

## Press Releases

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### 01-19-11 This Week In Orange County By Edward A. Diana

Have you ever had the opportunity to share your time or talent with a young person? Or maybe when you were younger someone took you under their wings, showed you the ropes, or offered a supportive and listening ear when you needed guidance, or just a friend. If you can relate to any of these scenarios, then you understand and appreciate the benefits of mentoring.

January is National Mentoring Month, which is being widely recognized in our community by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County; and January 25 is Thank Your Mentor Day. If you've been lucky enough to have a mentor in your life – please take a few minutes to reach out and express your appreciation to that person.

According to the Big Brothers Big Sisters national website, research has shown that positive relationships between children and their mentors have a direct and measurable impact on children's lives. By participating in mentoring programs, the Little Brothers and Sisters are: more confident in their schoolwork performance, able to get along better with their families, 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs, 27% less likely to begin using alcohol, and 52% less likely to skip school. To learn more about youth mentoring opportunities in Orange County, contact the Youth Bureau at 615-3620.

Being there for our children, as a mentor or simply as a trusted adult, can make all the difference in the lives of some young people, especially those at-risk or in-need. These relationships have become more important than ever as issues of bullying have been steadily increasing. It is unfortunate that the prevalence and severity of bullying and harassment among youth has gained national attention in recent months. So that we may work to stem the tide of tragedy among young people, it is critical that Orange County youth know that they have someone, or someplace, to turn to – a mentor, a teacher, a school, a County or human service agency.

That's why I am supporting the efforts of schools and youth-serving organizations throughout Orange County by proclaiming January 31 through February 4 as Orange County No Name-Calling Week. Activities planned for the week will be aimed at promoting respect for all and reducing name-calling. No Name-Calling Week provides an opportunity for young people to build self-control, confidence, and resilience to bullying, both in and out of school settings. It is my hope that this initiative will provide children and schools with the tools they need to eliminate bullying in our community for good.

One more date I'd like you to mark on your calendar ... February 4 – the American Heart Association's Wear Red Day. Wear red in support of those affected by heart disease and to support the prevention of heart disease. Join Healthy Orange and wear red, and love your heart.

Until next week, wishing you good health and happiness,

Edward A. Diana  
County Executive