



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MEDIA CONTACT - Sara Balough**  
Office: 972.573.2375  
Cell: 817.925.9296  
sbalough@bbbstx.org

## **DEION SANDERS EMBRACES NEW ROLE WITH SPORTS BUDDIES MENTORING PROGRAM**

Dallas/Fort Worth (August 13, 2009) - Big Brothers Big Sisters is pleased to announce that former National Football League Pro Bowl cornerback and Major League All-Star outfielder Deion Sanders will be leading the charge for the North Texas organization's sports-mentoring program. Beyond lending his name to the Deion Sanders' Sports Buddies program, Sanders will work with the mentoring organization to build awareness, raise funds and further develop opportunities that will allow children to experience the power of mentoring through sports.

Recognizing the potential impact of a sports-mentoring program and the need for dedicated men to serve as positive mentors to boys, Sanders jumped at the opportunity to partner with Sports Buddies. His primary objective in joining the initiative is to bring awareness to the program and call on men to become mentors to the growing number of boys waiting for a Big Brother in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program.

"Mentoring through sports is a hands-on concept that guys get," said Sanders. "You can preach to a kid all day about the value of hard work and hope it sticks, or you can put them on the turf, put a ball in their hands and let them work hard until they cross the goal line. Which one do you think will have more of an impact?"

Sanders began scoring touchdowns for the Pop Warner youth league team at the age of eight. He played football, basketball, and baseball in high school, and he liked basketball best. He says that athletics saved him from a life of crime. "It would have been easy for me to sell drugs, but I had practice. My friends who didn't have practice, they went straight to the streets and never left. Guys who were as fast as me when we were kids."

"We all know that Deion Sanders is an exceptional athlete on the field. Now, he is dedicating that same drive, determination and passion to the Sports Buddies program," said Big Brothers Big Sisters CEO Charles Pierson. "He knows the impact that sports can have on the life of a child because he's lived it. Together, we want to make sports and their benefits accessible to the thousands of kids in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program."

Challenged with a growing number of boys waiting for a mentor, Big Brothers Big Sisters developed the Deion Sanders' Sports Buddies program to attract men to the possibility of becoming a mentor to a child based on their shared interest of sports. By providing the common ground of sports and athletics, the program hopes to provide mentors and children the opportunity to build a relationship while participating in and watching athletic activities.

### **About Big Brothers Big Sisters**

Big Brothers Big Sisters places caring adults in the lives of children in one-to-one mentoring relationships. Through the positive impact of those friendships, children with a Big Brother or Big Sister are more likely to graduate from high school and are less likely to begin using drugs, begin using alcohol or engage in negative conflict. For more information, contact 888.887.BIGS or [www.bbbstx.org](http://www.bbbstx.org).

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