

**BEST FRIENDS
MENTORING
PROGRAM**



The Best News

www.westernwellness.org

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Friends save child from drowning

Two years ago, the Best Friends Mentoring Program matched Brandon Jaeger with his Senior Friend, Robbi Kudrna. Since then, they have attended many sporting events, played lots of sports and eaten lunch together at Brandon's school.

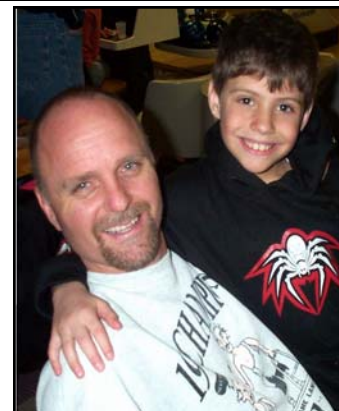
In August, they were celebrating the beginning of school by swimming at a local motel pool.

The two were playing in the pool with many other children. When Robbi turned around, he found Brandon, then a third grader, in the deep end of the pool. He was holding onto the ladder with one hand and pulling a small child up from under the water with his other hand. The

youngster was about three years old.

"He wasn't strong enough to pull her all the way out of water, but he got her head above the water," Robbi said. I hurried over there and pulled her out of the pool. At first she wasn't crying or anything. It was like she was in shock. All of a sudden, a stream of water about 10 feet long came out of her mouth. She had swallowed all of that water and was drowning. Then she started crying."

Robbi looked around for the girl's parents or another adult that might have been with the little girl. After a while, he said, a woman came over and took the girl's hand and walked away without a comment or



Senior Friend Robbi Kudrna, left, and Junior Friend Brandon Jaeger enjoy lunch and playing many sports together.

a thank you.

"There's no doubt that he saved that little girl's life," Robbi said. "Brandon knew the right thing to do and he did it, instinctively. I still can't believe he was so brave and that it happened so fast. It was almost a tragedy, but thanks to Brandon, it wasn't."

DSU track team volunteers with Best Friends

When the Best Friends Mentoring Program put out a call for young men to volunteer as mentors, the Dickinson State University track team answered.

Fifteen athletes became trained as mentors and are now matched with boys in elementary school for friendship and positive role

modeling.

These young men eat lunch, play sports and work on homework either one-to-one or in small groups with boys in grades three through six.

At right, DSU track team members and Junior Friends assisted with a Best Friends television commercial.





Junior Friend Profile: Ashley needs a role model

Ashley, a sixth grader, is looking for a young adult female who would like to spend time with her on weekends or after school. She has younger sisters, lives with her father and sees her mother frequently. However, her mother has had sev-

eral serious illnesses requiring long hospital stays. Her father doesn't have regular employment so the family has few financial resources. Ashley likes to play basketball, participates in Tae Kwon Do and collects porcelain dolls. She also enjoys hanging out at the mall, trying on

clothes and make up, and doing science experiments in school. Ashley's father is looking for a positive female influence who can and help his daughter resist negative peer pressure. Ashley's principal describes her as "a very sweet girl" who needs a friend.

Senior Friend Profile: Lyn enjoys outdoor activities

With two employees already serving as long-time mentors, Wells Fargo Bank in Dickinson offers a third employee to the Best Friends Mentoring Program. Lyn Candrian is a personal banker and marketing officer at Wells Fargo. She enjoys being involved with children of all ages: she has taught religion classes, has

been an American Legion junior auxiliary leader, and has showed high school students how to save money. "My children are grown and I truly miss that interaction with kids," Lyn said. "This could fill that void." Lyn is volunteering in the school mentoring program and would like to meet a

girl who could do occasional activities after school. She enjoys exercising, playing softball and other outdoor activities, and is looking for long-term friendship with a girl who would like to get to know her and explore their mutual interests.

'A life is not important except in the impact it has on others.'
-Jackie Robinson

Thank You!
Thank You!

Contributors' Corner

Friendship Drive

- Sandy Bertelsen
- Border States Electric
- Mary Pat Bruels
- Clinic Pharmacy
- Consolidated Employees
- DLN Consulting Inc.
- Eyewear Concepts Inc.
- Kris & Alan Fehr
- Dr. Dale & Glenice Hansen
- Nancy Johnson
- Terry & Kelly Klusmann
- Ladbury Funeral Service

Friendship Drive cont.

- Sherry Libis
- Dot & John Martinson
- Diane F. Melbye
- Dr. Amy Oksa
- Dr. Bruce & Irene Olin
- Jack & Velma Olin
- Dr. Melanie Oltmanns
- Michael Parke, CPA, CFP
- Fern K. Pokorny
- Roger "Skip Rapp
- St. Anthony Club
- TMI

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Dickinson, N.D.

And Bonanza will donate 10% of your purchase
To the **Best Friends Mentoring Program**
135 W. Villard St., Dickinson 701-483-8615

Mentoring makes a difference to youth in southwest North Dakota!

Have you considered a bequest to the Best Friends Program?

Annual Mentor Appreciation event Saturday

Senior Friends, who give their time to children in our schools and communities, will be honored at a swimming event on Saturday, Jan. 22.

To celebration National Mentoring Month, Best Friends mentors and tutors, Junior Friends, family members and Best Friends Program supporters are invited to this annual Mentor Appreciation celebra-

tion. This year's event will be held at the West River Community Center in Dickinson. Besides swimming in the leisure pool, participants may enjoy playing card and board games or information conversation with program staff and other Best Friends Program families.

Prize drawings for mentors and for program youth will be held, and snacks

and beverages will be provided.

Admission to the event is free to program participants. Those with WRCC memberships should bring their cards; anyone not part of the Best Friends program must pay \$3. Life guards will be on duty. Call the Best Friends office at 701-483-8615 for more information.



Outstanding Mentors:

Daryl & Vonnie named 'Mentors of the Quarter'

When Daryl Tabor's sons grew up and left home, he still wanted to make a difference for a boy. So two years ago he volunteered for the school mentoring program and was matched with a boy



Daryl

who is now a fourth grader. President of Wells Fargo Bank in Dickinson, Daryl eats lunch at school with his Junior Friend and then the two work on the computer or play games. During the summer they see each other, too.

Vonnie Kryzsko volunteered to be a mentor when she was a high school junior. Now a busy senior at

Beach High School, she has been matched with the same girl for a year and continues to make time for her Junior Friend.



Vonnie

They spend their time at the library, have fun at the park and work on homework.

'Be the change you want to see in the world.'

-Ghandi

Match count: 122 matched Junior Friends sets record

At the end of 2004, Best Friends counted a record number of youth: 122 children were matched one-to-one or in small groups with 105 trained caring mentors in the Best Friends Mentoring Program.

Nearly half of those matches occurred in the school mentoring program, where mentors acted as

friends, academic tutors and homework helpers.

Many of these mentors are high school juniors and seniors, and students at Dickinson State University.

The waiting list continues to grow and includes:

- 7 boys & 2 girls in the community program.
- 6 boys & 6 girls in the school program.

Can you give the gift of your time to a child in southwest North Dakota?

Mentors commit to four to six hours per month and receive training and support.

Call the Best Friends Mentoring Program at **483-8615** or **toll free at 1-877-877-8685** for information.

Match Barometer

Dec. 2004: 122

Dec. 2002: 43



BEST FRIENDS MENTORING PROGRAM

*Address correction
requested*

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We're on the Web!
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'Making a positive difference in children and families, one at a time.'

**Inside:
Mentor Appreciation Event,
Outstanding Mentors!**



Western Wellness Foundation, Inc./Best Friends Mentoring Program is a United Way agency.



Mark your calendars!

Upcoming Activities & Events:

- **Jan. 22, 2-4 p.m.**—Best Friends Mentor Appreciation Swimming Party, Community Center.
- **Jan. 29 & 30**—DSU Children's Play, "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe." Mentors attending with Junior Friend may call the office (483-8615) for special tickets and show times.
- **Feb. 12** — **DSU Blue Hawks basketball**; mentors attending with Junior Friend may call the office (483-8615) for special tickets and game times.
- **Feb. 19, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.**—Sister to Sister Career Exploration day for girls in grades 5-8. Call the office (483-8615) for registration information.
- **Feb. 26, 2-4 p.m.**—**Best Friends ice skating** for Sr. & Jr. Friends, Dickinson Recreation Center.
- **March 19, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.** — **Best Friends Easter Carnival** at Prairie Hills Mall. Welcome the Easter Bunny, play carnival games & win prizes at this Best Friends Program fundraiser.

Education Opportunities for Senior Friends & AmeriCorps Members:

- **Jan. 29, 10 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**—CPR Certification Training.
- **Jan. 29, 1-4 p.m.** —First Aid Certification Training.
- **Jan. 31, 6-8 pm.**—**Tutor/Mentor Training: Building Relationships.**
- **Feb. 1, 6-9 p.m.**—CPR Certification Training (*repeat of 1-29*).
- **Feb. 2, 6-9 p.m.**—First Aid Certification Training (*repeat of 1-29*).
- **Feb. 8, 6-8 p.m.**—Building Relationships Training (*repeat of 1-29*).
- **Feb. 28, 2-4 p.m. or 6-8 p.m. (choose one)**—**Time & Stress Management Training.**
- **March 5, 10 a.m. - noon** —**Building Relationships** (*repeat of 1-31*).
- **March 21, 2-4 p.m. or 6-8 p.m.**—**Best Friends/AmeriCorps Conflict Resolution Training.**

Space is limited to the first 6 to sign up! Call 483-8615 to reserve your training materials and to confirm training locations for the above sessions!