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By ROBERT PIERCE

- Leader & Times

Some local bowlers will take to Ayr Lanes next weekend to raise money for a local non-profit organization.

Bowl For Kids Sake is the largest source of funds for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Seward, Haskell and Stevens Counties, and the dollars raised will help provide mentors for those children in need.



Community members are asked to gather a team of friends, family, co-workers or church members to raise pledges for the cause and then bowl to celebrate their efforts.

Studies show children with mentors show improved school performance, positive attitudes about school and improved relationships with family and friends.

BBBS director Kerry Seibel said the organization has had several volunteer inquiries in recent weeks, and this helps get some of the kids off the waiting list for a mentor. However, there are significant costs involved in supervising, as well as liability and background checks and the recruitment of mentors themselves.

“Right now, we have a lot of kids on the waiting list,” Seibel said. “We’re getting more referrals coming in. That has increased over the last couple months. However, we’re starting to match them. We currently have 72 matches.”

There is no cost to register for Bowl For Kids Sake, but Seibel said she would like to know ahead of time when a team will be on the lanes. She added each team will bowl once during the event.

“They don’t have to come to all three sessions,” she said. “When they’re there, they hand their pledge sheets in, and we check them. If they do \$100 in pledges, they get a T-shirt.”

There will be door prizes and top earner prizes available including a Kindle Fire HD, PlayStation 3 and a trip to Kansas City’s Great Wolf Lodge.

“We will have door prizes at each session throughout the bowl, plus we’ll have prizes for the best dressed ’80s team,” Seibel said.

Bowl For Kids Sake will take place April 5 and 6 at Ayr Lanes at 2500 N, Kansas Ave. in Liberal. For more information or to get involved in the event, go to www.kansasbowl.org, or call 620-624-9000.

Seibel said BBBS is thrilled to be kicking off its fundraising season.

“We provided mentors for 62 littles last year, and we are excited to be able to help even more local children this year with the dollars we will raise at this event,” she said.

Seibel said the organization does hosts other events to help raise money.

“We have a turkey shoot and a poker run and several other little ones throughout the year,” she said. “We have a miniature golf tournament and chili cook off, but this is by far our biggest one of the year. This is where most our funds come from.”

In addition to fundraisers, Seibel said BBBS officials are happy to get money by other means.

“We definitely take donations anytime during the year,” she said. “Every dollar counts.”

In addition to raising money, the local BBBS office will also be raising awareness of another campaign going on. Reunite Now is a nationwide campaign underway to locate and reunite former “big brothers” and “big sisters” with “littles.”

“We’re reuniting some of our past board members, bigs with their littles, doing feature stories on past bigs and littles together to see where they have been and the influence they had on their life and their success stories,” Seibel said. “They appear on Wednesday’s Child on KSN News every Wednesday.”

Kansas is part of a friendly nationwide competition to reunite the most matches before the end of March. People interested in learning more about the campaign can visit www.reunite-now.org.

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