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Gregg Marshall, Wichita State University

- Special to the Leader & Times

WICHITA – Gregg Marshall, Wichita State University, Bill Self, University of Kansas, and Bruce Weber, Kansas State University, are challenging Kansans to “Go Big or Go Home.”

Sponsored by Cox Kansas, the challenge is Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters’ mission to raise awareness of the positive impact and urgent need for mentoring Kansas kids.

KSBBBS currently serves nearly 6,000 kids statewide by providing them with strong and enduring, professionally supported one-to-one mentoring relationships that change their lives for the better, forever.

However, there is an urgent need to support 4,000 children who are still on the waiting list for a Big Brother or Sister.

“When I learned that 80 percent of these kids served come from families living at or below the poverty line, I knew it was a priority for me to get involved and help make a difference,” said Coach Self.

“Go Big or Go Home” challenges Kansans to step up and serve as a mentor in a child’s life.

Coach Weber said, “Having 4,000 Kansas children waiting for a mentor is simply unacceptable. I’m proud to join as a co-chair of this campaign and help put a major dent in that number.”

Additionally, Kansans can become involved in the annual “Bowl for Kids’ Sake” fundraising campaign at www.kansasbowl.org that brings colleagues, friends and families together to form teams and raise pledges in the event to support the mentoring programs.

After funds are raised, participants come together at varying times across the state from Feb-April to celebrate their success at a bowling celebration party.

“The bowling is the reward, not the mechanism to raise volunteers or funds,” says Tammy Bouchér, Development Associate, BBBS. “But it’s certainly important to celebrate the additional number of kids served as we partner together with community members and businesses.”

Says Coach Marshall, “I was shocked to hear that 61 percent of these kids come from families with substance abuse backgrounds and 25 percent have had or has a parent who has been incarcerated. I’m happy to be working with Coaches Self and Weber to make a positive impact on the future of our most vulnerable Kansas kids.”

During the campaign, participants will be able to select the coach/school of their choice for the "Go Big or Go Home" competition. Funds raised go directly to KSBBBS to provide local kids facing adversity with positive mentoring relationships.

KSBBBS will track which coach/school is in the lead for the most pledges and volunteers. At the end of the campaign, a traveling trophy will be awarded to the winning coach.

For more information on how you can partner with Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters, go to www.kansasbigs.org or call 888-KS4-BIGS. The Bowl for Kids' Sake website is operational at www.kansasbowl.org.

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