



Big Brothers Big Sisters Southeastern Pennsylvania

Interview with Penn Big Brother Paul Bottone

Paul Bottone, 21, and Marcus McIntosh, 9, have been matched since October of 2005. Paul reflects on his experience as a Big, and his relationship with Marcus.

First Day as a Big: It was smooth. Marcus wasn't particularly shy, and BBBS had set up a mock-interview where we had to guess each other's likes, dislikes, and wishes. I remember that he did not really grasp the idea, and he would always say what he liked instead of guessing what I liked, but at least it wasn't awkward.

How has your relationship with Marcus developed: Marcus and I have been compatible since the beginning; we both quickly realized that we were very similar, in that we both like aimless running and horseplay. Since the day I met him, he has changed remarkably little, although now he tests his limits a bit more, and I can see his rebel teenager about to reveal itself. I never hesitate to tell him what I think about that though, and he returns the favor.

Hardest thing about being matched and being a Big: Because Marcus and I are so close, and have known each other for so long, it is always hard to explain to him why I can't be there, whether it's for a holiday, a vacation, or even when I went to France for the semester. That's why I always make sure to go when I'm on campus, even if I have to make arrangements.

Best part about being matched and being a Big: I'd like to say that it is the good influence I will have on him, but truthfully, I don't know if he takes anything I say that seriously. Really, the best part is looking forward to our horseplay every week, and knowing that he's looking forward to it, too.

Favorite memory: The time I made him eat hummus on a carrot stick to expand his food horizons, and he immediately spit it up because he said that it tasted like poop.

Something the two of you have in common: Neither one of us is particularly coordinated, which is nice, because this way, instead of playing real, organized sports, we can just run around and tackle each other.

Activities you usually do together: Like I've said a hundred times, his favorite thing is horseplay, but more specifically, he likes it when I throw him over my shoulders or flip him upside-down. He requests each of those moves about a hundred times every time I visit, and he has been since I started.

Why did you join BBBS: I originally joined because I have a real big brother of my own, and I know what a considerable influence he has been on me, so I really liked the idea of having a little brother, for whom I would ideally be a good influence, or at least a friend.

Any advice you would have for new Bigs or people considering joining: Little kids are both more and less intimidating than you think. They are ready to idolize you and emulate your every move, but they can also be fickle. Ultimately, though, they're good and fun and the part that makes them love you wins out, so you can never get discouraged.