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Charity makes appeal for male role models

By Nea Talbot

Bermuda's youngsters are in constant need of role models, according to local leader of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Bermuda.

George Jones said Bermuda's chapter of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters has more than 60 children in its group who need mentors.

And the organisation is appealing specifically for positive male mentors to pick up the gauntlet and make a difference in a child's life.

Mr. Jones spoke at the weekly Hamilton Lions meeting about the need to shape a child's life.

"We have large numbers of unattached children looking for mentors," he said. "Right now we have 91 matches of little girls and little boys. But that is shadowed by the 70 unmatched children that we don't have matches for and 60 of them are males. We don't necessarily have all the volunteers that we require."

And Mr. Jones said that a fear factor by some adults is what tends to keep them from volunteering.

"A lot of people are afraid of becoming a mentor, because they feel that they will have to become like the parent or foster parent of a child," he said. "That's not the goal. What we seek is a little bit of time. We want volunteers to be there so they can just be a presence, an assistance to a child."

Mr. Jones said the ages of children that are part of the organisation range from 5-years-old to 20-years-old.

He noted that the maximum amount of time that the group seeks an adult to spend with a child is three hours saying "it could be watching a movie or washing a car."

It is the quality of time, not the quantity of time spent with a youngster that matters, he said.

The Bermuda chapter of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Bermuda has been in existence for 23 years, having originated in the US at the turn of the century and spreading to more than 36 countries around the world.

He encouraged anyone interested to take the challenge and become involved.

And said their mission is to maintain themselves as a charity organisation as well as to working in the community to heighten awareness of the importance of children having structured environments.
