

BBBS NEWS 2·0·0·8



WINTER 2008



Dear Friends,

Now, more than ever, the young people in our communities need us to reach down in order to lift them up – to celebrate their development and to brighten their future. Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities (BBBS) needs you to dig a little deeper and give a little more to support them as they rise to each new challenge, making better choices and becoming stronger, more positive citizens.

All young people need someone to encourage them to dream big, and in these tough times, we need to do even more. The good news is that ours is a movement with a role for everyone. Whether you support us financially, give our Little Brothers and Sisters your time and expertise or advocate on

our behalf, please accept our deepest gratitude. With growing economic pressures on families and communities across America, the need for all of us to join the movement is vital to securing a healthy, safe and productive future for our children.

There are many ways to support what our movement achieves – results that make a real difference in young people's lives, increasing the chances that they will succeed in school, solve problems without violent behavior and avoid engaging in illegal activities. In addition to those who get involved as a Big Brother or Sister, the movement also includes corporate partners, event volunteers, professional advisors, private donors, board members and others willing to do what they can to provide support.

Next month is National Mentoring Month, and we invite you to join our movement. You can do so by simply recognizing a citizen you know who is helping children increase their sense of confidence, competence and caring. Go to BigBrothersBigSisters.org and give a local, unsung hero an opportunity to be recognized nationally. While nominating your favorite Big Citizen, you also will be able to select from a number of ways that you can do your part to make a difference and encourage others to do what they can as well.

You are making a BIG difference in our community by helping us to provide hope and friendship to young people across the Greater Twin Cities. We can't easily change the world children grow up in, but we can work together to change the way the young people in our community see their world and how they interact with it.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our efforts. I am asking you to give a little more during these challenging times, and using the enclosed donation envelope, help us lift up a child and give him or her hope for years to come.

Sincerely,

Gloria C. Lewis
President and CEO

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities

ARE YOU A

FORMER BOARD MEMBER OR
VOLUNTEER (BIG, COMMITTEE
MEMBER OR EVERYDAY
ADVOCATE) OF:

BIG BROTHERS

(St. Paul or Minneapolis)

BIG SISTERS

(St. Paul or Minneapolis)

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

of the Greater Twin Cities

WE'RE PLANNING A BIG
REUNION FOR JUNE 7, 2009
AND WANT TO INCLUDE
YOU IN THE PARTY.



If you received this newsletter in the mail, we must have your address, but please share your phone number and/or email address with us also.

Additionally, if you know of others who should be included in this celebration, pass the word to them or contact Kate Ray or Pam Olson so that we can make sure our files are accurate and complete.

KATE RAY

BBBS DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATE
KRAY@BIGSTWINCITIES.ORG
651-789-2493

PAM OLSON

FORMER BBBS BOARD MEMBER
& BIG SISTER
OLSON1220@AOL.COM

MATCH SPOTLIGHT: BIG JOHN & LITTLE JOHN



John McCarthy became involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters nearly three years ago after reading an article in the *Star Tribune*. The article highlighted a former classmate of John's who was a Big Brother for a former Minnesota Gophers Basketball player. "I was touched by their relationship, and it motivated me to take the first step in becoming involved with this great organization," John explains. He called Big Brothers Big Sisters the next day and was soon introduced to his new Little Brother, John. Due to the coincidence of having the same name, they refer to each other as "Big John" and "Little John."

Big and Little John are part of the School-based Program, which means they meet for an hour once a week at Little John's school. Big John has been dedicated to visiting Little John on a regular basis, and they even keep in contact over the summer break through the BBBS Pen Pal Program. In one of his letters, Little John mentioned that he was learning to juggle, and the next time the two got together, Big John brought his juggling balls from home.

Since their match began, Big John has witnessed Little John take his school work more seriously and noticed his confidence soar. Gayle, Little John's mother, has noticed that her son has become more independent and embraced many good values in the years since first meeting his Big Brother. Their relationship also has made an important difference in Big John's life. John says, "I believe Little John has made me a better parent. I can credit Little John with assisting me in becoming more patient with my own kids and recognizing their great qualities."

Respect and appreciation is apparent in this match. When Little John was asked what he would change about his Big Brother, he replied, "He is perfect and always makes me feel very special." Big John mentioned that he deeply appreciates the positive outlook that Little John has about life and how that is reflected in his respect for others and the way he speaks about his mom. Little John has committed to Big John that one day he will become a Big Brother and pass on his great qualities to another lucky kid.

When asked what he enjoys most about being matched with Little John, Big John replied, "It is very rewarding to see how a little commitment of time can make such a positive difference in someone's life. I truly believe that I'm the big winner in our mentoring relationship."

BIGS FOR KIDS CHALLENGE!

In August and September, we challenged current Bigs to refer new volunteers to our agency as part of our Bigs for Kids Challenge. We are happy to announce that 33 current Bigs participated in the challenge, bringing in nearly 40 new volunteers. Big Sisters Sarah Scullin and Adrian Watson are the winners of the challenge, referring the most new volunteers to BBBS! Sarah and Adrian will each receive two free tickets to our annual awards Gala in March 2009.

Sarah, who is part of a Big Couple, has been matched with her Little Brother for a year-and-a-half. Sarah was ready to win this challenge from the beginning. She says, "I cannot imagine another volunteer opportunity that is as rewarding, meaningful and fun as being a Big. It is for these reasons and a million more that I do not hesitate when asked to recruit new members into the BBBS family."

Adrian, who was only recently matched with her Little Sister, was competing in the challenge while she was waiting to be matched. According to Adrian, "I decided to become involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters because I really wanted to make a difference in someone's life. I am very excited to build my relationship with my Little Sister and hope that this continues to be a rewarding experience for both of us."

A BIG thanks to all our Bigs who participated in the Bigs for Kids Challenge.

LORENZO IS WAITING FOR A BIG BROTHER!



I want a big brother
because I can play and
talk with him.

PARENT SPOTLIGHT: THE SMIDZIKS

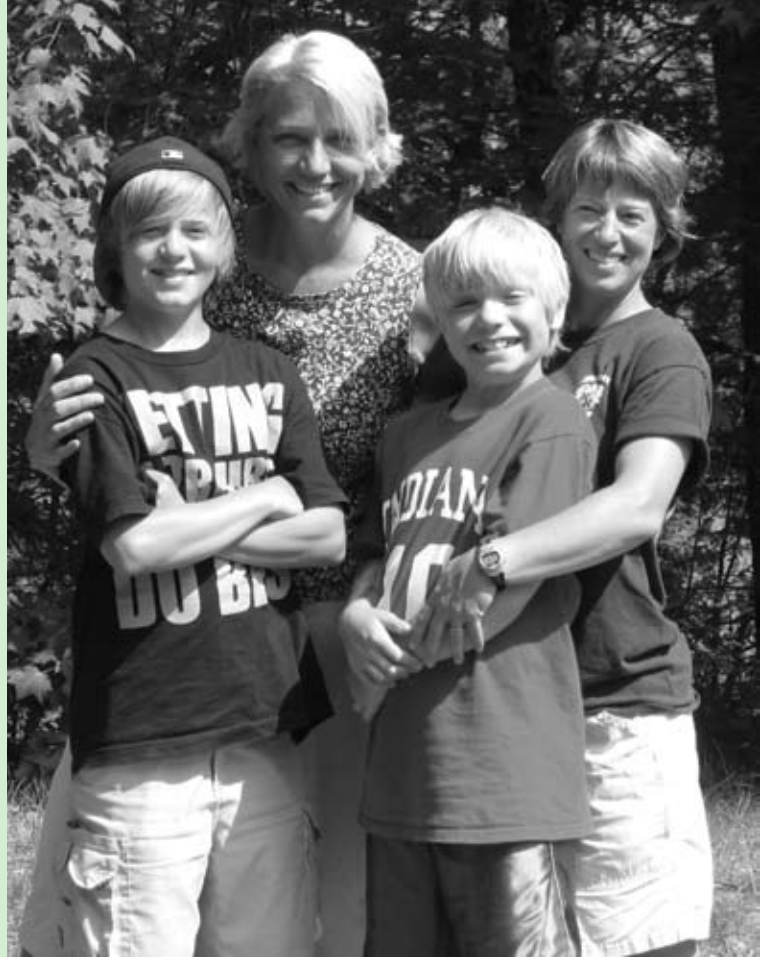
As their sons, Corbin (age 10) and Quintin (age 12), reached their pre-teen years, Laura and Linda Smidzik felt that their sons needed some positive, male role models in their lives. Subsequently, while attending the Twin Cities Pride Festival a few years ago, the couple stopped by a Big Brothers Big Sisters booth. It quickly became clear how they could help fill the “male void” in their sons’ lives. Soon after visiting the booth, Laura and Linda’s sons were matched with Big Brothers, and two powerful relationships began.

The difference Corbin and Quintin’s Big Brothers have made in their lives has taken Laura and Linda by storm. Whether going to the Humane Society to walk a dog or to a friend’s house to work on a car, the time their sons spend with their Big Brothers is invaluable and “impossible to put into words,” reflects Laura. Corbin cherishes the time he and his Big Brother, John, spend fishing and tubing in Northern Minnesota each summer. Quintin’s Big Brother, Rob, was very involved with his junior high school graduation and has even traveled to Red Wing to catch one of Quintin’s hockey games. Laura notes that her sons are proud to have mentors like John and Rob in their lives.

Since being matched with their Bigs, Linda and Laura have noticed increased confidence, care and respect in their children. The pride Corbin and Quintin exude makes their parents proud. Laura says, “Rob and John are extended family, and it’s beyond awesome.”

Laura believes so deeply in the work that BBBS does to foster relationships between youth and adults that she has become an advocate for the organization. She led a workshop at the Rainbow Family Conference about the work we do and encouraged members of her own non-profit’s Board of Directors to become Bigs ... which they did!

Looking at the long-term influence of their sons’ friendships with their Big Brothers, Laura and Linda hope their boys will become adult men who want to give back because somebody gave to them. Of their experience, Laura says, “Rob and John are filling up a place in them Linda and I can never fill. We are very grateful for what they have brought into our sons’ lives.”



ROB & QUINTIN



JOHN & CORBIN

FEDERATED GOLF TOURNAMENT

As one of Minnesota's largest charitable fundraising events, the Federated Challenge for Kids of Minnesota supports Big Brothers Big Sisters in a big way. The Federated Challenge, co-chaired by Federated Insurance Chairman Al Annexstad and his wife Cathy, raises funds to support the work of the three Big Brothers Big Sisters organizations in Minnesota.



This year's Federated Challenge began on Sunday, August 24. Guests attended a black-tie dinner with both silent and live auctions at The Depot in Minneapolis. The following day, participants competed in a golf tournament held at Interlachen Country Club. Both morning and afternoon tee-times were offered this year to accommodate the growing number of participants.

With proceeds upward of \$2.4 million, the Federated Challenge makes a tremendous difference in the lives of young people across Minnesota. The funds from this event that will be allocated to our agency will provide substantial financial support for our work, helping us provide a mentor to every young person who needs or wants one.



GREAT WATERS GOLF TOURNAMENT

On Monday, September 15, golfers showed their support for Big Brothers Big Sisters at the 7th Annual Great Waters Golf Tournament held at Mississippi Dunes Golf Course. Attendees enjoyed a dinner and auction following a round of golf. Prizes at the auction included Wild tickets and wonderful restaurant certificates.

Sean O'Byrne, owner of Great Waters Brewing Company, served as the host of this event. Sean and his siblings were all Little Brothers as children, and through this event, he has generously given back to BBBS. This year, Sean offered a new challenge to each of the 75 attendees. He committed to donating \$100 to BBBS for every person who becomes a Big Brother or Sister.

This kind of advocacy in the community makes Big Brothers Big Sisters the outstanding organization that it is. The \$7,215 raised at this year's event will allow us to continue enriching young people's lives through one-to-one friendships.

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN



NICOLE & KATIE

This year, our School-based matches chose fighting hunger as the theme for the summer. In keeping with this theme, Bigs and Littles held a food drive in June. Matches collected 122 pounds of food, which was enough to serve approximately 91 meals to local individuals and families, and donated it to the Emergency Food Shelf Network.

Continuing with their efforts to fight hunger, the School-based Program organized an event for matches at Feed My Starving Children (FMSC). FMSC is a non-profit organization whose mission is to feed children in more than 50 countries around the world. They welcome children and adult volunteers to hand-pack meals designed specifically for children who are malnourished. On July 12, matches gathered at FMSC facilities in Eagan and Brooklyn Park to help fight childhood hunger. About 75 participants volunteered their time between the two locations.

The food drive and FMSC event were a huge success. Matches had the chance to spend time with one another while helping to eliminate hunger locally and internationally.

HIP HOP DANCE



MARY & ASHLEY

This past summer, the Community-based Match Support team hosted a Hip Hop class for ten matches. BBBS partnered with instructor Kenna Sarge to put together a series of three Hip Hop dance sessions. At the first two sessions, Kenna worked with the matches to create two choreographed Hip Hop routines. At the third and final session held on July 1, matches performed these two routines as well as a short “free-style” routine in front of family, friends and Big Brothers Big Sisters staff at Central Gym in Minneapolis.

Guests enjoyed snacks and beverages prior to the event and cheered enthusiastically while each match showed off their hard work. Participants went home with a framed photo of their match as well as a Big Brothers Big Sisters Hip Hop Team 2008 T-shirt.

The event was a great success. One Big sent a note to BBBS, saying, “It was incredible for me to see my Little Sister so confident in herself. She was glowing during the performance. Thank you for giving us this opportunity.”

SUMMER PICNICS

This past summer, the Community-based Program hosted three picnics for matches to get together and have a great time. The picnics were held in Shakopee, Lake Elmo and St. Louis Park in order to accommodate matches from all over the Twin Cities metro area.

More than 300 people attended the picnics this summer, and all were treated to lots of food, fun and games. Each picnic featured a 30-foot blow-up obstacle course, a bungee run, potato sack races, balloon burst, snow cones, face painting, and arts and crafts. All of the picnics ended with a raffle drawing that included tickets to sporting events, admission to the Minnesota Zoo, books and games.

The picnics were an easy and fun way for matches throughout the metro to meet each other, have fun and win cool prizes! Overall, the picnics were a great success, and many matches are already looking forward to next summer’s picnics.



AZARAIA & KELLY

MARKET FIESTA

On Saturday, October 18, Bigs and Littles gathered at the Midtown Global Market on Lake Street in Minneapolis for dance lessons, a cooking demonstration and lots of fun!

While first apprehensive to dance in front of others, all of the Littles soon found their step. They learned the Merengue, the Salsa and the Cha Cha. Passersby at the market definitely noticed our group moving and grooving on the dance floor!

After the dancing, the ten participating matches enjoyed a cooking demonstration from a chef at Salsa a la Salsa. Bigs and Littles were able to watch the chef prepare a typical Hispanic dish and were then treated to tasty samples. Matches were given “Market Money” to be used in the market for lunch. They also completed a scavenger hunt, which brought them through the various venues at the market in search of specific items.

Everyone who participated thoroughly enjoyed this fun and exciting cultural experience!

ANNUAL MEETING



HILL HARPER

On November 21st, BBBS hosted its 2nd Annual Meeting, *Painting a Brighter Future*, which featured an entertaining emcee, delicious food, inspiring words from an acclaimed keynote speaker and entertaining stories from several Little Brothers and Sisters who attended the event with their Big Brothers and Sisters. These stories about the special relationships formed between Bigs and Littles were the highlight of the luncheon. Several Bigs and Littles talked to attendees about their favorite activities, what their friendship means to them and how their mentoring relationship has a profound, positive affect on everyone involved in BBBS' programs.

Keynote speaker Hill Harper spoke passionately about helping young people in our communities grow into strong, capable adults. Harper, recipient of numerous awards recognizing his work as an actor, author and philanthropist, has received several awards including two NAACP Image Awards and the prestigious American Library Association Award, which named his New York Times bestselling book, *Letters To A Young Brother: MANifest Your Destiny*, the Best Book for Youth and Teens in 2007. He also is a proud Big Brother and national Big Brothers Big Sisters advocate.

Sheletta Brundidge, host of *CrossRoads* on KSTC-TV and recent Emmy winner for Best Independent Blog, emceed the event.

The event was made possible by the following corporate sponsors:



MATCH UPDATE: WILLIE



In our last newsletter Willie was waiting for a Big Brother. We are happy to report that Willie was recently matched with Big Couple Mike and Katie. We had the chance to catch up with Katie, Mike and Willie to see how things were going.

When asked why she decided to get involved with BBBS, Katie replied, "I had always volunteered for other mentoring programs in high school and college and gained great satisfaction from it. I enjoyed it so much, I decided I wanted to be involved in mentoring again." Mike adds, "I thought it would be a great opportunity

to make a positive difference in a young person's life." Mike and Katie are looking forward to bike riding and going to the zoo with their new Little Brother. They both agree that these types of activities are more fun when done with their Little Brother.

Little Brother Willie is just as excited about his Big Couple as they are about him. According to Willie, he has already done some fun things with Mike and Katie, such as playing basketball and going to the apple orchard.

Even though Mike and Katie have only been matched with their Little Brother for a short time, they already agree it was a great decision to get involved. Katie says, "The signing up process to become a Big was easy, and the orientation was a lot of fun. For anyone who is considering becoming a Big, do it! It has already been a very rewarding experience."



ANNEXSTAD SCHOLARSHIP: JESSICA

Al and Cathy Annexstad personally understand the positive difference that youth mentoring makes, which is why they have been committed to supporting Big Brothers Big Sisters for many years. They also have the strong desire to personally help some of these young people fulfill their dreams of attending college. In 2001, the Annexstad family established The Annexstad Family Foundation, which provides financial support for higher education to former Little Brothers and Sisters.

Since that time, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities has worked with 19 students who have received the scholarship. Seventeen of those students received

the scholarship in the last two years. The growth in the number of students is in large part due to the work of BBBS' Education and Enrichment program, led by William Tully. This program educates Littles about the possibilities of post-secondary education and assists them in applying to schools and scholarship programs as well as going on campus visits. The current Annexstad Family Foundation scholars attend ten different public and private colleges and universities across the state of Minnesota.

The scholarship is available to former BBBS Littles who have shown strong academic performance in high school, possess quality character and leadership, and demonstrate significant financial need. The program's goal is to provide funds to cover tuition, fees, room, board, books and all other costs associated with attending college.

Jessica, a freshman at Minnesota State University at Mankato, is the first Little from the School-based Program to receive the scholarship. She also is the first in her family to attend college. In her application, Jessica spoke of her "whatever it takes" attitude to achieve the best for her future. When asked of her plans upon receipt of the scholarship, Jessica said, "I want to give back and show other kids that live in [the rough neighborhood I grew up in] that they can succeed too."

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship has provided Jessica and 18 other former Little Brothers and Sisters from our agency the opportunity to realize their dreams of attending college. Jessica hopes that leading by example, the way her Big Sister taught her, will spawn a long-standing tradition of success that she will pass down from generation to generation.

Big Brothers Big Sisters would like to thank the Annexstad Family Foundation for living up to their mission statement, "Giving hope and opportunity to bright minds with big dreams."



PHOTO BY ANNEXSTAD FAMILY FOUNDATION

SAVE THE DATE! 2009 DAY ON THE HILL

PURPOSE: EDUCATE LEGISLATORS AND RENEW STATE FUNDING FOR MENTORING CHILDREN OF PRISONERS PROGRAM

LOCATION: MINNESOTA STATE CAPITOL BUILDING ROTUNDA, SAINT PAUL

DATE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2009

TIME: 12:00 - 1:00PM



MATCH UPDATE: ROOK

Rook, one of the Waiting Littles that we featured in our last newsletter, was recently matched with a Big Brother, Jay Sentz. A few weeks ago, we caught up with Jay to see how things were going.

As a donor, Jay was involved with our agency before becoming a Big Brother. Regarding his decision to become a Big, Jay says, "I was looking for an opportunity that would allow me to experience the results of donating my time and money. The chance to be a friend and a positive role model to a young person seemed to be the opportunity I was looking for." Jay is looking forward to going to the many museums, historical sites, sporting events, theatre performances and parks that the Twin Cities has to offer with his new Little Brother. Jays says, "I'm also looking forward to this upcoming wrestling season and watching Rook compete. From what I hear, he has a natural talent on the mat!" Jay is happy to finally be a Big Brother and would like to thank his Match Support Coordinator. Jay states, "The knowledge, dedication and support from staff have really solidified my decision to volunteer for Big Brothers Big Sisters!"



NOMINATE A BIG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Now accepting nominations for BIG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR. As we focus on our nations' most vulnerable children during a time when children confront serious risks — growing school drop-out rates and neighborhoods suffering from poverty and violence — we want to pay tribute to people who are helping kids beat the odds. To nominate anyone who is helping children break negative cycles, please go to www.bigbrothersbigsisters.org.

BOWL FOR KIDS' SAKE



The 2008 Community Day Bowl for Kids' Sake event was held on Saturday, November 1, at AMF Southtown Lanes. Guests enjoyed an afternoon of bowling, giveaways and prizes! The event had a Halloween theme, and kids and adults alike got into the Halloween spirit. Princesses, pirates, superheroes and even a penguin were in attendance. Participants formed bowling teams of four or five and raised more than \$16,000 prior to the event through an online donation system. All proceeds go toward matching young people with mentors.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT: THE LINDHOLMS

Dean Lindholm and Mary Jo Haugan Lindholm became donors in 2004. Their involvement with our agency started after Mary Jo's sister, Barb Alfrey, who works for BBBS, explained the positive effects that youth mentoring has on both Bigs and Littles. According to Dean, "We believe in the power of one-to-one relationships that are exemplified in BBBS' mentoring programs."

Although Dean and Mary Jo have never been Bigs, they have recognized the significant difference they can make in a young person's life by donating to BBBS. Mary Jo comments, "The world continues to move faster and faster, and we see that the opportunities and challenges for young people are bigger than when we were their age. We believe in the urgency of addressing all the needs of young people, so they are prepared to become future leaders with the opportunity to lead us into a world of peace."

Dean and Mary Jo have decided to take their donations to BBBS to the next level. When they began to write their will a few years ago, they became stuck when the attorney asked who they wanted to choose as their beneficiaries. Dean and Mary Jo do not have any children, nieces or nephews, so the obvious choices were not options for them. After some reflection and contemplation, they came to the realization that there may be a way to look at parenting on a larger scale. Dean explains, "We thought one way parents plan for their children is to support their college education, and we realized that we could do that!" Consequently, Dean and Mary Jo decided to create a Big Brothers Big Sisters Scholarship that will focus on aiding students from North Minneapolis and its immediate suburbs because Mary Jo went to high school at Minneapolis North, and Dean attended Brooklyn Center. Mary Jo notes, "Through our scholarship plan, BBBS has allowed us to have the honor of being able to participate in a traditional parental role. This has been an absolute joy for us!"



BBBS would like to thank Dean and Mary Jo for their generous contributions and dedication to fostering meaningful relationships. Without their donations and the valuable financial support received from all our donors, our mission would be immeasurably more difficult to achieve.



YOU MAY SUPPORT OUR WORK IN A VARIETY OF WAYS:

Gifts of cash, stocks or bonds ensure the continuity of our work.

Make a planned gift to support the future of the agency.

Give in memory of a loved one.

Such gifts may provide estate and tax benefits. We have professionals available to help you develop the most efficient financial plan.

Your financial support of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities makes a BIG difference. Please help us continue to offer hope, friendship and fun to the young people in our communities. Donate today by calling 651-789-2400 or donate online at www.bigstwincities.org.



INVEST IN OUR

CHILDREN

GET A BIG RETURN

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS!

This list names only a few of the people and organizations whose generosity makes it possible for BBBS to serve its mission. Due to space constraints, we are unable to list everyone who provided support for our work. Thank you to all our supporters.

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