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NEWS RELEASE

Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber, along with several other dignitaries, celebrates mentoring

Portland, OR (November 3, 2011) – One thousand guests will have the opportunity to hear from Governor John Kitzhaber, Nike V.P. Tim Hershey, Portland Timbers owner Merritt Paulson and former Portland Trail Blazer Terry Porter — who will share his experience as a Big Brother, in celebration of Big Brothers Big Sisters in providing children life-changing volunteer mentors.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Columbia Northwest will host the 9th annual *Start Something Breakfast* on Thursday, November 17, 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m. at the Oregon Convention Center. The *Start Something Breakfast* is free to attend — but is also the agency's most important fundraising event of the year. Members of the media are invited to RSVP to Abby Herrera at 503.943.5773.

The *Start Something Breakfast* is aimed at generating much needed revenue to sustain the agency's current efforts and to expand services to assist more children experiencing adversity. While the agency serves nearly 3,000 children, there are another 2,400 on the Big Brothers Big Sisters waitlist in Oregon and Southwest Washington. Many of the waitlist children come from foster care or single parent households and hope to one day meet a caring friend through the Big Brothers Big Sisters program.

Among the speakers at this year's *Start Something Breakfast* is former Little Sister Brooke Weissenfels. Brooke is also a brand new Big Sister to 12-year-old Marcella. Brooke's story serves as a great example of how a Big Brothers Big Sisters friendship positively impacts a child's life, forever.

In sixth grade Brooke was matched with her Big Sister Cherie. Brooke was at a vulnerable time in her life, bouncing to several foster homes. At the time she met Cherie, Brooke was living in a home that took in difficult kids. She wasn't a difficult child; but, the foster care system had no other place to put her.

Cherie left a significant impression on Brooke – most importantly, that the young girl could go on to attend college. Brooke threw herself into school and received several scholarships that made it possible for her to go to college. She chose the same college as Cherie – the University of Puget Sound! In 2002, it all paid off and Brooke graduated with a business degree and minors in economics and math.

As a new Big Sister, Brooke sees the opportunity to offer an example of a brighter future, encouragement and support to someone who needs that in her life.

It is stories like this that show how Big Brothers Big Sisters is making a difference. It is also why the following sponsors support this initiative: The title sponsor of the event is Regence. The presenting sponsors are Nike and U.S. Bank. Supporting sponsors

include: Aequitas Capital Management, Kuni Automotive, Randall Children's Hospital and Wells Fargo. Match sponsors include: Boly:Welch and USI Insurance. Community sponsors include: Knowledge Universe, HFO Real Estate Investment, Northwest Evaluation Association, The Portland Timbers and Steel Rives.

ABOUT BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS COLUMBIA NORTHWEST

Big Brothers Big Sisters Columbia Northwest provides children experiencing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported one-to-one relationships that change their lives for the better, forever. The agency serves Clackamas, Clark, Cowlitz, Marion, Multnomah, Skamania, Wahkiakum and Washington counties. In 2010, Big Brothers Big Sisters Columbia Northwest supported 2,784 children — and the volunteer mentors who serve them, making it the largest Big Brothers Big Sisters agency on the west coast and 8th largest nationwide.