



For Release
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GREEN BAY MAN NAMED NATIONAL "HERO"
Heroes In Our Midst Reinforces Tradition of Connecting to Others

GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN (September 26, 2006) - A Green Bay resident and insurance broker with Associated Bank's insurance division, has been tapped for the national "Heroes In Our Midst" award for giving his time and compassion over the past six years to guide and mentor a young Green Bay child into his teenage years. Chris Ostrand, a mentor with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeastern Wisconsin, received the special award Tuesday afternoon during the Packer's Power Lunch at Lambeau Field.

"Heroes In Our Midst" is a national program sponsored by the Greeting Card Association to reinforce the tradition of connecting with others, and to encourage Americans to reach out to the everyday heroes in their own lives through card sending. The program, which recognizes one Hero in Our Midst each month, has helped to generate hundreds of cards for community and personal heroes.

"This program is all about the rewards of connecting to others and building human ties. We believe exchanging greeting cards is one of America's most cherished traditions for connecting to others," said Juliette Bogus, Heroes In Our Midst spokesperson. "Americans everywhere have a special card story of how someone impacted their life or created a lasting bond or shared memory through a greeting card."

"We hope that in honoring Chris Ostrand for his mentoring role as a Big Brother and making a difference in someone's life, others will be inspired to make special connections with the heroes in their own lives," Bogus added.

Ostrand, who is a mentor with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeastern WI, received a special medallion greeting card, a ceremonial check for \$1,000 and hundreds of cards from members of BBBS and the community, expressing their appreciation for his volunteer work. The \$1,000 check will be donated in Ostrand's name to the local Big Brothers Big Sisters agency to support similar mentoring matches in the community.

After Ostrand accepted the Heroes In Our Midst award, his "Little Brother" Matthew Kaercher read his own greeting card to Ostrand, thanking him for being a positive role model and influence in his life over the last six years.

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“I never thought that such a special friendship would grow out of this mentoring relationship,” said Ostrand. “I think that every person should take the time to connect with someone special in their life or community. There are everyday heroes everywhere.”

Matthew has been paired with Ostrand since he was eleven and attributes his improved grades and his drastic life turn-around to the mentoring efforts of his Big. He is now 15 and attends East High School in Green Bay.

Matthew says he hopes that people from all over Wisconsin will send thousands of cards expressing their appreciation for his role model and Big Brother. Cards should be addressed to:

**Chris Ostrand
1345 West Mason St.
Green Bay, WI 54303**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America officials say Ostrand has been a positive male role model to Matthew and leads by example. He has worked with the teenager to help him make smart life decisions and improve his grades. “Chris has really been there for me over the last six years,” says Matthew, “He’s like an actual brother to me, and he has really helped me see the other sides of things.”

Heroes In Our Midst representatives say they hope area residents will be inspired not only to send a card to Ostrand, but to become everyday heroes themselves, by reaching out to others through the type of personal interaction and caring that cards provide.

To learn more about Heroes In Our Midst and its goal of encouraging America’s to connect through card-sending, visit www.HeroesInOurMidst.org. ■

Heroes In Our Midst is a public outreach campaign of the Greeting Card Association. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is its first-year partner. For more information, visit www.HeroesInOurMidst.org.

Big Brothers Big Sisters is the oldest, largest and most effective youth mentoring organization in the U.S. It has been the leader in one-to-one youth service for more than a century, developing positive relationships that have a direct and lasting impact of the lives of young people. Big Brothers Big Sisters serves 240,000 children, ages 6 through 18, in all 50 states. The national offices are located in Philadelphia. To volunteer or donate, visit www.bbbsa.org.

The Greeting Card Association, headquartered in Washington, DC, represents nearly 300 U.S. and international greeting card publishers and suppliers. It is dedicated to celebrating, promoting and preserving the tradition and cultural values of exchanging greeting cards. Its website address is www.greetingcard.org.