

For immediate release

Mentoring young people paves a path to happiness, optimism and a more positive view of aging: study

Volunteer recruitment campaign by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada and Standard Life focuses on fountain of youth at the heart of mentoring

Montréal, June 16, 2009 – The Standard Life Assurance Company of Canada has released a national survey that suggests that the fountain of youth for adults lies in mentoring children and teenagers.

Conducted by Ipsos Descarie, the Standard Life Youth Index Survey compared the attitudes of Big Brother and Big Sister volunteer mentors with average Canadians and clearly shows that “Bigs” are not only happier with their lives, but they are also more energetic, younger at heart and have a significantly more positive view of aging than other adult Canadians.

The survey is the kick-off point for the Dare to be a kid again campaign, a national recruitment drive by Big Brothers Big Sisters and Standard Life to attract 10,000 new youth mentor volunteers over the next 10 years.

Survey results: Mentoring is good for the mentor

Half of the youth mentors polled (51%) described their lives as “very happy”, compared to 29 per cent of Canadian adults from the general population. When asked if they were optimistic or pessimistic about life, 81 per cent of the mentors surveyed described themselves as optimistic, compared to 63 per cent of adults who have not been engaged in youth mentoring.

Mentors answered more youthfully on a range of questions

Mentors were far more likely to answer “yes” to all the following questions:

- ✓ “I have as much energy as I used to have.” (52% for mentors versus 37% for ordinary Canadians)
- ✓ “As I get older, things are better than I ever would have thought.” (78% for mentors versus 58% for the average Canadian)
- ✓ “I am as happy now as when I was younger.” (79% for mentors versus 63% for the typical Canadian)

On the other hand, Canadians who are not mentors were more than twice-as-likely as Big Brothers or Big Sisters to believe that things get worse as they age (44% versus 20% for youth mentors). Ordinary Canadian adults were also more than three-times-as-likely to feel less useful as they age (19% versus 6% for youth mentors).

“Through this study and the Dare to be a kid again campaign, Standard Life reinforces the axiom that mentoring a child or youth is a proven path to personal happiness and inner wellness,” says Bruce MacDonald, President and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada. “If you are looking to spark up your life, there is no better way than by spending a few hours each week as a Big Brother or Big Sister. You’ll make a world of difference to a young person and recapture some of the fun of childhood.”

The role of Standard Life: More than money

Dare to be a kid again is part of a broad corporate undertaking by Standard Life to help Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada address the urgent shortage of Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

Across Canada, the demand for youth mentoring far exceeds the number of available “Bigs”. More than 10,000 children are currently on waiting lists at Big Brothers Big Sisters community agencies and some wait as long as two years. The mentoring services of Big Brothers Big Sisters have proven to be instrumental in reducing bullying, truancy, early school dropout and substance abuse.

Beyond financial support, the company is also planning to mobilize its employee and stakeholder networks to advance the cause of youth mentoring – either by becoming a mentor volunteer or a donor or by raising funds for the recruitment campaign or by acting as an advocate for youth mentoring.

The recruitment drive will kick into high gear in late August and early September with a national advertising campaign and a series of corporate fundraising events organized by Standard Life and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada.

“Dare to be a kid again is about harnessing the power of people to make a meaningful difference for young Canadians,” says Joseph Iannicelli, Standard Life’s President and Chief Executive Officer. “We are asking all Canadians to consider getting involved to ensure our young people receive the guidance they need to be successful in life. As our survey so clearly shows, the rewards to those who volunteer are great.”

Canadians can learn more about Dare to be a kid again and how to become a Big Brother or Big Sister by visiting www.beakidagain.ca.

Methodology

The Standard Life Youth Index Survey was conducted by Ipsos Descarie between May 27 and June 4, 2009, via Ipsos Reid’s national online panel, with a national sample of 2,050 Canadians aged 18 and over. Poll results are based on a sample where quota sampling and weighting are employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample reflects the actual Canadian population according to Census data. Quota samples with weighting from the Ipsos online panel provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online surveys; however, an unweighted probability sample of this size, with a 100% response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of +/-2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

This survey also polled 752 Big Brother and Big Sister volunteers. An unweighted probability sample of this size, with a 100% response rate, would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20

About Standard Life

With 2,000 employees based at its corporate headquarters in Montreal and in other major business centres across Canada, The Standard Life Assurance Company of Canada provides asset-managing services for retirement, investment and protection to 1.3 million Canadians, including group insurance and pension plan participants. The company is a member of Standard Life plc, a major international financial services group headquartered in Scotland.

www.standardlife.ca

About Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada is the nation's largest youth mentoring organization, providing quality adult mentoring services for over 26,000 children. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada currently has 140 agencies serving more than 1,000 communities, and yet more must be done, as some children still have to wait up to two years for a Big Brother or Big Sister.

www.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca

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Note to editors: Regional survey results are available upon request.

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