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WHITE HOUSE PRESS CONFERENCE

– President & First Lady Obama Celebrate National Mentoring Month –



January 20, 2010 (Washington, DC) – The President and First Lady celebrate National Mentoring Month with Big Brothers Big Sisters by highlighting the power of mentoring to impact the lives of youth. Center: National Big Sister of the Year, Angela Rodriguez, and her Little Sister Sabriyah meet with President Obama in the Oval Office. Angela mentors two children in Newark, NJ.

Excerpts

Little Brother of the Year, Anthony Saldana: *“Being a part of Big Brothers Big Sisters has been one of the best experiences of my life. This program means that in addition to my grandma and grandpa, I get to spend time with a wonderful guy like Ben, who is on stage here today.”*

President Barack Obama: *“That’s why mentoring is so important. We know the difference a responsible, caring adult can make in a child’s life: buck them up when they’re discouraged; provide tough love when they veer off track; being that person in their lives who doesn’t want to let them down, and that they don’t want to let down; and refusing to give up on them -- even when they want to give up on themselves.”*

“Studies have shown that young people in mentoring relationships get better grades in school, they’re less likely to drink, they’re less likely to do drugs. And you ask any successful person how they got to where they are today, chances are they’ll tell you about a mentor they had somewhere along the way.”

“So there’s no doubt about the value of mentoring. And there’s no doubt about the tremendous need for mentors in this country -- with at least 15 million young people in need of a mentor. What we need now is for committed adults to step forward and help us meet that need.”

“So I’m pleased that non-profit organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters are stepping up.”

For more information: www.BigsAndKids.org

Complete press conference: www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/celebrating-national-mentoring-month