

Mt. Lebanon man recognized for his volunteering at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh

JoAnne Klimovich Harrop, The Tribune-Review, Greensburg

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Apr. 9—Dan Jenkins talked with a high school classmate about finding a career where he would earn a lot of money.

She suggested he consider doing something that would make him rich in a different way — become a mentor for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh.

So he did.

Jenkins was matched with a young boy named James from Pittsburgh's Hill District neighborhood. James went on to become a productive member of society.

The two still occasionally connect.

Jenkins, now 53, is a board member for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh and organizes one of its biggest fundraisers.

He was recognized for his dedication to the organization with a \$25,000 grant from the Northwestern Mutual Foundation.

"I am honored," said Jenkins, of Mt. Lebanon, who owns Pittsburgh-based JKS Financial, a wealth advisory services company that partners with Northwestern Mutual. "It is so easy to sell what you believe in."

In a video produced by Northwestern Mutual about his commitment to the cause, he became teary-eyed reflecting on the ways Big Brothers Big Sisters makes a difference.

The work isn't done, he said.

"We need more mentors and more financial help," said Jenkins, a father of five with wife Amy, who is his biggest supporter and an advocate for young people. Two of their children were mentors while at college in Philadelphia and Columbus, Ohio.

When matching an adult with a child, the organization invests \$1,500 to support the relationship, according to Jenkins.

After his years as a mentor, he began donating money, joined the board and served as board president.

He is chairman of the annual golf outing at Laurel Valley Golf Club in Ligonier — the largest fundraiser of the year for Big Brothers Big Sisters. It's Thursday, June 17. The event nets \$85,000 annually, he said.

The Northwestern Mutual Foundation awarded 12 people with \$15,000. Three received an additional \$5,000 for supporting organizations with a connection to the company's Childhood Cancer Program.

Four were called "Most Exceptional" and received \$25,000. Jenkins was one of them.

"This is a really big deal and a wonderful honor," said Jan Glick, CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh. "This money will really help to support us this year."

The organization matches 1,500 children a year with a mentor.

According to Northwestern Mutual, despite the challenges of the past 12 months, a recent study found that 85% of nonprofit organizations had an increase in volunteerism requests — more than double pre-pandemic levels.

"No matter the odds, our advisors have remained committed to helping others," said Eric Christophersen, president of Northwestern Mutual Foundation, said in a statement. "Their spirit and dedication is an inspiration, and we're proud to recognize the meaningful change they've accomplished."

Since 1995, the Northwestern Mutual Foundation has donated more than \$6.3 million through its Community Service Awards program. Northwestern Mutual offers life insurance and other financial services.

"There have been so many challenges with this pandemic," Glick said. "This money will be used to continue our mission of impacting the lives of the young people we serve."

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