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Lack of males continues to hamper big brother programme

With almost 40 young boys waiting to be matched with big brothers, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Bermuda is holding a recruitment drive on Saturday at the Bermuda Regiment.

Executive director Patrice Parris said the need for males to sign up is not just limited to Bermuda.

"Big Brother and Big Sister organisations all over the world are facing this problem," she said.

The purpose of the organisation is to provide positive adult role models to boys and girls. Although the majority of the children are from single-parent homes, Ms Parris said children from all backgrounds could be eligible to participate in the programme.

While there are currently girls on the waiting list, Ms Parris said she does not see them facing as long a time period as the boys because the organisation receives more calls from women looking to volunteer their time. "Our greatest challenge is having too many little brothers versus too few big brothers," Ms Parris said.

With activities such as tug-of-war, soccer and a mini assault course planned for Saturday, Ms Parris hopes that the event will draw some men into the fold.

"Hopefully, out of the event we would have encouraged some of the men to hopefully become big brothers," she said.

Almost half of the little brothers on the waiting list will be attending the recruitment drive.

While she admitted that the event has not always been greatly attended in the past, she said she held out hope that the organisation would at least be able to cut a few boys from the waiting list after Saturday.

"It's so easy to get involved in a child's life. Some men say they don't have the time but they don't realise that a child can be included in activities such as grocery shopping or washing a car."

Anyone interested in becoming a big brother or big sister should call 292-2802 or e-mail patrice.bbbsibl.bm.
