Dear Rappeller,

On behalf of **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Virginia**, welcome to **Over The Edge 2017!** In boldly going “Over the Edge” of the Patrick Henry with us, we hope you’ll discover the same thing that our Bigs and Littles teach each other every day—that you are capable of achieving more than you ever thought possible.

As you may know, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Virginia’s mission is to provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported one to one mentoring relationships that change their lives for the better, forever.

**Your participation** will help us support our current matches and create new Big/Little matches throughout our entire service area, including Roanoke, Salem, Montgomery County, and Pulaski County. Your support ensures we can match more Bigs and Littles, create more friendships, and inspire improved outlooks on life.

This Welcome Packet contains a number of exciting tips and tricks to increase your impact, including:

* Tips on how to raise the big bucks by using our online fundraising system
* **Over The Edge** communication samples you can personalize and use to engage your loved ones
* A “What to Expect” Guide to help better prepare you for this great adventure.

Your engagement in fundraising and promoting participation for the **Over The Edge 2017** over the next few weeks will make a big difference in the lives of children in our community. And the earlier you get going the better, so please start today!

Keep in mind that I am here for you every step of the way, so please don’t hesitate to give me a call or send me an e-mail. I look forward to working with you as we prepare for **Over The Edge 2017**.

Warmest regards,

Natanis DeMascio

ndemascio@bigslittles.org | 540.769.9776

***PS - Now that you have signed up to rappel, why not start a team and engage your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers in this important cause?***

Fundraising Made Easy

**Maximize your impact and invite your community to join your efforts.**

**Set Your Goal and Create Your Plan!**

You’ve already taken the first step towards helping empowering young people through mentoring with Big Brothers Big Sisters. Now take your second step by setting your personal fundraising goal and creating a plan to exceed it.

**Ask To Receive!**

The #1 reason people give is because they are asked. Don’t be shy about telling everyone you know that you are participating in **Over The Edge 2017**. Don’t forget about places where **you spend money** like hairdressers, dry cleaners or your favorite restaurant. **Remember: If you don’t ask, you won’t receive.**

**Letter-Writing Campaign!**

Like to write? Then take a few moments to create an e-mail or a letter to everyone you know to announce that you are participating in **Over The Edge 2017**. Perfect mailing lists include Wedding lists, Holiday Cards and Organizational Membership Lists. Don’t forget to include a return envelope. We have included a sample letter in this packet for your convenience.

**Vendor Letters!**

Vendors can be work-related, such as a printer, or personal, like your insurance agent, hair salon or dry cleaner. Places where **you spend money** are a great resource!

**Wraparound Events!**

What is a wraparound event you ask? Wraparound Events or are mini-fundraising events that raise both money and awareness for Over The Edge! Common examples are bake sales, dress-down days, brown-bagging it and car washes.

**Create a Fundraising Plan. Follow this simple guide!**

* **Ask To Receive!**  The #1 reason people give is because they are asked. Don’t be shy about asking for support. Try places where **you spend money** like hair salons, dry cleaners and restaurants.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Create your fundraising page at [www.bigslittles.org/OTE](http://www.bigslittles.org/OTE)
 |  |
| 1. Send an email out to your friends, family, and co-workers
 |  |
| 1. 5 generous friends give you $50
 | $250 |
| 1. 10 of your contacts give you $25
 | $250 |
| 1. 5 friends give you $20
 | $100 |
| 1. 10 more people give you $10
 | $100 |
| 1. 20 coworkers give you $5
 | $100 |
| 1. Your donation of $100
 | $100 |
| 1. Your company’s matching funds of $100 (better yet, see if they will match all the funds you raise!)
 | $100 - $900 |
| 1. Take a deep breath, because you are really going Over the Edge!
 | **TOTAL: $1000+** |

**Helpful Hints**

* Always follow up! Many people will need more than one request to donate and most will appreciate the reminder. Include fun facts and an update on how close you are to reaching your goal.
* Send a thank you letter, note, or message to your donors. For your sponsors, consider including a crazy picture of you from the event so they remember you next year.

**Quick and Easy Ideas to Increase Your Fundraising Efforts**

* Add the event logo to your e-mail signature. You can also include a hyper-link to your personal fundraising website and encourage everyone to visit it and support your efforts.
* Ask all of your supporters about the possibility of matching funds from their employers.
* Social media is a great way to promote your fundraising and connect with people who you may not see daily. Always be sure to include a link to your personal fundraising website for anyone interested in or able to support you.

**Who Do You Know?**

The key to building a successful fundraising campaign depends on asking the people that you know for support. Think about everyone whose lives you touch and ask them to join you in supporting Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Virginia.

Use this chart to help you identify people that you know who might support and organize them into categories. Start with the easiest people to reach - your family and friends. Next ask acquaintances and service providers. Before you know it, you will have a complete list of people you can ask for support!

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| High School / College Alum | Neighbors | Friends |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
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|  |
| Community / Social Clubs |  | Family |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  |  |  |
| Your Name Here |
|  Work Colleagues |  | Work Vendors / Suppliers |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  |  |
| Local Companies /Folks I do Business With | Fraternity / Sorority | Children’s School / Sports |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
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DRAFT Fundraising Letter

***Use the draft/sample below as a guide to write your own letter. Please make changes to personalize.***

Dear Family and Friends:

I’ve signed up to rappel 11 stories down from the roof of the Patrick Henry in downtown Roanokeon May 20, 2017 as part of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Virginia’s **Over The Edge 2017.** And to do this, I need to raise $1,000 by May 15!

Why would I do something so crazy? First, because it’ll be one heck of a view from up there. Second, because it’s not actually crazy, it’s completely safe. And third—most importantly—because I believe that every young person in Southwest Virginia deserves the chance to unlock their true potential through one to one mentoring.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Virginia does exactly this. Their mission is to *provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported one-to-one mentoring relationships that change their lives for the better, forever.*

In 2016, **85%** of children enrolled in mentorship programs with BBBS of SWVA reported feeling socially accepted. **77%** of Littles felt scholastically competent and **100%** avoided the Juvenile Justice system. BBBS of SWVA also served 415 children in Southwest Virginia in 2016. Impressive right? This is only possible through the support of donors like you and me!

This inspires me / is important to me because…**(YOUR STORY HERE).**

So I’m excited to both fundraise and rappel! **My goal is to raise $1,000**--enough to support one Big/Little match for one year.

I would like to ask for your support by either joining my team to help me fundraise or by starting your own fundraising page, which will be your first step in rappelling yourself! Are you up for the challenge? If so, please join me. It’ll be simple and fun! Do you know others who are up to the challenge? If so please pass this information on to them so they can experience this unique event!

As you have read, [empowering young people/mentoring/ paying it forward] matters a lot to me and my family. Whether or not you can join me in rappelling or fundraising**, please consider making a donation today help in our efforts**. With your support, we match one of the 100 children currently waiting for a Big Brother or Big Sister.

You can make a gift online at [www.bigslittles.org/OTE](http://www.bigslittles.org/OTE) or you can mail a check (with my name in the memo field) to BBBS of SWVA at 124 Wells Avenue NW, Roanoke, VA 24016.

Thanks so much and I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Yours truly,

Insert Name

What to Expect On Rappel Day

**How You Will Rappel –**

* You will be wearing a full-body industrial harness and using an industrial descender to go down. Squeezing a handle makes you go down, letting go (or pulling back) makes you stop. You can control your speed to a certain extent. Should you go too fast, or should the equipment fail, the back-up device will engage.
* Getting your weight off the roof and into the harness is the difficult part for most people. Once you’re over the edge, you are on your own. Don’t forget to stop and take in the view!
* The squeezing motion to activate the descender requires quite a bit of force and using the same hand the entire way down can be tiring. You can stop to rest, or switch hands when you need a break. Once you’re within 20’ of the ground, your landing will be assisted by an Over the Edge staff member.

**Training**

* When you arrive on site you will have the opportunity to practice rappelling from a lesser height. This will give you a chance to hang in the harness, find a comfortable position, and practice using the descender and safety equipment. You can practice as often as you’d like before heading to rappel. The same safety procedures are used in the training as in the long rappel so you will be familiar with them when you get there.

**What to wear:**

* You’re going to be walking down the side of a building so wear good shoes. Well-fitting sneakers, light hiking boots, climbing shoes, or other soft soled shoes are recommended. No sandals, slip-on shoes, slippers, flip flops, high heels, or steel toed boots will be allowed.
* Wear long pants and a long sleeved shirt. Athletic pants, leggings, and jeans are suitable. The harness goes around your legs, waist, and shoulders, so it is best to avoid anything too bulky. Shirts should be comfortable and without draw cords. Long hair should be tied back. You will be required to leave droppable items like keys and cell phones, or jewelry that can get caught on things, with a staff member on-site. You will be given a pair of leather gloves and a helmet when you arrive.

**Cameras and Phones**

• Sorry, no phones, cameras, etc. on the roof. Helmet cams are permitted if you have one and want to bring it

**What Can I Do To Practice?**

• The most common complaint from participants after rappelling is that their forearms became sore during the descent. The squeezing motion required isn’t hard, but over a long time it can get tiring. Proper technique and switching arms makes a lot of difference, but using a squeeze ball once in a while doesn’t hurt either.

• Go rock climbing with our friends at River Rock Climbing Gym! Not only does rock climbing strengthen your forearms, but also it allows you to hang in a harness. Although the harnesses we use are different you will still get the idea of what muscles it takes to stay up-right.

**Get psyched:**

* Tell your friends. You’re one of a few special people who will be rappelling!
* Send your Fundraising page link out to everyone.
* Tell your story on your Fundraising page, add photos if possible.
* You are also encouraged to use the all the social media sites. (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.)

**Spectators and Friends:**

* Unfortunately friends of the participants will not be allowed up to the roof top. The roof is a restricted access area. Big Brothers Big Sisters will have an event photographer taking pictures from the roof, ensuring that each participant gets a picture of himself or herself going over the side.
* We highly encourage you to invite your friends to spectate from the ground. We will have music, food trucks and Emcee’s to make this a fun and exciting event!

**Participant Weight/Size Restrictions:**

* Participants over 300 lbs. are not permitted to rappel as they exceed the safe working load of the equipment. The minimum weight of a participant is 100 lbs.

**Special Needs Rappellers:**

* Special Needs Rappellers will be accommodated as long as it can be done safely. In the past people with intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, amputees, and wheelchairs have been able to participate fully and have enjoyed successful rappels. Advance notice is required, however, so that the Event Managers and Technicians can ensure that each participant gets the best experience possible.

**Clothing and Costumes:**

* Participants are asked to wear athletic clothing. Long track pants, t-shirts, and sneakers are advised. Long hair should be tied back. Extra baggy clothes should be avoided as it can become caught or jammed in the rappelling device. We do not allow sandals or slip-on shoes.
* Costumes are allowed but are subject to the same limitations as baggy clothing. Every attempt will be made to safely fit costumes around harnesses and helmets. As with shorts, it is ultimately the decision of the Site Safety Supervisor. Stringy, loose, or excessive costumes must be avoided. Head pieces that will not accommodate a helmet, obscure the vision, or are notably large or heavy will rarely be allowed.