



The Big News

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Seacoast

A Little Sister's Journey

By Katie Rand & Joan Barretto

Eleven year old, Angela was struggling in many aspects of her life. Angela's grades were rapidly dropping and her attitude at home was defensive and defiant. She was overweight, asthmatic, and had extremely poor nutrition. School was challenging; she did poorly, was teased about her weight, and had very few friends. She was a child who desperately needed a mentor to take her hand and lead her out of a chaotic, smoky, and dysfunctional home, if only for a couple hours a week, and provide her with a more positive self-image and hope for the future.

Tara entered Angela's life as her big sister one year ago and made an instant connection with her. Tara immediately picked up on Angela's lack of confidence and built a strong friendship with her based on trust, positive reinforcement, and demonstrated

commitment. For the first part of their relationship, they met every single week consistently; consistency that Angela had not experienced very much of in her short life.

Within a few months of the relationship, Angela started to become less angry and more forgiving at home. She began to talk about new friends at school and brought home better behavior reports from teachers. Additionally, because the two were matched under our Department of Education grant, Tara helped Angela set some personal and academic goals, and became an important part of Angela's academic life, working with Angela to achieve her goals, and helping her to envision a more positive future. Last semester, Angela's grades had greatly improved and she was better adjusted socially. Tara's consistency has not stopped, however, and she is constantly encouraging Angela to keep trying, keep improving; all while praising her already impressive achievements.

Angela and Tara spend a lot of time doing low cost activities that include playing games at a local coffee shop and window shopping at the mall. Making

dinner is one of the activities that the girls love to do together and it has taught Angela the importance of eating healthier foods, which had been a constant challenge for Angela since she was very young.

"Angela immediately perks up when asked about her Big Sister"

Angela immediately perks up when asked about her Big Sister and describes Tara as exciting and fun. She proudly talks about improving in school and making new friends. Her confidence is higher and her new-found positive attitude is shining through.

When Angela first became a little sister, she had difficulty making eye contact; her self-esteem was so low, that she barely raised her eyes when being spoken to. She had difficulty even walking at times, because she was so overweight.

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Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Seacoast

Winter 2010

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Mission Statement

The mission of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Seacoast is to provide successful mentoring relationships for all children who need them, promoting a brighter future, better schools, and stronger communities.

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Letter from Tawnee

It is a bit gloomy and snowy outside my window but here in our cheerful office filled with bright colors and delightful photos of the children we serve, it is another exciting day during which we have the extreme honor of making lives a little bit happier and healthier. We are starting off 2010 with three awesome additions to our staff: Briana Marshall, our new development and marketing associate, Christine Thiel, our new match support specialist and Anna Remillard, our new school based specialist. Briana and Christine join us from Arizona and Oregon respectively, while Anna is from Kittery. We are so excited to have them and we are already off to a great start for 2010!

2009 was a wonderful year for all of us at Big Brothers Big Sisters. Thanks

to your support and the incredible work of our staff we were able to increase the number of children we serve by 18% over the past year. We are also delighted to have reached a new goal in terms of match case management and to be able to boast of longer and stronger matches than the national average. In the words of Mary, one of our Littles, to her Big Sister after every single time they get together, "This has been the best day of my

life!"

Thank you so much for all that you do to give so many children the best day of their lives so often.

Peace,

Tawnee

" We were able to increase the number of children we serve by 18% over the past year "

Little Sister

Continued from Page 1...

However, two weeks ago, when Angela arrived at BBBS for holiday gift pick-up, she was energetic, feisty, and engaging. She had slimmed down, easily made eye contact, and appeared a responsible, mature, and caring big sister to her own younger sister; vast differences in the persona of this child whose outlook was bleak; and self-esteem, non-existent.

Angela's life is still far from perfect. She had a very rough start and perhaps will always struggle with the challenges of her youth. However, with the

commitment, positive reinforcement, and nurturing provided by her Big Sister, Tara, she has leapt over some high hurdles in a very short time, and has developed coping skills and a sense of self which will hopefully help her to continue leaping hurdles for the rest of her life, and perhaps even knock a few down along the way.

Names have been changed for confidentiality purposes.

If you or someone you know would like to volunteer to change the life of a child, please don't hesitate to contact our office!

Bowl For Kids' Sake Goes Hollywood

It may only be January but Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Seacoast is already looking forward to seeing you at the Portsmouth Bowl-O-Rama on Saturday, April 10th! This year, bowlers are invited to come dressed as their favorite celebrity and enjoy the fun of the casual red-carpet scene as *Bowl for Kids' Sake Goes Hollywood!*

Bowl for Kids' Sake is an event for all ages and will include entertainment, free food, drinks and a complimentary tee-shirt for all bowlers!

Each year over half a million supporters across the country come together to have fun and raise money in support of the Big Brothers Big Sisters' mission.

Join the fun and form a bowling team with your co-workers, friends and family!
It's never too early to form a team, make a donation or both! All you need to do is:

~Register: Sign up at www.seacoastbfks.kintera.org



~Raise Money: Give your friends and family a call, shoot them an email or send them a text message. You can even collect donations online!

~Bowl: Take an hour and a half on April 10th to have some fun at Bowl-O-Rama in Portsmouth! Relax, bowl and enjoy spending some time with your team. It's our way of saying, "Thank you" for being Big enough to help vulnerable children and transform your community.

If you don't have time to bowl, you can still make an impact by donating to Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Seacoast today!

For questions about forming a team, making a donation, or to become a corporate sponsor of *Bowl for Kids' Sake Goes Hollywood*, please contact Briana Marshall at 603-430-1140 ext. 308 or briana.marshall@bbbs.org

See you on April 10th!

Get Involved!

Don't have time to be a Big but want to contribute to our mission?

YOU CAN!!!

Consider getting involved in the following ways:

- ~Host a jeans day at your place of work to raise money for Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Seacoast (charge \$5 for employees to wear jeans on a designated day)
- ~Set a time with our staff to help with small data entry projects at our office
- ~Are you good with I.T. issues? We could use YOU!
- ~Do you have a fun skill or hobby that you would like to teach our Matches during a monthly get together?
- ~Form a team, raise some money and have fun at *Bowl for Kids' Sake Goes Hollywood* on April 10th
- ~Serve on an event committee
- ~Do you have unused office supplies or reams of paper you'd like to donate?

For more information on how you can get involved, contact Billy Gaudet at billy.gaudet@bbbs.org or 603-430-1140 x 307

A BIG Thank You to Our 2nd Quarter (October-December 2009) Donors!

\$1,000 +

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*For a complete listing of donors under \$100,
 please visit our website!*

www.nhseacoastbigbrothersbigsisters.org

It Takes A Gingerbread Village...

By Joan Barretto, Director of Programs

On December 12th, with genuine Christmas spirit, creative energy, and good humor, for the price of 5 cans of food paid by the Bigs and a “little imagination” paid by the Littles, our matches constructed the first ever, one-of-a-kind BBBSGS Gingerbread Village. A fabulous time was had by all as the matches worked diligently to create fun and festive houses, and then connect them together to make a village. Matches shared their ideas, their decorations,

and their admiration for each other’s designs. There was a variety of stunning, and...interesting... architectural feats on display. BB Nate and LB Jared were the first to arrive and despite having no previous gingerbread building experience, dove right in, and proceeded to “spackle” their house together, just like using “mortar” described one big brother. They very expeditiously completed construction, and as famous artists and architects do, signed their work, with a big licorice J on one side and N on the other. Artist Erin and Little Sister Anneka --- created a candy wonderland with an intricately decorated house, snow-drizzled roof, gum-drop Christmas tree lawn, licorice and Skittles ice-rink with teddy bear skaters, and candy cane lamp posts to welcome the Christmas visitor. BB Hunter was stuck (literally) holding the (icing) bag when LB Clayton decided that their design could not have enough blue and red frosting squirted all over it. Clayton also relayed that the reason there was a gingerbread man stuck on the roof was because the gingerbread woman was mad at him! BS Susan and LS Heather struggled valiantly to keep their house

standing. The answer? More and more icing. The end result? A quaint little gingerbread cabin completely covered in an avalanche of candy-dotted snow.



BS Mari and LS Selena hit on a great idea! When the house starts to fall, prop it up with marshmallow pillars! Top that off with intricate lattice work on the roof and it becomes an instant Swiss Chalet!

Other matches borrowed the strategy to help prop up their own houses. Still others borrowed the cans which were brought for donation to help support the walls until structurally sound. Jeanine and her little sister Sarah thought a red and green striped M&M roof captured the Christmas spirit, along with a chocolate chimney for the chocolate Santa to shimmy down!! Not to be outdone, Cody and his BS Kathy created a gingerbread wonderland; their house, entirely decorated with the most lavish confections, had almost no gingerbread visible! Complete with candy-coated walkway, gumdrop and Skittles garden, and teddy grahams romping around in the snow, it was a feast for the eyes (and appetite!). LB Ariel and BB David had a unique take...keep the two roof pieces together with long pieces of licorice filled with M&M’s, throw a couple of marshmallow gingerbread people and grazing animal crackers in the snow-covered yard, keep the decorations sparse, and call it a day. This way, Ariel reasoned...all the candy they didn’t use was going home with him!

A few matches came a little later and created their houses from leftovers... by then some of the more popular candy had either been used in the architecture or popped into some “little” mouths. Tymraya and BS Alie managed to snag the last blue and red fruit leather for one side of their imaginative roof, with big spearmint and cinnamon gumdrops lining the other. BS Stephanie and LS Adele, last to arrive---good-naturedly raced against the clock to complete their house in time to connect with the others. They made imaginative use of the leftovers; pretzel bows and peppermint candies thatched their roof. BS Diana and LS Savannah, also latecomers, created a colorful, eclectic “anything goes” kind of house sporting a candy-cane and M&M roof. But when it started to cave in, LB Ariel and LS Sarah were right there to pitch in and help keep it together. And last, but not least, and definitely the match that kept us all laughing, was BB John and LB Tyler. They very strategically and carefully constructed their roof of Necco wafers, until the weight of the “snow” caused a tragic roof cave-in. Not to worry! It became the village’s token “green” home- with imaginary solar panels. When you peeked inside the panels, the Necco wafer roof had now become a colorful tile floor and a cozy indoor Christmas scene had materialized inside with a Christmas tree cake in the corner, and a chocolate Santa delivering Starburst “presents” under the tree.

It was an extraordinarily fun and positive event, exemplifying some of the very best qualities that mentoring encourages in children: cooperation, thoughtfulness, ingenuity, camaraderie, generosity, and good humor. It may have also contributed to a few candy bellyaches later that evening, but it was all for a good cause! Sixty pounds of canned and non-perishable food (i.e. the Big’s price for admission) was donated to our local food pantry. It truly does take a gingerbread village!

Benefit Night @ Flatbread Company Tuesday, February 23rd ~ 5pm to 10pm

Join Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Seacoast
for our first Flatbread Company Benefit Night!
It's simple! Come into Flatbread Company for a great dinner!
Our agency will receive a portion of every flatbread sold during the event!

*Flatbread Company is located at
138 Congress St
Portsmouth, NH*

For questions or more information, please contact Briana Marshall at 603.430.1140 x308 or briana.marshall@bbbs.org

The Little Soirees

This year's Fall Fundraiser was a HUGE success!
With your help, we were able to raise over
\$80,000!!!

Thank you to everyone who sponsored, donated, volunteered, attended & hosted our Soirees
And particularly to our sponsors of \$2,500 and up!

