

Mentoring Matters: 'Big In Blue' Pairs Cops with Kids

November 21, 2016

By Rick Folbaum



MIAMI (CBSMiami) – CBS4 News is committed to bringing you stories about why mentoring matters and mentors aren't always teachers, coaches or parents. Sometimes they are cops. At the Bright Futures School of Excellence in Northwest Miami-Dade, when one particular officer shows up, it's not because there's something wrong, it's because there's something right.

“So, if you practice all the sports, basketball, football track, what are you supposed to be practicing too?” asked Miami-Dade School Police Chief Ian Moffett. Student Kadrian Shaw replied, “Reading!”

Moffett isn’t just a police chief; he’s also a volunteer Big Brother to fourth grader Kadrian Shaw.

“I like this, when I come here, I like you reading the word and us talking about what it means,” said Moffett.

Chief Moffett is part of “Bigs in Blue,” a program within Big Brothers Big Sisters that pairs law enforcement with young kids in need of mentors.

“I’ve been doing this for three years now. It’s my second little brother. And it’s a wonderful opportunity because you get to carve one hour out of your week to come to school and visit your little brother or sister.”

For Kadrian Shaw, who lives with his single mom and his brother and sister, it’s a chance to be around another adult role model.

” We read about the book. We talk about the book. We talk about what I want to be when I grow up,” Shaw explained.

“Most important thing is we talk about setting goals. What you want to be in your life,” said Chief Moffett. “For me, that’s the best aspect, to be able to tell the kids that they can be anything they want in their life, but they’ve got to succeed in the education environment to get there.”

Kadrian told Chief Moffett that he loves books about dragons, so the chief got him a stack of dragon books to read and each week, they talk about the books and look up words Kadrian’s not familiar with.

“Wisdom means good sense learned from experience,” said the Chief. “You’ve got to remember the vast majority of times kids will have a negative engagement with police, so this is a time when we can have a positive engagement with police.”

There are 10 officers in the “Bigs in Blue” program right now. Chief Moffett says that number will double by the end of the year.

“I’m a big believer in lead by example, so I can find one hour a week to come and be with my little brother. I think it’s important for my officers and others

in the community to do so as well. The officers and the kids, they both benefit from it. That's the greatest part about it. It's a give and take. Not just a take from both perspectives."

So, what does Kadrian want to be when he grows up?

"I'd like to be a firefighter," he said.

How does Chief Moffett feel about that?

"I'm trying to get him to go the police route, but we'll see how that goes," laughed Moffett.