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Carlson has partnered with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities and KIPP: Stand Academy in Minneapolis to launch Beyond School Walls, a program where fifth- and sixth-graders are matched with company employees for one-to-one mentoring.

Funded by the Curtis L. Carlson Family Foundation, this innovative youth mentoring program matches Carlson employees, who serve as Big Brothers or Big Sisters, with students from KIPP. The Big Brothers/Sisters will meet with their Little Brothers/Sisters for the first time February 3, at Carlson's world headquarters in Minnetonka.

"Partnering with schools and corporate supporters is critical to our success with helping children grow into confident, competent and caring adults," commented Gloria C. Lewis, President and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities. "Therefore, we are extremely grateful to the Curtis L. Carlson Family Foundation for its generous support of the Beyond School Walls program. Bringing students from KIPP to Carlson's world headquarters will most certainly enhance the positive effect of these students' mentoring experience."

Beyond School Walls, first launched in the Twin Cities region last fall, is a unique workplace mentoring program in which companies give back to their communities by hosting children from area schools at their offices. In this partnership, the Curtis L. Carlson Family Foundation offers resources and support for Carlson employees to participate in, and help to spread, Big Brothers Big Sisters' mission, which is to help children reach their potential through professionally supported, one-to-one relationships with mentors that have a measurable impact on youth.

"Both Carlson and Big Brothers Big Sisters work to build and invest in the future of local communities by supporting the development of children, who are tomorrow's leaders," said Barbara Carlson Gage, President and Chair of the Curtis L. Carlson Family Foundation. "Our continued partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters and the launch of this new program with KIPP: Stand Academy are a testament to that commitment."

"We are thrilled to partner with Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities in a collective effort to set our children up for success in school and in the community," said Daisy Mitchell, Executive Director at KIPP: Minnesota. "I am delighted that Carlson is making it possible for us to expand our Beyond School Walls program and provide our students with this amazing opportunity."