

## IMPROVING THE FUTURE OF A LATIN CHILD IN ACADIANA

If you haven't already heard of the "Big Brothers Big Sisters" organization, you should know that they have been around since 1904. Starting with only 39 volunteers, they are now one of the largest and most successful organizations helping children to a better future.

Their system, as simple as it is successful, is for volunteers to invest about four hours per month to influence a child facing adversity and change their outlook in life. It targets children who need it most, like those growing up with one parent or in the absence of both, growing up in poverty or coping with a parent's incarceration, or a life style that is counterproductive for the child, just as well as those whose parents are unsuccessful against the bad influences surrounding the child's. "Big Brothers Big Sisters" carefully matches volunteers to children between the ages of 6 and 18.

The program focuses less on experts to address specific problems on a child. It focuses on ideal individuals that can make a difference just by being a good example for the child while enjoying their time together over everyday activities like eating out, playing sports, attending events and just hanging out together.

Children facing identity issues in addition to the problems above, is a challenge of itself and faced with prejudice and fitting in, tend to reject and lose their culture and heritage. With this in mind and in our effort in improving the quality of life of the Latin Community, "The Asociacion Cultural Latino Acadiana" has begun working with "Big Brothers Big Sisters of Acadiana" to expand their efforts to the Hispanic Youth in our area.

Children in the program are less likely to begin using drugs, to begin drinking, skip school or class, to hit someone and are more confident of their schoolwork, more likely to attend college and get along with their families much better. This is how much a child's life can improve by spending 4 hours per month with the right adult.

ACLA calls you to change a child's life and improve their future by volunteering or enlisting a child who needs better examples in life.

Written by Juan A Paredes

