Introduction

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ellis County offers voluntary mentoring to children around the area. Adults are matched with children from various backgrounds to serve as role models. Large portions of the children involved with BB/BS are from low-income, single parent, and/or unstable families. Volunteers spend time with children to help them build self-esteem, feel loved, make friendships, and give back to the community in general. BB/BS needed help with recruiting volunteers and promoting the organization as a whole.

We first organized a meeting with Nancy Jeter, BB/BS director, to do a “needs analysis” for a media kit. We had to reach a realistic common ground with BB/BS. This involved a lot of brainstorming on our group’s part, along with Nancy and her case managers. Thoughts and ideas were juggled around and some were discarded.

At the conclusion of our analysis, we found that BB/BS was in desperate need of Big Brothers for Little Brothers. There were many young boys in need of an older role model with this non-profit organization. We believed that the INT department gave us the tools necessary to contribute to this worthwhile cause.

After early group meetings, we concluded that two videos needed to be made: one for recruitment and the other for promotion. Also, radio PSA’s would simultaneously recruit and promote along with two new brochures that would enhance their image. We decided to meet with Nancy weekly in order to monitor progress, add new ideas, and revise if needed. Our group worked in conjunction with FHSU’s Leadership class to complete the radio PSA’s.

Video

Nancy provided old videos they had been using and had several ideas on style and content. We started with a goal of making the videos accurately represent BB/BS. Before shooting any video, our group had a major brainstorming session. We had to decide how many matches we were going to interview. We decided to have six matches for general interview sessions.

Nancy and her staff determined who was to be interviewed and chose themes. The themes that we brainstormed together for the recruitment videos were “I’m still waiting...” featuring a young boy who is on the waiting list for a Big Brother. The original introduction graphic was scrapped for this video due to new
creative thoughts. This added extra hours to editing. We also chose to do a montage of seven matches doing an activity together and the Big looking up, saying, “I find time.” We used BB/BS’s national tagline “Little Moments, Big Magic” as a general theme.

Some exciting shoots were “Heroes for Kids” with the local fire station and National Guard. There was also “Bowl for Kids’ Sake”, which is a fundraiser for the organization.

We also wrote questions for commenting during an interview with Nancy and her case managers. These videos explain BB/BS and what it has to offer. Prominent community members, FHSU students, and athletes were used for shooting matches. Nancy helped schedule each match, which were usually shot during weekends. We joined the matches for whatever activity they chose. Between 70-80 hours total were spent shooting, digitizing, and editing.

Each shoot was different. Adam joined the team on the match interviews to shoot extra pictures of the activity. A member of the team, and even Nancy herself, helped out with an aspect of the production. Ross ran the camera and microphone. Other jobs varied between Lorisa, John, and Nancy from holding the boom mic to holding the reflector for lighting. Lorisa wrote questions and did interviewing with matches along with being the liaison with the Leadership class.

Audio

We decided that radio PSA’s would be a great way to recruit/promote BB/BS in the area. Eagle Communications radio stations were utilized to create PSA’s for various demographics. We used the same technique as the videos with prominent community members, FHSU students, and athletes. Using these groups allowed for name recognition and credibility.

The PSA’s were directed to attract diversity, like the diversity within BB/BS. The people used for the PSA’s gave a brief and personal reason on why they think others should get involved with BB/BS.

The scheduling of the radio talent primarily revolved around video shooting times. John and Nancy would visit with the talent to decide what wanted to be said. Nothing the talent said was ever scripted; it all came from the heart.

There was usually enough time after the initial recording for the talent to sit with John while he edited. This allowed for the talent to critique the PSA and help decide what they wanted cut. The people used for talent were extremely cooperative, which made production smoother. The only challenge was recording
the correct length of time for a thirty second PSA. Fortunately the recordings were usually long and could be cut down to get what we needed.

**Graphic/Print**

Nancy Jeter showed us dated promotional and recruitment brochures. Both were on colored paper, photocopied from an original. A lack of photography and a mishmash of fonts contributed to a rather dated look. She seemed quite embarrassed to even show us the brochures, but was also extremely excited to hear that we’d be redoing them.

When we sat down to go over a new version, she expressed concern with printing costs. A decision was made to produce a version that could be printed in black and white or in color. By utilizing the PDF document format, the standard for professional printing, we are able to offer them brochures that can be printed equally well on a home ink-jet printer or on a commercial CMYK offset printer.

The new brochures utilize colorful BB/BS corporate colors and local photographs from various Bigs and Littles. One brochure is geared more toward the community at large, offering the typical “cute kid” shots. The other is aimed at college students, offering a catchy front panel to get them to pick up the brochure in the first place.

Difficulties included trying to stay within the guidelines of the national BB/BS graphic design rules and harsh lighting during many shoots. Class scheduling was also problematic. Approximately forty hours were spent by Adam in the graphic/print area, editing through well over 1500 photos and finding design schemes that worked best for the project.

**Project Conclusion**

The final step in the project was the creation of a website to showcase our efforts. Adam produced a modern, clean site that featured our presentation, this paper, video spots, audio spots and print brochures. This took an additional 12 hours to create and perfect.

Probably the biggest problem our group faced was time. Every one of us is heavily involved at FHSU, like many INT students. This made it especially difficult in coordinating our schedules with Big Brothers Big Sisters events and interviews. As we worked on the project, we felt the urge to do more and more. These kids are absolutely amazing.
However, there was a deadline for this Capstone project. While our work for the INT class is winding down, our work for BB/BS is still continuing. John was faced with having to make 12 radio spots instead of the original 6 just a week before our deadline. Adam was also still receiving direction from Nancy Jeter on the print brochures, making little changes here and there. Lorisa kept us on track, providing the glue to make this project succeed. And Ross himself is heavily involved in the agency, having his very own Little Brother.

We are very proud of our work on this media kit. Besides being very professional, our kit has a very warm feeling. Thousands and thousands of dollars were saved with BB/BS giving us the opportunity to create these PSA’s, videos and printed materials instead of a professional media company doing them.

Acknowledgements

We’d like to thank BB/BS of Ellis County, especially Nancy Jeter. Her direction and passion at the organization is inspiring to all of us. The individual case workers were also instrumental in finding matches that would be willing to be a part of our project. Big thanks also go to Eagle Communication, for giving us the resources needed to record and edit the radio spots and possibly air them. And finally, we’d like to thank Mark Bannister. His continual leadership in the INT department has made it one of the best convergence degrees in the nation. The faculty in our department also deserve credit, for dealing with us every single day.