

Company Profile: Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Texas is a volunteer organization that helps to enrich, encourage and empower children to reach their highest potential through safe, positive one-on-one mentoring relationships.

Website: www.bbbsnt.org

Business Challenge: The North Texas chapter of Big Brothers Big Sisters covers 300 square miles and facilitates over 8,000 mentoring relationships each year, making the chapter the largest and most successful in the country. However, with size and success come manageability issues. As a community-based organization, social service professionals have to travel up to 50 miles to complete paperwork, fill out evaluations and conduct volunteer outreach, putting additional strain on employees and adding days, even weeks, to the mentor matching process.

Solution: The organization deployed a remote and automatic systems management solution from Kaseya that streamlines IT management and gives administrators complete access and visibility into all systems from a central management console. The more efficient and proactive IT management strategy improves application performance and ensures the health of the organization's servers and workstations, providing the North Texas chapter with a robust and reliable infrastructure to enable remote and mobile computing. As a result, the organization's social service professionals are able to log in to reporting applications from home and fill out paperwork without having to travel into the office.



Big Brothers Big Sisters

Kaseya Helps Not-For-Profit Organization Create Lasting Mentor Relationships

Several years ago, the North Texas chapter of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters organization merged with three neighboring regions, creating the largest district in both geographic area and number of mentoring relationships created. The region stretched east to west from the Arkansas border to Abilene and north to south from the Oklahoma border to the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex—an area totaling 300 square miles. The restructuring made the North Texas chapter more efficient by consolidating several layers of the organizational structure and reducing redundancy.

However, the shake-up had an unintended effect by adding to the commutes of the chapter's 200 employees who educate clients of offered services, recruit volunteers, match mentors with the children, monitor the relationships and run the business functions of the organization. These social service professionals are required to fill out mountains of paperwork every time they have contact with a volunteer or client—all in an effort to ensure safety for their children and volunteers as well as compliance with internal and 501(c) IRS regulations.

Instead of filling-out paperwork on a daily basis—requiring a trip to one of seven regional facilities—most social workers waited until they had multiple reasons to go in, usually once a week or even less frequent. The lag-time in completing paperwork became so inefficient that it took more than four months to match a volunteer with a child in need.

“Because of the sheer size of our region, we had some social service professionals driving more than 50 miles each way just to fill out paperwork,” said Sean Ryan, director of information services, Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Texas. “This just slowed down the process of finding volunteers, matching them with children and establishing the relationship. We knew there was a better way of doing things.”

Allowing employees to work from home or on the road seemed like a logical solution, but the IT infrastructure required to ensure the level of availability and performance that a distributed environment needs simply wasn't in the cards. The organization's current systems management strategy forced administrators to conduct manual hands on maintenance of workstations and servers in each facility, requiring hundreds of man hours and drive time that the organization couldn't afford. In addition, a distributed environment can quickly grow out of control, contributing to inventory management complexity and causing problems with not-for-profit compliance efforts. The size of the environment simply wouldn't allow for end users to reliably fill out paperwork from home.

Bridging the Distance Gap: Remote, Automatic Systems Management

Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Texas deployed a remote and automatic systems management solution from Kaseya that gives IT administrators complete visibility and access into all servers and workstations from a central management console—regardless of the physical location of the systems. The solution automates basic tasks like monitoring, patch management and software deployment, eliminating the need to physically visit each system to conduct maintenance as well as much of the repetition that used to take so much time.

“What a difference! We're able to efficiently maintain the health of the workstations and server infrastructure in all nine offices from our main headquarters in Dallas,” Ryan said. “We're also able to remotely manage any laptop through a secure Internet connection, ensuring that even our work-from-home employees are being monitored and protected.”

Kaseya's low-footprint client is deployed on nine Windows 2003 servers and 230 Windows XP Pro laptops and desktops distributed throughout the region, ensuring that the systems are meeting the organization's performance and availability service level agreements and social workers have access to the reporting applications they need to administer and monitor the mentor relationships. The servers also run the organization's accounting solution and donor database as well as Adobe design applications used to create educational and marketing materials.

Tasks like patch management and software deployment are now centralized and automated through the Kaseya solution. When Microsoft or one of Big Brothers Big Sisters' software vendors issues an upgrade or patch, Ryan is able to download it locally, test it on a machine and then pushes it out to the rest of the network at the touch of a button. Previously, administrators would have had to manually install the patch on each machine separately—a process that took days (or weeks depending on the complexity of the upgrade) and couldn't confirm that all systems were updated. By making patch management and software deployment more efficient, Ryan is able to ensure that all systems are patched correctly and updated with the latest software updates, making all systems—regardless of their proximity to headquarters or the data center—more robust.

The Kaseya solution automatically creates a complete and accurate view of the network, compiling a real-time repository of inventory information including each system's operating system, drive capacity, memory, applications installed, CPU utilization and endpoint security status. This transparent capability makes it easier to conduct inventory audits and prove compliance. As a not-for-profit organization, Big Brothers Big Sisters needs to update its 501(c) status with the IRS on a regular basis, requiring it to report all assets—especially donated machines.

The repository also allows the IT staff to maintain each system to set standards and policies and monitor it for dips in performance, ensuring that all systems are reliable and running optimally at all times.

"Kaseya eliminates a lot of the repetitive administration associated with systems management, freeing us to focus on other proactive projects," Ryan said. "As a whole, the IT organization is streamlined and is much more efficient with the service we provide our social workers and administrative staff. We're a much more healthy organization because of it."

Key Benefits

- Kaseya enables remote computing for over one hundred of remote workers, allowing them to file paperwork from home, making the matchmaking process more efficient and streamlined
- Servers and workstations are more reliable, more secure and more powerful
- There is more transparency throughout the IT environment, making it easier to conduct audits for not-for-profit compliance
- Remote computing makes employees more productive, resulting in the following benefits:
 - Paperwork is filed in several hours, down from an average of seven days
 - Volunteers are now matched with children in two months, down from 4 months
 - The chapter's cost per match has been reduced from \$1,300 per month to \$1,190 per month
 - Social workers conduct 20 volunteer interviews per week, up from 5 per week
 - The number of children matched with a volunteer has increased 35 percent from 2004 to 2006, and the organization is well on its way to quadrupling matches by 2010

"The Kaseya solution has had a huge affect on the way Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Texas matches children in need with adult mentors. We have real, tangible results showing the affect that efficient IT has on operations."

— Sean Ryan, dir. of information services, Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Texas

More Productive Staff Able to Create More Matches

The more reliable and robust IT environment maintained by the Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Texas, ensures that the organization's employees are able to access reporting applications from home, eliminating the need for them to drive to the office to fill out paperwork. As a result, volunteer evaluations, client feedback and meeting logs are filled out in a timely manner, usually the same day the contact occurred.

"The benefits of giving our employees reliable remote access has many trickle down affects," Ryan said. "The paperwork filed on time keeps the process moving, making the entire organization more efficient top to bottom."

According to an internal audit conducted in 2007, the average time it takes to match a child with an adult volunteer dropped in half from four months to two months since deploying the Kaseya solution. At the same time, the cost per child in the system was reduced by \$200 per month. Overall, the chapter increased the number of children that were matched up with an adult mentor from 4,500 in 2004 to more than 8,000 in 2007. The chapter has set a goal to create 15,000 matches by 2010—a beatable target thanks to increasing efficiencies in the matchmaking process.

The same audit found that employees are taking advantage of the ability to file paperwork from home. More than 100 social workers officially work away from the office, with more doing so occasionally. The average time to file paperwork dropped from seven days to less than one day, and employees report a 20 percent decrease in drive time over the course of a typical month.

IT is also seeing benefits, allowing staff to manage more systems in less time. Ryan estimates that his staff saves thousands of man hours each year through Kaseya's remote management and automation. Each administrator can now manage 150 systems, up from 75 prior to deploying the Kaseya solution. As a result, Ryan has been able to account for a \$600,000 savings in redundant equipment and inefficiencies, some of which will carry over year after year.

"The Kaseya solution has had a huge affect on the way Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Texas services our clients and matches children in need with adult mentors," Ryan said. "We're a much more efficient organization which carries over into client service. We have real, tangible results showing the affect that efficient IT has on operations."

The results that have recently caught the eye of the Big Brothers Big Sisters national office, leading it to award the Agency of the Year for 2007 to the North Texas region.