

UCS News Release

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Big Brothers Big Sisters Appoints New Leadership

Bennington and Manchester, Vt. — The Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) mentoring program has appointed Nicole Pritikin, of North Bennington, to be the new program coordinator in the Southshire. BBBS has also appointed Susan Cottrell, of Manchester, to be the new program coordinator in the Northshire.

“Mentoring provides young children with the single most important thing they need to become successful—friendship with a caring adult,” said Ralph Provenza, executive director of United Counseling Service, which sponsors the BBBS program.

“We know mentoring is one of the best ways to boost academic performance and self-esteem while reducing the likelihood of substance abuse and absenteeism.”

Cottrell and Pritikin have set about providing more children with mentors by promoting different ways for adults to get involved. One popular way—Lunchtime Mentoring—arranges for mentors to meet their “Littles” once a week at school. The structured time and school setting make it easy for mentors to get their feet wet and get started.

“In the Northshire, we have an opportunity to expand programming dramatically and involve more kids,” Cottrell said. “Adults provide a positive role model and in return, they get an opportunity to connect to a child and have some fun.”

Cottrell has extensive experience in the community as the former Events Coordinator at the Manchester Country Club. She is the chair of the Manchester Elementary Middle School Parent Group and Head Coach and Director of the Southern Vermont Mountain Fusion Soccer Club. She also brings lengthy experience in relationship building and administration from corporate sales management.

“As much fun as it is, mentoring also provides some very serious benefits for the kids and adults alike,” Pritikin said. “Of course kids look to adults in so many ways, but surprisingly adults learn a lot from kids too.”

Pritikin has long experience in communications and sales and owned and operated The Naked Sheep Yarn Store in Bennington for several years. She earned a BA in sociology from Middlebury and has also taught at Southern Vermont College and the Community College of Vermont.

United Counseling Service serves children, adults, families, and seniors through nationally recognized counseling, early care and education, and clinical support. Visit www.ucsvt.org to find out more.

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