

Within weeks of my father's death I welcomed the birth of a friend's daughter's baby, attended two 21st celebrations and am looking forward to the birth of my second grandchild this month. Life carries on in all its ragged, less than perfect hopeful glory.

My father was a showbiz man and we did his funeral full show biz in a theatre, singing, banjos, jokes, laughter, tears, ending with a standing ovation. After everyone had gone my granddaughter (3) got up on stage and started dancing. She couldn't help herself, after all that's what stages are for. My brothers and I taught her how to take a bow in the full theatrical style of my father. She bowed - we clapped - over and over again. A little bit of spring wrapped it arms around us and all was well in the world. Go well friend.

Richard

Learning from each other

When Steve at Big Buddy called to say he'd found a Little Buddy for me he said he thought we would get on well and that Brendan had a dry sense of humour. Brendan is 14, and we have been buddies for over 2 years. We do get on well, and I really like his 'quirkiness', which is refreshingly different.

Brendan lost his Dad about 14 years ago, but has a very supportive mother and brothers, as well as an extended family. We are buddies - me the adult male (in his 60's), and him the teenager. Brendan likes modern music, but is very specific on what appeals. So I am learning about rap, and other types - for an opera and chamber music follower, that's new territory. Sometimes we go to a movie, but there are movies Brendan considers not suitable for me - there's a role reversal!



John and Brendan at the Big Buddy Day Out

I reckon I get as much as he does out of the relationship - it's a two way street. That's what makes it so rewarding. He opens new doors for me as much as I do for him. We talk lots, and discuss the kind of things a teenage boy is confronted with. It's a challenge, and makes me think! But I hope I give him some of the values I believe to be important.

Now he's coming up 15 we only get together fortnightly, but I hope it will go on as long as Brendan feels it of value. I have great confidence in his future - and would be happy to be part of it.

John Sinclair - Big Buddy

Our first outing

Probably hard to know who was more excited about the days outing, me or Jaymin, but his Mum said he'd been asking about it since Friday evening and was up at 5 o'clock on Sunday morning getting ready, so I'm happy to let him have the honours on this occasion.

I thought perhaps the first weekend should be about getting to know one another so I didn't plan to do too much and I took him to the park at Pt Chev beach where we could play on the playground, kick a ball around and generally lark about just being friends. The weather really turned it on and we got pretty hot and thirsty. Unfortunately I'd forgotten to pack a drink so we went in search of a drinking fountain without success but I did find a tap that we could use. What I didn't spot was that the tap was also attached to an outside shower for bathers and subsequently got my head very wet when I turned the tap on... much to the merriment of Jaymin. I decided that too much sun without a drink wasn't good so I treated us to an ice block each which we demolished as we took a little drive around some of Jaymin's favourite places. I then turned towards home and stopped at another smaller park where we played a little half court one-on-one basketball, which Jaymin had never played (and he beat me 5-4). We finished off at the mall as it seemed a good way to cool off and we checked out the gaming shop.



Rob and Jaymin after their first outing

I thought the day went terrific and I learnt a lot about my new Little Buddy. This weekend I'm taking him to check out the trolley derby at Westgate. I think he's hoping to get a turn in one of the trolleys, perhaps it may even inspire him to make one sometime.

Rob Thompson - Big Buddy

He's like a father to me

Hi, my name's Jack Liu and my Big Buddy is Brett Lake. He has been my Big Buddy for over two years, in which we did a whole bunch of exciting and marvelous things together! He is a very responsible man and every Friday Brett calls me and we plan what we do on the following Saturday when we catch up. Every Saturday afternoon at 2:00pm Brett always comes to pick me up on time. He is very reliable and helps me in all sorts of ways. Once, when I was doing a science project on Rube Goldberg machine, I needed a long tube to build it. So I asked Brett where to get one. He took me to Bunning's Warehouse to get the cardboard roll that holds carpets for me to use. He also helped me cut it in half! Without his help I wouldn't have been able to finish my project.



Jack & Brett before an outing

We go to a huge variety of places from art galleries, to mini golf to test driving cars, to doing an oil change, to the Museum, to watching planes land and takeoff, to watching movies in the cinema, and many more! On my birthday on October 10, Brett, a few friends and I went to the cinema and watched 'Despicable Me'. I had an awesome time and I know Brett did too!

Brett is a very knowledgeable person because when we are in the car (which is where we spend a lot of our time) we always have very interesting conversations about subjects like school, technology, current events, and important knowledge like money matters and real estate. He has given a lot of energy and time to me, and I sincerely thank Brett for helping me and acting like a father to me.

Jack Liu – Little Buddy

Wellington Update

Greetings from the Capital. Well it's been a solid year so far with plenty of new matches up and running and plenty more settling into their second and third years! It's a real treat to see Big and Little Buddies who were some of the first Welly matches still going strong and getting stronger.

Also getting stronger are the fundraising efforts of our supporters down here. Our good friends at the Empire Fergusson Masonic Lodge held a mid-winter single malt whisky tasting last week complete with haggis and bagpipes. It's the 2nd year they've run the event and this year all proceeds are destined for Big Buddy. Rumour has it that we can expect a tasty cheque in the next week or so. So many thanks to Clive, Russell and all the good blokes who put the evening together – it is very much appreciated in these tight times.

After snow on my doorstep last week it's extremely nice to feel a change in the air as spring approaches. Of course that will no doubt mean plenty of rain but the warmer temperatures mean we can all start to look forward to more outdoor activities. And with THAT big tournament just around the corner I'm sure there are many who can't wait for the big games to begin. One Little Buddy with a bigger interest than most will be Connor Bradshaw, who just happens to have an Uncle named Cory Jane (you know, that lightning fast fella on the wing for the AB's). No doubt his Big Buddy Radon will be hoping that means he and Connor get some prime seats – let's hope so!!

In the next couple of months we'll be making plans for the Big Buddy Day Out in Wellington with dates/locations still to be confirmed. After last year's fantastic outing we have quite the challenge to go better this year. I'll be getting in touch with our Wellington Big Buddies over the next few weeks to source some ideas, so put your thinking caps on chaps.

Kia kaha, Scott

Big Buddy welcomes the Gluckman Report

A taskforce was selected with a brief to review international and domestic peer-reviewed scientific literature involving children and young people, with a view to understanding and identifying ways to improve outcomes for them in New Zealand.

The report (prepared by about two dozen researchers and headed by the Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisor Sir Peter Gluckman) covers human development; digital media; alcohol & drug use; teenage pregnancy; child abuse; bullying; obesity; depression & suicide; smoking; Maori & Pasifika and Asian & immigrant minorities' issues.

While the hefty 308-page report acknowledges it is inevitable that adolescence is a period of risk-taking and impulsivity, it looks to reduce the impact of these behaviours on our young people.

One of the report's key findings is that social programmes have been introduced on the basis of "advocacy rather than evidence and/or have characteristics that cannot be measured". Some of these programmes included short-term mentoring programmes; boot camps and military-style training, all of which I agree with.

Fortunately, Big Buddy's commitment to fatherless boys is long-term and we have very good evidence of its profound effectiveness over years rather than months. I have no doubt about the very positive outcomes for children and youth in our programme but the evidence also shows that good outcomes do depend on the style and quality of the mentoring programme.

Unfortunately, mentoring has become flavour of the month and everyone is jumping on the bandwagon, tagging any relationship they have with a young person as mentoring. Many so-called 'mentoring' programmes are short-term and low quality and they clearly do not work.

Hopefully, the Gluckman report will help sort the wheat from the chaff and its call for long-term commitment to social programmes that do work will be heeded.

Meanwhile, we carry on the good work ...

Richard

Ferrari Owners Club of NZ...Vroom...Vroom... you're great!

It took a while to come down to earth after experiencing the thrills of driving fast around the Pukekohe race track in a red Ferrari. We were very lucky to have been invited by the Ferrari Owners Club of New Zealand to participate in their annual outing around the racing circuit. Over 100 of us came to the day, even our Trust chairman Andrew Cook thought it was too good a chance to miss.



Marcus, Anton & Allan...just cruising!!



Corey checking out the engine room

We were well hosted with Nick Cressey organising things beforehand, and on the day, Simon Parkinson, Chris Hogg, Kirsty and the team took care of us, including putting on a lunch. All we had to do was enjoy it, and the young and not so young boys did just that. It was all action in the pit lanes - instead of a change of driver like they do on race days, it was a change of passenger, one keen to get in, the other reluctant to get out! The boys even got a special tee shirt memento (see photo).

Thanks to everyone for this once in a lifetime chance. We hear that the smiles stayed on those happy faces for ages. One Big Buddy remarked that it was so fitting as a Big Buddy activity, quite right!

Martin Hosking

Can a Big Buddy grow too?

I saw an ad in the local press for Big Buddy about 18 months ago and thought it would be a worthwhile thing to do. It took me quite a while to decide to go ahead, having never had children of my own. I was a bit nervous about how I would relate to a young fella, one to one. I was also concerned how he would relate to me. So after much deliberation I went ahead, was accepted, and paired up with Theo (aged 9) some 9 months ago. I needn't have worried.

My initial feelings were that I could help out a young guy and make a difference for him. The biggest surprise for me was how much I got out of it. It is like being a kid again and having someone to 'muck about' with and be as silly as you like. To have someone so pleased to see you and wanting to spend time with you is a nice feeling.

We have had some 'big' day outs but even more 'small' ones, where we go for a walk, ride or just kick a ball about in the park. In the process we have developed an easy, honest, trusting relationship which has exceeded my expectations.

For the future I intend to stay in contact with Theo, as long as it suits us both. He is a smart guy who is extremely enthusiastic about everything he does and I'm sure he will succeed at what ever he chooses. It will be fascinating to see how he develops, and me for that matter.

Andy Gore - Big Buddy

Our North Shore office has moved

The North Shore-Rodney office has moved, but not far. Now we are located in the building in front of the building we were in. Confused? Don't be.

We had to find somewhere else to go and luckily our landlord was able to offer us space in the front building at the same address, 99 Hurstmere Road, Takapuna. Phone numbers and other details remain the same. The entrance to the office is now right on Hurstmere Road, between the Chemist and the Photo Shop, and you are welcome to visit.

Look out for the new Big Buddy sign outside, the good work of one of our Big Buddies, Chris Field.

Martin Hosking



New signage on Hurstmere Road

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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.