



230 LaBree Ave So, Thief River Falls, MN 56701

218-689-9471

lbs.pennington@gmail.com

**Sponsored in part by:**



**St Hilaire Lions Club, TRF United Way, Eagles Club, Red Lake Electric, Seven Clans Casino, Heritage Community Center Bingo Fund, American Legion Post 117, DJ's K9 Country, Genereux Realty, John and Eileen Kotaska, Knights of Columbus, VFW Post 2793 Gaming Fund, Northwest Eye Center, Edward Jones-Jerod Kolden, North Winds Chiropractic, Riverside Terrace/Schuett Companies , M.D.H.A. TRF Chapter**

Thank you for your interest in the Little Brother/Little Sister (LBLS) of Pennington County. This guide will introduce you to our program and explain our policies. We hope reading this will give you the information you need to be a mentor.

## **Mission Statement**

*Build a relationship between a child and an adult mentor who will be an advisor and friend on the journey to adulthood.*

**Goals:**    *\*Value and support our youth\**        *\*Prevent juvenile crime\**  
                  *\*Increase school success\**                    *\*Decrease juvenile depression\**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

**How can I be involved?** There are many ways to help support the program. We are always looking for volunteers to be a Big Brother/Sister. Referring potential volunteers is a great way to help support our program. Other support may be monetary or assistance with fundraising efforts. We also have special events for Mentors and Youth to attend together and need volunteers to help.

**How can I be a Mentor?** To be a mentor you need to fill out an application. Included in the application are a background check and three references. Once the application is complete we will submit it to the matching committee for approval.

**How can I enroll my child?** Any parent or guardian of a child age 4-14 can complete an application. It is important that the child wants a mentor.

**Does being a Mentor take a lot of time?** No! We only ask that you can commit about four hours a month to the youth with whom you are matched.

**Does being a Mentor require special training or experience?** No! You just need to be a positive caring adult that likes to have fun and be a role model/friend to a child.

**Do I have to spend a lot of money?** No! You do not need to do activities that cost money. We provide a list of activity ideas. Many of which are free. We also provide several group activities throughout the year.

**What kind of support will I receive through LBLS?** We are here to support our volunteers, parents and youth every step of the way. Program staff will check in to see if you have any questions or concerns. You may also contact us at any time.

### **Mentor Application Process**

1. Application: The volunteer completes an application, background check and provides three references.
2. Interview: Once the application has been processed, the program staff will contact the applicant for an in-person interview.
3. Matching: The matching committee reviews the application for final approval and discusses potential matches with enrolled youth. The decision is based on many factors to ensure the best fit for youth and mentor. The match is then presented to mentor and the youth's parents for approval
4. Meeting: Staff will schedule a meeting with the mentor and family to complete the paperwork and get the match started.

### **Youth Application Process**

1. Inquiry: Potential participants request information or are contacted by staff if a referral has been made.
2. Informational meeting/application: Staff contacts the family and provides an overview of the program, answers questions and completes an application.
3. Enrollment in the program: The application is submitted and goes on waiting list until a mentor is available.
4. Match: Once a match has been made, parents will be contacted to approve the mentor.
5. Meeting: Staff will schedule a meeting with the mentor and family to complete the paperwork and get the match started.

### **Matching Process**

1. Match is approved by the Matching Committee, mentor and family.
2. Youth are matched based on the following factors: Needs of the youth; Skills and experiences of the volunteer; Preference of the youth, parent and volunteer; Interests and personality; Location
3. Staff will schedule a "match" meeting for the family and mentor to complete paperwork and begin the program.
4. Program staff will supervise the match in several ways: Calling or emailing the family and Mentor; Surveys; Informal contacts; Newsletters

## **Mentor Responsibilities**

1. Protect the privacy of the youth and family. Any information shared should be held in strict confidence by the mentor unless it is potentially dangerous or life threatening to the youth.
2. Mentors are expected to spend at least four hours per month with their youth. Spending less time will not allow a relationship to develop. We ask that you commit to the program for at least one year, but hope that it will last much longer. It is important that dependability and consistency be built into the friendship from the beginning.
3. Mentors complete and return an occasional program survey.
4. Mentors are responsible for contacting the youth's family regarding the time they spend with the youth.
5. Mentors are responsible for the activities they plan. However, it is not necessary to do expensive activities. There are plenty of free activities in our community. Occasionally, allow the youth to help make decisions about the activities. This helps build the relationship and you will learn what is important to them.
6. Mentors may bring their youth to activities planned by program staff. These activities are optional, but provide an opportunity to get together with other mentors and youth.
7. Trust is built over time. When you make the effort to call and meet, you send a strong message that you care and that he/she is worth caring about.
8. Give advice sparingly. Young people learn more during a conversation with an adult than just listening to an adult. Relax and enjoy each other's company. If they come to you for help or advice, then it is appropriate to help them develop solutions.
9. Mentors are expected to record and submit time spent on the program. This process is called in-kind and is important to our funding through grants. Your time is valuable!
10. Avoid becoming overly involved with the youth's family. Get acquainted with the family, but avoid lengthy discussions about personal problems or past failings of the youth.
11. Say NO to any and all outlandish requests, e.g. asking to lend money, babysit, run errands etc.
12. Always be supportive of the family, even if you disagree. Don't make judgments concerning family situations. The family may have a different set of social/cultural/religious values than you do.
13. Involve the youth in your family activities when appropriate but make sure that you do not sacrifice the one-to-one relationship by always being with your family.

14. Notify the program coordinator with any concerns, comments or questions regarding the match.
15. Notify the program coordinator with any change of name, address, phone or email.
16. In the event that it should be necessary to terminate a relationship, please contact the program coordinator and we will work together to ensure that the termination is handled in a sensitive manner with respect and concern for the child's feelings.
17. DO spread the word about the program. We are always in need of more volunteers.
18. DO give us a call, send an email or submit pictures with positive information about the match. We love to see the results of a good relationship.

### **Parent Responsibilities**

1. Contact the program coordinator with any questions or concerns regarding the match.
2. Notify the mentor and program coordinator with any name, address or phone number changes.
3. When an activity is planned, have your child ready for the time that is set.
4. Be respectful of the mentor's time. When an activity is planned and needs to be cancelled, notify the mentor immediately.
5. The mentor will initiate meetings with your child. The exception is if your child invites their mentor to a special event such as a school program, sporting event etc.

### **LBSL Program Responsibilities**

1. Assist and answer questions during the application process.
2. Process youth and mentor applications.
3. Maintain ongoing communications with the mentor and family.
4. Offer support and ideas for how to have a successful match.
5. Provide occasional group activities.
6. Work with the mentor and family to ensure that the termination of a match is handled in a sensitive manner with the respect and concern for the child's feelings.

## **Activity Suggestions**

You have been matched.....now what?? There are many sources available for activity ideas. Here is a list of just some ideas. We will also make sure you are notified of any upcoming group events. Make sure to check The Watch and The Times. Our community often has many wonderful opportunities to get out and about.

### **Anytime**

Play cards or board game  
Take a walk  
Color  
Go out to eat  
Bird watching  
Help with homework  
Make a scrapbook  
Build a model or kite  
Bowling  
Visit the Library  
Have lunch at school  
Visit their classroom  
Movies  
Craft projects  
Tour your place of work  
Cook a meal together  
Bake  
Visit a nursing home  
Attend a sporting event

### **Summer**

Enjoy the park  
Go on a picnic  
Play Frisbee  
Canoeing  
Make Ice Cream  
Go to the fair  
Mini Golf  
Wash the car  
Scavenger hunt  
Go fishing  
Horseback riding  
Go to the lake  
Visit a farm  
Play ball  
Blow bubbles  
Catch frogs  
Go for a bike ride  
Play tennis  
Shoot some hoops  
Plant a garden  
Fly a Kite

### **Winter**

Take a Community Ed  
class together  
Local sporting events  
Read the same book  
Make hot chocolate  
Ice skating  
Sledding  
Make holiday crafts  
Send valentines  
Make greeting cards  
and write letters  
Make a snowman  
Build a snow fort  
Make snowflakes  
Cross-country skiing  
High school band or  
choir concert  
Snowmobiling  
Have an indoor picnic