Big Brothers Big Sisters
OF COASTAL & NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

# NEWSLETTER

MAY 2020

## A LETTER FROM BOARD MEMBER ROB NAGEL

Dear Friends,

As the founder of Surf Taco and a proud Board Member for the past eight years, I've been able to trace my journey to Big Brothers Big Sisters through valuable opportunities serving children.

After college, I joined Americorps VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) with my future wife and was placed at the 4-H after-school programs in South Central and East Los Angeles. I worked with disadvantaged youth, providing experiences and resources while recruiting volunteers to serve as mentors to the youth.

Immediately, I saw the impact mentorship had on the kids. The mentors helped with homework, oversaw activities, and were wonderful role models. Most of the volunteers came from local colleges, and the experience was extremely rewarding. To be a positive influence for at-risk youth was a life-changing experience for me. I had a better understanding of the struggles and hardships families face in the inner city.

The impact was so great that after my one-year commitment was over, I signed up for another year to be the VISTA leader, where I oversaw 20 other volunteers from around the country. I managed them as they continued to bring opportunities and volunteers to the 4-H youth. Coaching my team and seeing the smiles on the children's faces left a lasting impression on me.

Leading my team encouraged me to go back to school for my MBA at Pepperdine University. Being on the business side, I would not only be able to lead and manage but also give back. During school, I wrote a business plan for Surf N' Subs, focused on crafting sandwiches and connecting with the community. That plan became the template for Surf Taco when my wife and I moved back to New Jersey.

When the opportunity arose to join the BBBSCNNJ Board, I was honored to become part of a great organization that focuses on mentorship. I have witnessed the value mentorship brings to youth, and I find great joy in advocating for this organization. The leadership and commitment of Executive Director William Salcedo and his staff is inspiring. The amount of growth and number of mentors skyrocketing throughout our state over the years speaks to that commitment to the communities and our youth.

I have also witnessed the commitment to our Littles' families during these challenging times. Agency staff have been providing food through community partners and restaurants and it's been a privilege to team up with them to provide essentials – hot meals, chicken, eggs, produce, bread, cereal, and more.

The need for mentors is going to be greater coming out of this crisis. Youth will need positive influences, experiences, and a sympathetic ear in the near future. I'm proud to be a part of the Board of Trustees with all of the other Board members committed to our youth. I look forward to the growth of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern New Jersey as we forge ahead to serve even more children in our communities.

Be Well,

*Rob Nagel*
Founder, Surf Taco

## PROVIDING FOOD TO FAMILIES IN OUR PROGRAMS

Thank you to our community members and local restaurant owners for their generous support during this time. To date, over 1,000 hot meals have been delivered to our Littles and their families. We are **#BiggerTogether**!

## THE BIG WAIT

George is a friendly 13-year-old boy who enjoys fishing, sports, and playing drums. He loves cheering for the Knicks, Yankees, and Packers. His dream is to start a landscaping business someday. With a Big Brother, he would love to learn to fix cars and build things.

**Become A Big at**
**www.mentornj.org/be-a-big**



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305 Bond Street, 2nd Floor
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**Regional Offices**
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Morristown, NJ 07960

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## BRIAN SINGS BRUCE FOR BBBSCNNJ

On May 5 for #GivingTuesdayNow, Brian Kirk of Brian Kirk and the Jirks hosted a memorable Bruce Springsteen-themed concert on Facebook Live to benefit BBBSCNNJ. It was a huge success as over $16,000 was raised for our one-to-one mentoring programs. Thank you to Brian Kirk and all who donated!

## BBBSCNNJ FEATURED IN ASBURY PARK PRESS

On May 5, BBBS was featured on the front page of the Asbury Park Press. The story of Big Brother Anthony and Little Brother Shantae's match touched readers' hearts – so much that some applied to become Bigs! We are very grateful for the opportunity to showcase such a wonderful friendship in our local newspaper.

Read the Story at http://mentornj.org/bbbscnnj-app-2020-05

## KIDS CLUB IS NOW CARES PROGRAM

Through this pandemic, our staff has been a lifeline for many families. Our agency has replaced our Kids Club with a more comprehensive *"CARES Program,"* which is the acronym for Creating Access to Resources, Events, and Support. Through this program, BBBSCNNJ has worked with community partners and restaurants to provide over 1,000 meals to families in our programs, and we are engaging more partners each day. We send frequent emails detailing available resources in the community as families face challenges as a result of COVID-19 (loss of jobs, food insecurity, home instruction, mental health, etc.).

## MATCHES STAYING CONNECTED

During this challenging time, our Bigs and Littles have embraced connecting virtually as well as becoming *"pen pals"* through the mail. Heartwarming drawings and letters lift spirits and help our matches look forward to when they can see each other in person again. Little Brother Ambrose drew an *"I Miss You"* picture for his Big Sister Heather, and Little Sister Callie drew a portrait of her Big Sister Michelle from the Morris County Bigs in Blue Program.

BE A BIG.

YOUR COMMITMENT:
4-6 hours a month with your Little for at least one year

YOUR IMPACT:
Defending and igniting a local child's potential

**mentornj.org**

## PREPARING FOR A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

BBBSCNNJ staff have been holding virtual meetings to connect with school leaders, Bigs, and Littles in preparation for the 2020-2021 school year. Our matches are thrilled to continue their relationships and grow together!

## LUNCH & LEARN

Want to learn more about BBBSCNNJ and how we're serving 1,500 children?

Register for a free webinar on **Thursday, May 21 at 12:00pm**!

Find out how BBBSCNNJ is handling critical needs as well as learn about the organization and how you can get involved.

Email Elyse Jankowski at ejankowski@mentornj.org to register.

## THE BIG IMPACT EVENT

## ANTHONY OF REMEMBER JONES DEDICATES "COCKTAIL HOUR" TO BBBSCNNJ

On May 14, Anthony D'Amato of Remember Jones hosted a *"Cocktail Hour"* concert on Facebook Live with a portion of the proceeds benefitting BBBSCNNJ. The event was co-presented by The Strand Theater, Camp Jam in the Pines, and Shore Point Distributing Company, Inc. Remember Jones' live stream featured an intimate musical performance full of fan favorites and covers, with accompaniment by David Pershan on piano. Thank you to Anthony and everyone who contributed!

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO OUR MAY MATCHES

- Big Brother Carlo & Little Brother Antonio 8 Years
- Big Brother Adam & Little Brother Seven 6 Years
- Big Sister Toni & Little Sister Kassandra 5 Years
- Big Brother Andrew & Little Brother Ethan 4 Years
- Big Sister Wendy & Little Sister Layla 3 Years
- Big Brother Brian & Little Brother Tyreon 3 Years
- Big Brother Brian & Little Brother Michael 3 Years
- Big Sister Kathleen & Little Sister Kellyann 3 Years
- Big Sister Leigh & Little Brother Sammy 3 Years
- Big Sister Gina & Little Sister Ariella 3 Years
- Big Sister Stephanie & Little Sister Amaya 3 Years
- Big Brother Jonathan & Little Brother Gavin 3 Years
- Big Brother Dylan & Little Brother Vincent 2 Years
- Big Sister Margaret & Little Brother Savon 2 Years
- Big Sister Annabelle & Little Sister Jasmine 1 Year
- Big Brother Hanbom & Little Brother Tobias 1 Year
- Big Sister Donna & Little Sister Karina 1 Year
- Big Brother Rodrigo & Little Brother Zuriel 1 Year
- Big Sister Riddhi & Little Sister Rylee 1 Year
- Big Sister Tatiana & Little Sister Lindsay 1 Year
- Big Brother Joshua & Little Brother Navarre 1 Year
- Big Sister Deborah & Little Sister Emma 1 Year

## OUR MISSION PARTNERS

Want to be a Mission Partner? To learn, more contact us at 732.544.2224

Mission Maker: The Morris & Clara Weshnak Family Foundation

Vision Maker: Garden Savings Federal Credit Union

Mentor Makers: Delta Dental, Hackensack Meridian Health, Seaview Orthopaedics, Super Foodtown, Circus