

Commitment to Kids is the Backbone of the Lunch Buddies Program

Two Lunch Buddies volunteers in the Plymouth School District have been the backbone of this school-based Big Brothers & Big Sisters' program which matches an adult volunteer with a child in a weekly lunch hour meeting.

It all began six years ago with Debi Lisowe, the owner of Here We Grow, a day care center for children in Plymouth. Lisowe was the mother of three grown sons and a grandmother and wanted to make a difference in the life of a young child in a one-on-one setting. She didn't know if she had the time to devote to being a Big Sister but the Lunch Buddies program was in its fledgling stages in the Plymouth School District and the once a week commitment appealed to her. Having an opportunity to have a little girl in her life was also a plus for her.

Lisowe began her relationship with a Fairview kindergartener who is now in Middle School and so she now has begun a new relationship with a Fairview student. She watched her first lunch buddy's self confidence and her progress in school follow a steady growth pattern. During their weekly lunch date they talked, played games and often worked on crafts for her to give as gifts to her family. The two of them expanded their relationship to Lunch Buddies Plus and are enjoyed summer activities and movies together outside of school. And now Lisowe is starting over again with another little girl.

Lisowe's friend and co-worker, Patti DoBas, also became interested in Lunch Buddies and was matched with a little girl at Fairview in March of 2005. Tuesdays have been their special lunch hour together and they spend 45-50 minutes doing homework, games – Legos is a favorite – and sometimes spend time on the playground.

DoBas has two grown daughters and is a grandmother and she is proud of the satisfaction she gets from taking the time to benefit a child who needs mentoring from a caring adult. Always wanting to be a Big Sister but not having the time to devote to it, the Lunch Buddies program has enriched her life and the life of a very special little girl.

Two friends, two lunch buddies and two special little girls – what more can you ask for? More lunch buddies in Plymouth, of course, and the excellent example set by Lisowe and DoBas increased the number of Plymouth Lunch Buddies to 12 since the start of the 2006 school year and in 2007, the number of volunteers skyrocketed to 35.

If this program sounds like something that could fill a void in your life and benefit a child in need, call Gina Chandler, Lunch Buddies coordinator at Big Brothers & Big Sisters, 920-458-0111.