



Big Brother takes his young friend for a stroll with his father.

Men needed for Big Brothers

By LINDA TAYLOR

Big Brothers of Oakland County has matched men to "fatherless" boys since 1954. Many men, such as Jim Willoughby of Birmingham, have had as many as four Little Brothers over the years.

Now, a high divorce rate is creating more "fatherless" homes and a "desperate need for men volunteers," according to the Big Brothers office. There are 200 boys on a waiting list, all wanting a man over age 18 who is interested in establishing a one-to-one relationship with them.

For some men, such as Willoughby, the experience of working with a boy has been very rewarding.

"I get as much out of it as I hope he does," said Willoughby, past president of Big Brothers. "There's a saying that men are nothing but grown-up boys."

"I enjoy things I do with him, going to the zoo and to the carnival. In spite of my being a bachelor, I feel I have a greater respect with kids than their fathers. I work with them as people, not in a father-son aspect."

"Being a Big Brother is a friend type of thing. I can do things with Kevin as a friend that I can't do as a father."

Willoughby's fourth Little Brother since he became a volunteer 15 years ago, is Kevin, age 10. Willoughby and Kevin have been friends for about two years. Kevin's parents are divorced and his father lives in California.

"He talks about his father and visits him in the summer. His father is remarried."

FOR MILLER WEISMAN of Beverly Hills, Randy of Southfield is his third Little Brother. They got together once a week, usually on Saturdays during school months. And they do "one-to-one things 99 per cent of the time."

Weisman, who is married and has children of his own, said his own son was at first resentful of his relationship with a Little Brother. Now he understands.

Weisman said, "A Big Brother is not supposed to be a father (to the Little Brother). If there is any chance he might get together with his own father, say for Father's Day, I wouldn't want to interfere with that."

"He has mentioned his father. He knows he lives in this area. I think last Christmas his dad gave him something."

JIM POLLINGTON agrees that he shouldn't be thought of as a father substitute for his Little Brother. One reason is that not only is Pollington a bachelor but

he is 21 and his Little Brother is 16.

"I don't really think I'm a father substitute, maybe I'm too young for that."

He said holidays are special for him and his Little Brother, Ron.

Bob Capps of Birmingham said he doesn't try to replace the father of his Little Brother, David, 11, of West Bloomfield. David is his second Little Brother.

"We do things special around holidays. Last year I went over to his house for Christmas. David and his Little Brother Danny, who also has a Big Brother, connected a little bit for us," Capps explained.

Capps, who has two daughters of his own, said he originally got involved with Big Brothers at his daughter's urging after seeing a Big Brothers commercial on television.

"They have no negative feelings at all when I bring David to the

house," he said. "There has been no negative reaction or jealousy of him."

"His father lives in Troy," said Capps. "He still sees him every two or three weekends. We encourage that. If the father shows an interest in the boy, we feel this is a very positive step."

HE EXPLAINED that a boy gets on the Big Brother list when his mother applies to the agency in Pontiac. In most cases, the parents of the boy are divorced.

"We're given a training period during which we are made aware of potential problems, such as a bitter divorce situation. If the problem gets too bad, professionals at Big Brothers work with the family."

Anyone interested in helping fill the need for Big Brothers in Oakland County may call PE 8-9281 to sign up.

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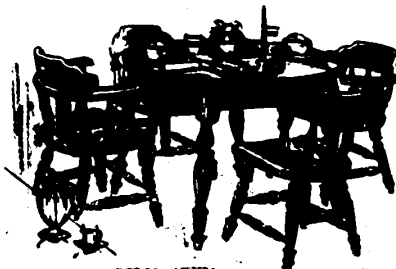
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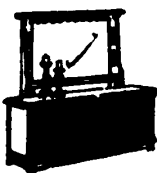


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