

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound Completes First Year of Level Up at Baker Middle School

Inaugural year of school-based mentoring program served 107 students, with strong gains in confidence, belonging, and future readiness.

TACOMA, WA, UNITED STATES, July 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound (BBBSPS) today announced the results of the first year of Level Up, its school-embedded mentoring program launched at Baker Middle School in partnership with Tacoma Public Schools. In its pilot year, Level Up served 107 sixth through eighth grade students, exceeding its initial enrollment goal of 50.

Level Up places BBBSPS employed, paid Lead Mentors on campus five days a week, meeting with students one-on-one or in small groups depending on need. The model was designed to close the gap between the number of young people seeking mentorship and the number of volunteer mentors available, without sacrificing the consistency and trust that define BBBSPS's mentoring approach.

"It takes little to be Big, and our Lead Mentors showed up for these students every single day this year," said Monique DuBose, Regional Director of Tacoma for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound. "What I witnessed at Baker Middle School was nothing short of transformational. When caring adults consistently show up, listen, encourage, and believe in young people, they begin to see new possibilities for their own future. This model isn't just about mentoring, it's about changing trajectories. I'm incredibly proud of our Lead Mentors for creating a space where every student felt seen, valued, and capable of achieving more than they imagined."



Students gather for Level Up Day at Baker Middle School, celebrating the program's first year serving 107 sixth through eighth grade students. (Photo courtesy of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound)

Students in the program reported meaningful growth across four measured outcome areas: sense of belonging (4.4 out of 5), social-emotional learning and confidence (4.2 out of 5), vision for the future (4.1 out of 5), and empowered decision-making (4.0 out of 5). Beyond the numbers, students built trusted relationships with their mentors and one another, working through challenges related to friendships, bullying, attendance, and academic motivation in a space designed to feel safe and consistent.

The year included a full calendar of shared experiences alongside weekly mentoring sessions: an inaugural Level Up Day celebrating the community students built together; an educational field trip to the [LeMay Car Museum](#) exploring STEM and automotive careers; and a year-end Student Showcase where students presented "Why I Matter" projects reflecting on their growth and their vision for the future.



Level Up students and staff visit the LeMay Car Museum in Tacoma as part of the program's year-long calendar of enrichment activities. (Photo courtesy of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound)

“

When caring adults consistently show up, listen, encourage, and believe in young people, they begin to see new possibilities for their own future.”

Monique DuBose, Regional Director of Tacoma, BBBSPS

Baker Middle School administration credits the program with a broader impact on school culture.

"Level Up has proven to be a powerful support system for our students during a critical stage in their development," said Fabbiney Scarlett, Ed.S, Vice Principal of Baker Middle School. "Through consistent mentorship and structured engagement, students are building stronger connections to school, increasing their confidence, and developing the social-emotional skills necessary to navigate both

academic and personal challenges. From improved student behavior and attendance to a stronger sense of belonging, Level Up has contributed to a more positive and supportive school culture overall."

Word of the program's success is spreading, with conversations underway with additional school districts interested in bringing the Level Up model to their own campuses.

Level Up launched at Baker Middle School in fall 2025 and is a school-based adaptation of a

mentoring model originally developed by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta.

Want to get involved, learn more about [becoming a big](#) or [donating](#) today.

Keshona Lawrence
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound
+1 206-456-9797
marketing@bbbsps.org
Visit us on social media:
[LinkedIn](#)
[Instagram](#)
[Facebook](#)
[YouTube](#)



Level Up student Jay'Liah Marley, an 8th grader at Baker Middle School, holds her 2026 Outstanding Committee Leader award from Washington YMCA Youth & Government. (Photo courtesy of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/930042584>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.