

San Antonio-based mentoring program exemplifies DOJ's commitment to American youth

By Office of Communications,
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Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt Dummermuth (sixth from left) and Jeff Gersh, deputy associate administrator of the Special Victims and Violent Offenders Division with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (fourth from left) meet with members of the Mentoring for Youth Initiative of Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Texas to discuss the program's impact. (Photo courtesy of CJ Craig)

In San Antonio, Texas, local mentoring efforts are making a difference, thanks to the Mentoring for Youth Initiative of Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Texas. The initiative strengthens local mentorship through collaboration with other local mentor-based programs to reduce delinquency, drug abuse, truancy and other high-risk behaviors.

The Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Matt Dummermuth visited the program January 29 to see how mentorship is affecting youth. Dummermuth and Jeff Gersh, deputy associate administrator of the Special Victims and Violent Offenders Division in OJP's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, listened to mentors – many who were mentored as youth by a BBBS mentor – about the program's impact.

“It was great to meet people who benefited from mentors and now are giving back to their community in so many ways, including being mentors themselves,” Dummermuth said. “I’m a big believer in the value of mentoring, for the simple reason that it works. Mentors help keep young people motivated and form positive social bonds that lead to better relationships and an improved outlook for the future. It’s a great way to help young people discover their talents and find their purpose.”

Through funding from OJJDP, the San Antonio-based program has helped expand local mentoring efforts by identifying and training hundreds of mentors, including minority men, to mentor minority youth.

San Antonio is not the only city where mentoring efforts are making an impact. Last year, OJJDP provided more than \$83 million to support youth mentorship programs nationwide, including funding to the National Mentoring Resource Center. [The Center](#) provided training and support to 378 school-, community- and faith-based mentoring programs that served more than 55,000 youth nationwide.

January is National Mentoring Month. To learn more about OJP’s support to youth mentoring efforts nationwide, visit <https://go.usa.gov/xE8QA>.

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