

# the link

A Big Brothers Big Sisters Publication - Fall 2009



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Hot Summer  
Getaway: Big  
Fun for Littles

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Big Socials  
Bring Bigs  
Together

## A BIG DAY OF FIRSTS FOR A LITTLE

*"Together, we have done many things that were firsts for both of us, but nothing had prepared us for our trip to Houston..." (page 5)*



## Big Brothers Big Sisters

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Big Brothers Big Sisters is a donor-supported volunteer organization that places caring adults in the lives of children in one-to-one mentoring relationships. Through the positive impact of those friendships, children with a Big Brother or Big Sister are more likely to graduate from high school and less likely to begin using drugs, begin using alcohol or engage in negative conflict. Contact us at 888.887.BIGS or visit us on the web at [www.bbbstx.org](http://www.bbbstx.org).

## Your New "Link" to Big Brothers Big Sisters



Dear Bigs, Littles and Parents,

I love this time of year! Cooler weather and lots of fun events. And it is during this time that we are able to introduce more Littles to their new Bigs than during the rest of the year combined.

We at Big Brothers Big Sisters know that for mentoring to achieve its fullest impact, our match relationships must be safe, strong and long lasting. We're dedicated to doing all we can to link you to activities and resources that will help you achieve the best experience. And this newsletter's new name, ***the link***, demonstrates that focus.

Over the next several months ***the link*** will begin appearing on all of our communications with you, including the weekly emails from your Match Support Specialist and a newly designed website, which is being redesigned to better serve you. So when you see the logo realize we're trying to connect you to something that will help your match.

***The link*** information will include dates for match activities, Big Socials and trainings. Discounts on tickets and ideas for fun activities will also be included. Information about making your match better and overcoming any difficulties as well as opportunities for community service will all be located at ***the link***.

We hope to link you to anything that might lead to the "safe, strong and long lasting" match relationship that will make a real difference.

We hope you enjoy the newsletter's new format. Please let us know what you think about these and the other planned changes. Send an email to [thelink@bbbtx.org](mailto:thelink@bbbtx.org) to share your comments and suggestions. We are here for you, and your feedback is appreciated!

Also, check out the beginnings of the new website at [www.link4bigs.org](http://www.link4bigs.org).

All the best to each of you!

Michael O'Teter, LMSW  
Vice President of Program

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## Upcoming Match Activities - Mark Your Calendars!

### MEDIEVAL TIMES

Tuesday, December 15

Medieval Times— 2021 N. Stemmons Fwy, Dallas, 75207

Bigs: \$10 / Littles—FREE

*Swords clash, axes ring, as one Knight will seek the title of champion in a spectacle not witnessed for centuries. The splendor, the pageantry and the romance of a time long remembered come to life at Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament.*

### HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Saturday, December 5

*Join other matches for holiday celebrations across north Texas. Have fun playing board games, making arts and crafts and enjoying lunch and other holiday refreshments.*

### VOYAGE! TEEN CONFERENCE

Saturday, February 20

*Join other Big Brothers Big Sisters Teen Littles and their Bigs for our annual Teen Conference at the University of Texas at Arlington. Mark your calendars now for this exciting event.*

*For more details and how to register, go to [www.link4bigs.org](http://www.link4bigs.org)*

## Southwest Airlines and the Texas Rangers Foundation provide Hot Summer Getaway for Essay Winners



In the early hours of July 29, ten matches made their way to Dallas Love Field airport. Each winners of the Hot Summer Getaway essay contest held by Big Brothers Big Sisters, they eagerly anticipated the once-in-a-lifetime adventure that waited thanks to Southwest Airlines and the Texas Rangers Foundation. At 8 a.m., a Southwest Airlines flight filled with Bigs and their Littles (many of whom had never been on a plane) lifted off and a fun-filled journey began.

After landing in Houston, the group headed to Johnson Space Center where they received a personalized tour of NASA and then experienced Space Center Houston. Next, the group traded space suits for sea legs as they headed to the Kemah Boardwalk. A fine-dining lunch at Babin's Seafood House was followed by The Boardwalk Beast- a boat trip to remember! Not only did the boat ride provide a complete head-to-toe soaking in Galveston Bay, but the roar of the engine and the unpredictable left and right turns kept everyone laughing. Once on dry land, the matches couldn't resist the carnival atmosphere of the roller coaster and other boardwalk rides.

The day ended with another fabulous dinner at the Aquarium and a smooth flight home on Southwest Airlines. A few weeks later, the group reunited at the Rangers Ballpark in Arlington on August 19 to watch the Texas Rangers take on the Minnesota Twins for an amazing end to a fabulous Hot Summer Getaway!

# A Big Day of Firsts for a Little

Dana St. Germain



**A**lmost two years ago, I met my Little Brother, 8-year-old Latrell. Together, we have done many things that were firsts for both of us, but nothing prepared us for our trip to Houston in July.

The essay I wrote for the contest explained how this opportunity would expose Latrell to a world outside of Fort Worth. What I didn't know was how it would expose me to the many things in our world that Latrell hasn't seen, and to what a significant role I play in his life.

In preparation for the trip, we read books about Buzz Aldrin, talked about TSA, talked about NASA, and even stranger danger. But, it was the little things on the trip that threw us the biggest curve balls.

I thought that his first flight and first visit to a city other than Fort Worth would have the greatest impact on Latrell. But, when he asked if, at 30,000 feet, we were moving or the clouds were moving... I knew we were in for an adventure. When questions like these hit me all day long, it really opened my eyes to his world and how much this trip would change both of us.

When we touched down at Hobby Airport, Latrell thought we were back at Love Field. He was ecstatic when he boarded his first tour bus! He had never seen TVs inside a bus before! That excitement only grew at the Johnson Space Center when he realized the magnitude of our universe.

Lunch at Babin's in Kemah also brought forth a barrage of firsts... his first crab cake, first peel-and-eat shrimp, first stingray, first calamari, and first crab and spinach dip. At the end of the meal he asked for a napkin. I pointed out the linen napkins we had placed in our laps at the start of the meal and then wiped my hands on mine. The look on his face made me realize that he had never eaten at a restaurant with linen napkins.

We then headed out to the Gulf of Mexico for a boat ride. Covered in salt water by the time

we docked, his first words to me were, "That water was nasty, why does it taste so nasty?" I had not considered that he had never encountered salt water. I then explained the difference between the water in Fort Worth and the water in the ocean.

After dinner, we headed back to Dallas on Southwest Airlines. During the flight, we reflected on the day. I thought he would talk about the plane and the ocean, but the little things enamored him the most. Latrell enjoyed the new variety of food, the other children, and the volunteers more than everything else. The trip was amazing and changed both of our perspectives about each other and the world. I now realize that impacting Latrell is more about the small moments and details. He learned that the world and universe is huge and limited only by imagination. He learned that he loves fried shrimp and that the peel-n-eat shrimp is too much work! I learned to never overlook small details that may be very important. And, I was reminded what a blessing it is to have the opportunity to be Latrell's mentor and friend.



# BIG LEAGUE

## COMMITTEES

### Invite Bigs to Volunteer

Big Brothers Big Sisters' "booster club" for our volunteers, matches and the agency's mission is seeking to engage volunteer Bigs in new and expanded ways. Volunteer and staff leadership has been identified and now Bigs are being asked to register to help in ways that match their interests and experiences. Four new committees have been formed:

**Volunteer Workforce** - Think how much more the agency could do for kids if we empower our many Bigs in greater ways! This committee seeks to identify an "army" of Bigs who are willing to occasionally help out with our agency events or host neighborhood pick-up games and match activities..



**Speakers Bureau** - No one is more effective at telling the Big Brothers Big Sisters story than our Bigs, Littles and Parents. Those who sign up for this committee are voicing their willingness to speak up on the agency's behalf to help us recruit new Bigs, raise funds, and inspire our Littles. Anyone interested will receive training to help maximize the impact of their story.

**Volunteer Socials/Recruitment** - This committee will help organize socials and happy hours that will pull together Bigs for fun and support AND encourage them to invite their friends to join in the Big Brothers Big Sisters fun.

**Resource Aquisition** - Many of our Bigs have connections and passion. Volunteers on this committee will help with the agency's fundraising and solicit donations for silent auctions, the Back-to-School Supply Drive and the Holiday Gift Drive

Bigs who would like to join one of these new volunteer groups are asked to register on line at [www.bbbs.org/bigleague](http://www.bbbs.org/bigleague). A Big League officer will contact you.



## BIG SOCIALS Provide Networking and Socializing for Bigs and Friends

**Big Brothers and Big Sisters** filled The Boardroom in Dallas with no intention of discussing business - not formally anyway. On Thursday, July 30, this Big Social Happy Hour was held at one of Dallas' premier hotspots and provided Bigs the chance to meet other Bigs in a relaxed social setting. Over 250 mentors and their friends enjoyed an evening of networking and socializing. The event was low-key and a fun way for Bigs to connect with each other.

Not all "Big Socials" involve the Happy Hour atmosphere. On July 29, Dallas County launched a Big Coffee Social. It was held at Crooked Tree Coffee House, an independent free-trade coffee venue in Dallas that has the feel of a coffee house on a college



campus. The Coffee Social provided a more intimate setting for Bigs to come together. A large crowd of Bigs came and shared stories about their matches, compared ideas for creative ways to spend time with their Littles and learned more about other Bigs in the area. It was also a great opportunity for friends of Bigs that attended to learn more about our agency, our mentoring programs and upcoming events.

Big Socials are open to all Big Brothers and Big Sisters and they are encouraged to bring a friend. Look out for more Big Socials in the near future!

***If you would like to know more about these events or serve on the Committee that plans them: please contact Sheila Marlow: [smarlow@bbbstx.org](mailto:smarlow@bbbstx.org)***



### **Next Big Social: Denton**

*Denton Bigs are invited to join us for a wine tasting event on October 22 at Avalon's in Castle Hills. Watch your email for details!*



## ***STEP into Our Future!***

Last year, teens from across the Metroplex joined STEPS, Big Brothers Big Sisters' unique college/career preparatory program for teens. STEPS made a BIG impact on teens through informative academic assessments to character enrichment workshops and you could be next.

Little Sister Aleeshia said, "Every time we go to an event, I think it's going to be boring. But we always have fun... and the mini-burgers...mmmmm."

Of course, mini-burgers are just one of the many highlights from the year-end celebration reception that brought program sponsors and partners together to honor the teens, parents and Bigs in the program.

Once again, STEPS is asking all seventh through twelfth grade Littles to join us! Whether you live in Collin, Dallas, Denton or Tarrant county, STEPS wants you. Why not take this fun approach to doing well in school and winning fantastic prizes while you do it! **Go to [bbbs.org/steps](http://bbbs.org/steps) to learn more...sign up!**

## ***SAVE THE DATES!***

### **STEPS Leadership Workshop Saturday, December 5, 2009**

Join STEPS in its first-ever Leadership Conference as teens across Dallas/ Fort Worth come together in a one-day workshop. Attendees will serve as the Inaugural Leadership Committee and participate in a variety of activities, such as: deciding on the cause area theme for 2010, brainstorming ways to impact the community, leading a peer-to-peer breakout session at the annual Teen Conference and much more.

### **Road Trip: STEPS takes over the University of Texas Saturday, March 6, 2010**

Join STEPS for a college tour like no other! This BIG day full of fun offers an opportunity to be a Longhorn for a day — see the university's literary and art collections, visit many of the 400+ education and enrichment activities, learn about its cutting-edge scientific research, experience UT history and traditions, interact with faculty, staff and students, and march with the Longhorn band! Transportation provided.

## Donors Make BIG Impact with 2009 School Supply Drive



Through the generous efforts of our dedicated donors, volunteers and staff, more than 900 children in North Texas were provided schools supplies from the 2009 Big Brothers Big Sisters School Supply Drive.

Each child received a backpack full of supplies suitable for whatever grade they were about to enter. Parents and kids were both thrilled with the new backpacks in addition to all the other great supplies. Some kids in Denton and Collin counties even got brand new shoes thanks to JC Penney and the Jr. League of Plano.

A special thanks goes out to the employees of Lockheed Martin. They made it possible for every child on our list to receive a backpack. Other notable donors include Pariveda Solutions, Thompson & Knight, LLP and Walmart.

We'd like to thank all of our generous donors and volunteers and recognize them for their awesome contributions: Arlington Police, Grand Prairie Noratorium, Starbucks, TCU Athletics, Kakes for Kids, John Anderson, Hannah Stone, Justin Shannon, Carrie Beckner, Deann Badura, Jeannette Mah, Rose Kirk, Patti Taylor, Ben and Monica Turner, Darla Russell, Thomas Sicks, William Sisk, Patricia Foti, Noel Dietrich, Jim Batten, Michelle Cox, Phong Do, Lockheed Martin, Pariveda Solutions, Thompson & Knight, LLP, Greystar Properties, Avenida Crossing, Walmart, Irving Mall, ADP, Weaver and Tidwell, LLP, JC Penney, Plano Jr. League, Heartland Payment Systems, Robin Trickel, Cantey Hanger, John Polzer, Balfour Beatty Construction, Pam Muirhead, Jackson Walker, LLP, Lapels Dry Cleaning, The Willow Balfour Beatty Construction, Pam Muirhead, Jackson Walker, LLP, Lapels Dry Cleaning, The Willow Bend Group at Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, Alpha Phi Alpha and other generous individual donors.



# Sports Character - The Roots

## THE ROOTS OF HONORING THE GAME: Character in Sports

R

### is for Rules

Rules allow us to keep the game fair. If we win by ignoring or violating the rules, what is the value of our victory?

O

### is for Opponents

Without an opponent, there would be no competition. Rather than demeaning a strong opponent, we need to honor strong opponents because they challenge us to do our best. Athletes can be both fierce and friendly during the same competition (in one moment giving everything to get to a loose ball, and in the next moment helping an opponent up).

O

### is for Officials

Respecting officials, even when we disagree with their calls, is an important part of Honoring the Game. We must remember that officials are not perfect (just like coaches, athletes and parents!) but they are to be respected.

T

### is for Teammates

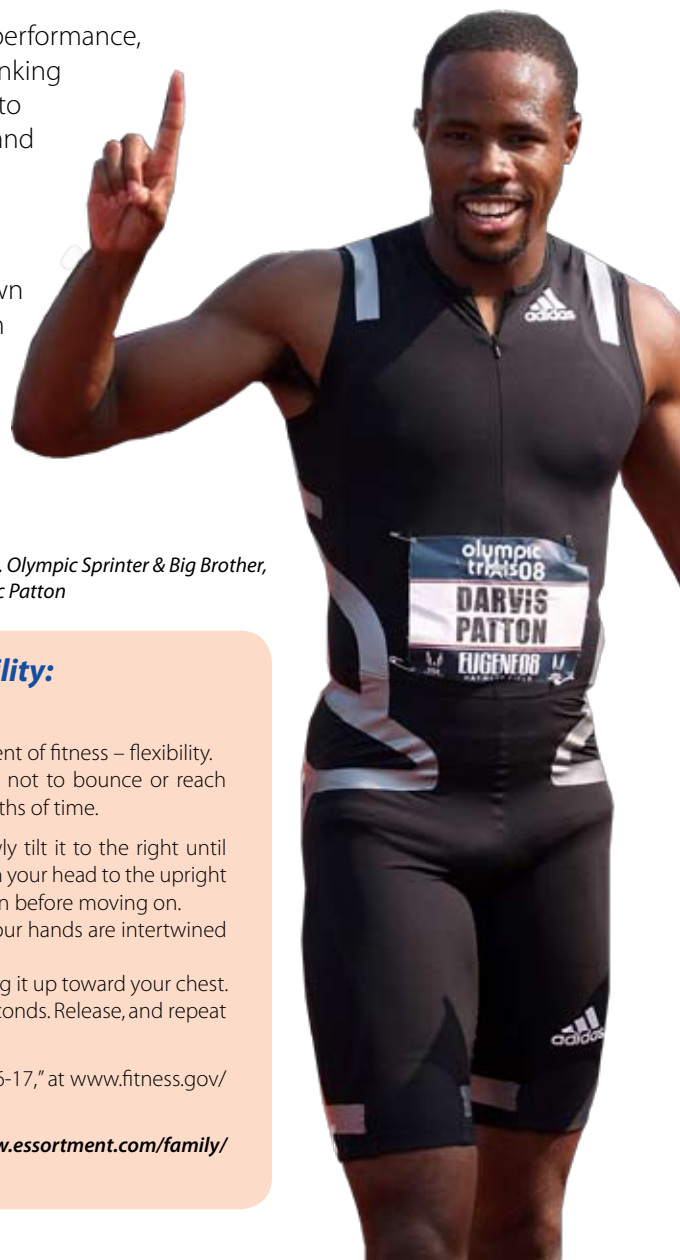
It's easy for young athletes to think solely about their own performance, but we should realize that being part of a team requires thinking about and respecting one's teammates. This respect needs to carry beyond the field/gym/track/pool into the classroom and social settings.

S

### is for Self

We, as athletes, should be encouraged to live up to our own highest personal standard of Honoring the Game, even when our opponents are not. Athletes' respect for themselves and their own standards must come first.

Sources: Adapted from [www.goodcharacter.com](http://www.goodcharacter.com) and [www.positivecoach.org](http://www.positivecoach.org)



U.S. Olympic Sprinter & Big Brother,  
Doc Patton

## Fitness

### The Three Elements of Fitness: Endurance, Strength and Flexibility: Part 3 of 3 - Flexibility

In continuing our review of the three elements of fitness, today we focus on the third key element of fitness – flexibility. Here are some flexibility exercises to try after you've taken the time to warm up. Remember not to bounce or reach repeatedly when you're doing these stretches; just stretch and hold for the recommended lengths of time.

- **Neck stretch:** While sitting or standing with your head in its normal upright position, slowly tilt it to the right until tension is felt on the left side of your neck. Hold that tension for 10 to 30 seconds and then return your head to the upright position. Repeat to the left side, and then toward the front. Always return to the upright position before moving on.
- **Reach to the sky:** Stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Raise both arms overhead so that your hands are intertwined with palms together. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds and relax.
- **Knee to chest:** Lie on your back on a mat with your legs straight. Bend your left knee, and bring it up toward your chest. Grasp the underside of your thigh, and slowly pull your thigh to your chest. Hold for 10 to 30 seconds. Release, and repeat with the right leg.

For more exercises, view or download the "Get Fit and Be Active! A Handbook for Youths Ages 6-17," at [www.fitness.gov/challenge/getfitandbeactive.pdf](http://www.fitness.gov/challenge/getfitandbeactive.pdf).

Sources: <http://kidshealth.org> - modified <http://dietandweightlossprograms.com> – modified [www.essortment.com/family/exercisegames](http://www.essortment.com/family/exercisegames) - modified

Run and get a glass of water and put it on the table next to you. Take a good long look at the water. Now -- can you guess how old it is?

The water in your glass may have fallen from the sky as rain just last week, but the water itself has been around pretty much as long as the earth has!

When the Brontosaurus walked through lakes feeding on plants, your glass of water was part of those lakes. When kings and princesses, knights and squires took a drink from their wells, your glass of water was part of those wells.

The earth has a limited amount of water. That water keeps going around and around and around and around and (well, you get the idea) in what we call the "Water Cycle." This cycle is made up of a few main parts: evaporation (and transpiration), condensation, precipitation, collection.

**Evaporation** is when the sun heats up water in rivers or lakes or the ocean and turns it into vapor or steam. The water vapor or steam leaves the river, lake or ocean and goes into the air.

**Condensation** is when water vapor in the air gets cold and changes back into liquid, forming clouds. This is called condensation.

**Precipitation** occurs when so much water has condensed that the air cannot hold it anymore. The clouds get heavy and water falls back to the earth in the form of rain, hail, sleet or snow.

**Collection** is when water falling back to earth as precipitation falls back in the oceans, lakes or rivers or even on land. When it ends up on land, it will either soak into the earth and become part of the "ground water" that plants and animals use to drink. Or, it may run over the soil and collect in the oceans, lakes or rivers where the cycle starts all over again.



Source: [www.kidzone.ws/water](http://www.kidzone.ws/water)



## Hey Bigs - Take Us to Work With You!

Big thanks to Big Brother Geoffrey Barry who helped organize a mentor recruitment campaign at work! This May, the First American Corporation recruited 31 Mentors in 30 Days for Big Brothers Big Sisters. The recruitment drive kicked-off a long-term partnership between Big Brothers Big Sisters and First American. In addition to just providing a forum to recruit mentors, First American is supporting their internal network of Bigs with company-sponsored events and annual recruitment drives. They even provide event tickets and other perks to their staff Bigs as they come available! A Big Brother to Little Brother Joston since October of 2007, we are thankful for Geoffrey and his extra initiative in helping us recruit more mentors. If you'd like us to help coordinate a mentor recruitment drive at your company or business, just say the word and we'll do the rest. Contact Kristy at [kbrownlow@bbbstx.org](mailto:kbrownlow@bbbstx.org) to learn more. Thirty more mentors could be just 30 days away if you do!

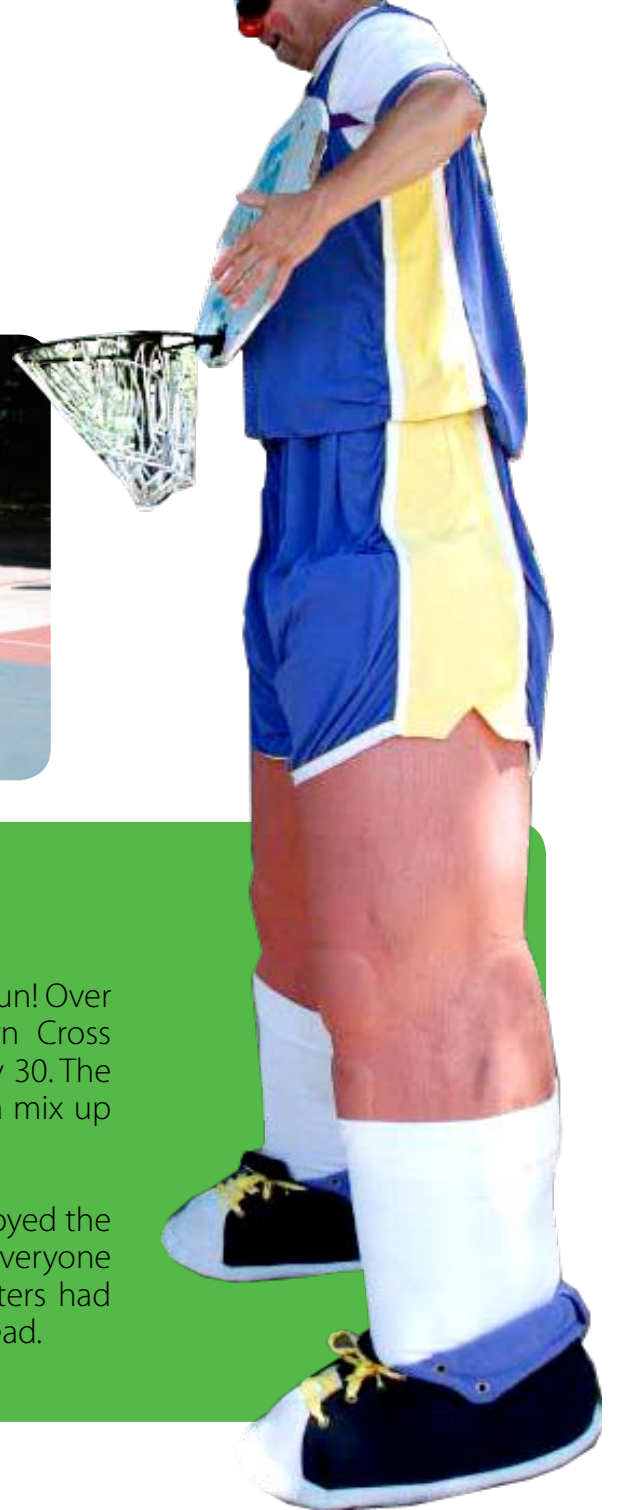


# Big Carnival Rocks Grayson County



The Grayson County Big Brothers Big Sisters hosted the 3rd Annual Big Carnival on June 5, 2009 at Fairview Park in Sherman. Over 1,000 participants enjoyed fun for the whole family including games, crafts, inflatables, and a free hot dog dinner.





## Big Picnic

Crowds of people, loads of books, lots of fun! Over 1,000 people stopped by the Southern Cross Event Center in Southeast Dallas on May 30. The annual Big Brothers Big Sisters picnic moved locales for a mix up of fun.

Whether the paddleboats were your thing or you just enjoyed the sand volleyball, basketball, arts and crafts or swimming, everyone had a great time. Thanks to Borders, Big Brothers Big Sisters had hundreds of books to giveaway to matches who love to read.

## Domino's Pizza Chefs in Training



Sherman matches recently invaded Domino's Pizza on September 12 where they honed the fine art of making the perfect pizza. Owner Steve Palmer welcomed matches who made their own pizza and toured the restaurant. After the pizzas were bubbling and hot, matches headed to the boardroom of Strokes Baseball Academy, also owned by Steve, to enjoy their creations...YUMMY!!!

Steve offers free Domino's pizza at Big Brothers Big Sisters events in Sherman and supports matches by offering free match activities. He's also invited matches for two free hours of hitting in the batting cages at Strokes Baseball Academy. Thanks Steve for your support of Big Brothers Big Sisters and matches in Grayson County!



A trail which was familiar by day became a whole new experience at night! On August 1, the Heard Museum's fearless trail guides lead 31 Bigs and Littles on an adventure in which owls hooting, coyotes howling and strange rustlings in the brush came to life. The hike took matches from the grasslands to the wetlands all in the same hike. Matches were treated to nature's family at night. Armed with red colored lights, the matches were able to see into the night without the creatures seeing them. (Animals can not see red lights.) Best of all, the hot summer night heat didn't keep the matches from having a good time.

## Heard Museum Night Hike



# Big Brothers Big Sisters Match Support Directory

*Big Brothers Big Sisters strives to ensure healthy, strong, long lasting match relationships. Each match is assigned a specific Match Support Specialist (MSS), and Bigs, Littles and parents/guardians are directed to lean on that individual for on-going contact and match support needs. These Match Support Specialists' supervisors ("Match Support Coordinators") also want to be available whenever needed. Their contact information is shared below.*

## **Director of Match Support – North and West Central Texas**

Marjorie Murat-Leslie  
mleslie@bbbstx.org  
972.573.2362

## **MATCH SUPPORT COORDINATORS**

### **All Community Based matches in Dallas, McLennan and Rockwall counties**

#### **Angela Dikes**

adikes@bbbstx.org  
214.441.2227, ext. 293

### **All School Based (Adult Bigs) matches throughout Collin, Dallas, Denton, Rockwall and Tarrant counties, as well as all Ellis County matches**

#### **Jenny Harper**

jharper@bbbstx.org  
214.441.2227 or 817.277.1148, ext. 140

### **All matches in Denton, Collin, and Grayson counties, as well as in the Wichita Falls area and throughout Northeast Texas**

#### **Caprice Hawkins**

chawkins@bbbstx.org  
972.423.9559

### **All Community Based matches in Tarrant, Johnson and Parker counties**

#### **Lisa Minch**

lminch@bbbstx.org  
817.277.1148, ext. 247

### **All matches in the West Central Texas area (Abilene, Brownwood and San Angelo)**

#### **Frankie Montgomery**

fmontgomery@bbbstx.org  
325.677.7739

### **All TBI School Based (Teen Bigs) matches throughout Dallas, Tarrant, Collin and Denton counties**

#### **Amber Tefertiller**

atefertiller@bbbstx.org  
214.441.2227 or 817.277.1148, ext. 262



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**Dallas County Office**

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Dallas, TX 75204

**Denton County Office**

909 Greenlee  
Denton, TX 76201

**Grayson County Office**

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## ***DIVAS Share Love of Outdoors!***

Bigs and Littles enjoyed the 6th Annual DIVAS Day Camp at Elm Fork shooting range in Dallas. This free event is hosted by DIVAS W.O.W (Women Outdoors Worldwide), which strives to support, encourage and teach women and youth the benefits and enjoyment of shooting and outdoor sporting activities. Each summer, this international club of sportswomen bring in outdoors experts to teach Bigs and Littles about fishing, archery and shooting. Trained hunting dogs are on hand as well to demonstrate their skills in the field and how they assist during a hunt. Matches enjoy learning new skills while spending a great day in the outdoors.

