



REACH & RISE[®]

The Butler County Family YMCA is excited to announce the addition of a **NEW GROUP MENTORING PROGRAM FOR YOUTH**. **Reach & Rise[®]** was created as a pilot program by the YMCA of San Francisco in 1992. The program grew to 5 regions in the United States in 2009 and in 2012, the YMCA of the USA expanded it to 38 states. The program serves at-risk youth ages 8-15 that lack role models and are in communities challenged by truancy, single-parent households, poverty, crime, and other social issues.

As we introduce this new program our first communication is for internal audiences - our YMCA Staff -our Youth Mentoring Committee – and our Boards. **Please read carefully so you are informed and can answer questions as they arise.**

How is this program different than Big Brothers Big Sisters of Butler County?

We are launching our **Reach & Rise[®]** program as a **group mentoring program**, which will enable us **to help more children**. Each group can be formed by age, activity (like sports or art), by geographic area, or in other ways that will benefit children in the group.

In addition, those not currently matched in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Butler County program will benefit immediately from this group model. Our goal is to serve 50 youth the first year of the program.

This **group structure can help participants learn how to form social skills in peer groups**, and build relationships that could last a lifetime.

Reach & Rise[®] has **established curriculum** for each group session.

Activities and events related to this program will be **held in public and community spaces** with two volunteers present.

What are the benefits of this new program?

Reach & Rise[®] is an **evidence-based youth mentoring program** with published research leading to specific guidelines that will help to ensure the success of the program.

Outcomes include:

- **increased productive use of afterschool hours**
- **involvement in two or more community activities throughout the year**
- **improved ability to relate to guardians, peers, and authority figures**
- **improved school functioning**
- **increased resiliency to gang recruitment**
- **decrease in substance abuse**

Because this program is evidence-based, we have received the **support and endorsement of the Butler Area School District**, which will serve as one referral source for the program.

Is there training for volunteer mentors?

Program volunteers would be required to obtain the **same clearances** that YMCA employees and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Butler County volunteers obtain.

Volunteers will also attend **specialized mentor training sessions** that total 15 hours.

How can children be referred to the program?

Referral sources include school districts, churches, individuals and family members.

How did you choose Reach & Rise®?

Since its founding, the YMCA's Cause has been to strengthen communities. Our Youth Mentoring efforts to date have been focused on a one child/one adult model. We recognized there is a gap in serving groups of children. As we **researched numerous programs** over the course of a year, we found the **Reach & Rise®** program was a good fit.

It's an **established successful YMCA program**. Resources and ongoing support are available at no cost through the YMCA of the USA, our national organization.

A group mentoring program will provide safety for volunteer mentors and youth.

Participants and volunteers will see benefit from an **evidence-based program** where outcomes are tracked.

How is Reach & Rise® funded?

This program will be offered for **free to participants**. Funds for this program will come from the YMCA's Annual Support Campaign. This important fund helps to support community programming to ensure that everyone regardless of age, income, or background has the opportunity to grow, learn, and thrive.

In addition, we have **fundraising events** that are established and dedicated to our Youth Mentoring programs. We are confident the community will continue to support efforts to help children.

Once we have demonstrated success at meeting the **Reach and Rise®** program goals, we may be eligible to apply for **Grant Funding** to support our program.

We are excited to **REACH** more youth and are preparing to **RISE** to a new level of service in Butler County!

For additional questions, contact Kathryn Eberle Cotter, MA, MT-BC, MFT, **Reach & Rise®** Clinical Director, kcotter@bcfymca.org.