

NEWS

VOLUNTEER CENTER OF BERGEN COUNTY, INC.

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Heroes Wanted

North Jersey—More than one hundred boys and girls are looking for heroes.

The children have been referred to Volunteers in Protective Services (VIPS), a mentoring program sponsored by the Volunteer Center of Bergen County. For over 30 years, VIPS has screened, trained, and supported caring men and women who are positive role models and dedicated mentors to Bergen County children who have experienced abuse, neglect, or isolation.

The next 6-week VIPS mentor training session begins Wednesday, April 15, 2009. It is held from 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm at the Volunteer Center of Bergen County, 64 Passaic Street in Hackensack.

There are not nearly enough people enrolled thus far. Men, in particular, are needed to become positive male role models for the boys.

“These 100+ children are waiting for someone to step in and believe in them, encourage them to laugh and succeed,” says Faith Samples-Smart, program director of VIPS. “The spring training class is not full! If you can remember someone who was in your corner at a time when you needed a friend, then please, I ask you to join us now. Take the training class and share your good fortune with one of those children who so desperately need a friend now. There is an especially critical need for bi-lingual, Spanish speaking mentors.”

The 15-hour VIPS training covers such topics as developing good listening and communication skills, working through challenges, recognizing the signs of abuse and

neglect, the role of the mentor and the matching process. Applicants are asked to supply references and undergo a background check.

For more information about the VIPS program, call (201) 489-9454 Ext. 11, or visit www.bergenvolunteers.org and click on mentoring programs.

The mission of the Volunteer Center of Bergen County is to strengthen the community by connecting people with opportunities to serve, operating model volunteer programs, building the capacity for effective volunteering and participating in strategic partnerships that meet community needs.

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