

## Trout to Bat for Big Brothers, Big Sisters

■ By DEIRDRE NEWMAN

**Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim** star outfielder **Mike Trout** will encourage his more than 1 million Twitter followers to consider mentoring.

It's a shift that stems from his new duties as ambassador for **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County and the Inland Empire**.



**Trout: takes relationship between nonprofit, Angels to new level with push for mentors**

Trout's decision to team up with the local chapter of the national nonprofit organization dovetailed with last week's national "I Am a Mentor Day!"

The local Big Brothers Big Sisters chapter had a prior relationship with the Angels, but Trout's partnership marks a major extension of the connection, according to **Melissa Beck**, chief executive of the nonprofit. Her chapter will leverage Trout's social media following to raise awareness of Big Brothers Big Sisters and its need for more mentors, she said.

The need for mentors in the Orange County Inland Empire area is "desperate," and Trout, who joined the Angels as a regular in 2012, is the ideal ambassador for recruitment, since he has such a solid reputation on and off the field, Beck said. His on-the-field credentials include the American League MVP award in 2014.

"We see Mike as the best conduit for recruiting mentors," she said. "He is wholesome and dedicated, and exactly the person we want to

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partner with.”

Trout, 24, splits his time between Orange County and New Jersey, where he grew up. His father—a history teacher and assistant baseball coach—instilled in his son that being a good person is of paramount importance, said **Tim Mead**, the Angels’ vice president of communications.

“He is the quintessential product of a good family.”

Trout chose Big Brothers Big Sisters after evaluating local opportunities to see where he could have an impact in the community, Mead said. Trout wasn’t available for comment last week.

“This young man has had so many expectations placed on him, and yet he has an uncanny ability to find the time and the day to just have an impact on so many people, especially young kids,” Mead said. “Not a day

goes by when we’re in season that he doesn’t pose for pictures, sign autographs, and spend time with fans.”

Trout will not be a mentor himself. His primary focus will be educating the community about Big Brothers Big Sisters’ one-on-one youth-mentoring programs. The local chapter has hundreds of kids on a wait list because it doesn’t have enough mentors, Beck said.

Trout’s local popularity extends to all three of the counties the local chapter serves—Orange, San Bernardino and Riverside. He’ll primarily be using Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to raise awareness about the need for more mentors, Beck said, adding that the social media outreach will hopefully produce a domino effect of more mentors and more donations.

“I hope it helps raise awareness of our organization and that in turn leads to donations and increased fundraising,” she said. “If we’re able to make even more matches because of Mike’s campaign, then we’ll be hitting the pavement pretty hard to fund those.”

The local chapter needs to hire a staff specialist

social worker for approximately every 80 matches it makes between a child and a mentor, she said. It matched more than 3,000 children with mentors last year.

The chapter’s fundraising goal this year is \$5 million. Last year, it raised \$4.7 million. It’s growing 10% to 15% per year in terms of staff and mentors, Beck said.

“If we want to keep that pace, we’re going to have to be more aggressive about recruiting mentors.”

Big Brothers Big Sisters’ relationship with the Angels has several facets. Angels games continue to be a popular outing for the mentors to take their little brothers or sisters to and is typically the first time the kids get to attend a professional sporting event, Beck said.

The local chapter has been a long-term grant recipient of the **Angels Baseball Foundation**. It’s also gotten grants for the past two years from **Accelerate Change Together Anaheim**, known as ACT Anaheim and launched in 2014 by the Angels team, the **Anaheim Ducks** and **Disneyland Resort**.