



PRESS RELEASE

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First Hamilton Big Buddy betters boy's life in less than a year

STARTS

Little Buddy Nicholas Perano and his Big Buddy, Colin Malcolm, haven't even been matched for a year, but mum Penny Perano says she's seeing positive, tangible differences in her ten-year-old already.

Eleven months ago, the first Hamilton Buddy pair began spending Sunday mornings together. Colin says they've been doing anything from finding a quiet corner to read in the second hand bookshop - he's discovered his young charge loves to read- to cycling BMX tracks or practising bowling arms for the coming cricket season.

Their most recent foray was a day trackside at the Supercars event in Pukekohe Park, courtesy of ITM and the Supercars team themselves. Mrs Perano said her son struggled to sleep that night, still lying awake at 10.30pm reliving the day.

Not surprisingly, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being 'awesome' and 5 being 'dumb', Nicholas says that life before Colin was around wasn't too bad – he gave it a 2. But since December 12, 2016 it's crept up to somewhere between 1 and 1.5!

"It's just good having 1-2 hours a week doing what you want to do, away from my sisters and mum. I like it when we do sports together – it's good practice and it's fun" says the dedicated rugby or cricket team member.

Regardless of what has gone on Sunday morning, Penny has noticed that Nicholas is very settled in the afternoon these days. She adds, with a touch of amusement, that he is mimicking some of Colin's mannerisms and using some of the words he uses. In Big Buddy terms, this is 'modelling' and a large part of how boys become men; simply put, being around other men allows boys to absorb the male qualities they need to complete their own sense of self.

"I think what Colin's presence also means to Nicholas is that he has someone 'for himself', someone he can choose what to do with. Looking back, I can definitely say Nicholas's life is better with Colin in it," muses Penny.

Colin, a father of three but with only the youngest teenager at home, says he remembers distinctly thinking it was time to give something back before he applied to Big Buddy. That

wasn't actually too long ago. If you'd have asked Colin three years ago if he would be a mentor, he would have said "no way".

He feels it's the extra space in his household that has allowed him to think of mentoring a boy: "I don't think there is a specific time to be ready though- it's different for everyone."

Colin was the first Big Buddy in the Waikato, an area that the organisation expanded to with a huge amount of support from GJ Gardener Homes and ITM. With an estimated \$280,000 in proceeds from the auction of two houses – one in the Waikato and the other in Pukekohe – the programme is gradually developing and area coordinator Andrew McFadden now has 10 matches on the books.

"Almost one year has gone quickly," reflects Colin. "When I think about all the things we've packed into the last 11 months...it's a huge amount! We made lasagne one day – it was a bit like the blind leading the blind as I'm not a great cook, but this is one of the things I get out of being a Big Buddy; I'm trying things I wouldn't normally do. We even got a couple of meals out of that for our families."

Apparently, Nicholas is a talented sportsperson and this has given Colin the chance to refresh his bowling arm, which after an hour is quite tiring! This activity has been cemented by Colin's loan to Nicholas of a battered old theory book on cricket; when they get down to the pitch they practice techniques Nicholas has read about.

However, Colin stresses that there are deeper lessons to share with Little Buddies, such as how to treat other people. When Nicholas received a bike as part of a local promotion, he took the boy to the shop it came from and got him to thank each of them in person. The team was very impressed.

"If I could choose personal qualities that I think are important in a boy growing up, they would be the ability to be happy and caring, aware of people less fortunate than themselves, and the willingness to go outside their comfort zone, to try something different."

Colin gets as much out of the relationship as he hopes Nicholas does and stresses that he "highly recommends" mentorship to men who are wondering about stepping up.

ENDS

Andrew McFadden asks men who hear about Big Buddy and want to know more to simply pick up the phone and ask, visit <https://www.bigbuddy.org.nz>, or check out <https://www.facebook.com/BigbuddyNZ/> and leave a message

EDITORS NOTES:

- Since 1997 Big Buddy has created over 700 matches. At 2017 capacity, Big Buddy can create 80 new matches per year. Additional funding through donations and sponsorship is directly focused on increasing these match numbers.
- The first funding for the Big Buddy programme in 1997 came from the Crime Prevention office of the Prime Minister.
- Big Buddy's work is proven to steer young men away from crime. People working at the coal face of crime will attest to the fact that this prevention needs to start early.
- Our statistics show that for every 100 boys we help, 2 of them would otherwise have taken the route leading to a serious criminal action. The NZ Treasury estimates the cost of crime is \$3 million per criminal. Mentoring one boy costs \$8000 in total. By saving 2 boys, Big Buddy potentially saves the country \$5, 992, 000.

Please contact Sally Webster for more information, interview contact details and image requests.

**Sally Webster
Media & Communications Coordination
M 021 599 191
sally@bigbuddy.org.nz
www.bigbuddy.org.nz
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