



FEBRUARY 2021

A MESSAGE FROM BBBSCNNJ GOVERNANCE BOARD MEMBER HEATHER MEADE

Dear Friends,

February 22, 2016 was a hugely significant day in my life as I was matched with my Little Sister Kelis. I still remember the day vividly, meeting her and her family after work. As I anxiously drove to their home, I remember hoping that she would be as happy as I was about our match.

Here we are five years later, and we have a bond that I know will last beyond her time in the Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program because of the special relationship we've developed. We've both grown in ways that I couldn't have imagined. I'm more enlightened about the issues that kids face these days, both in school and in their social lives, and she has spent time in my office where I hope she can envision herself in the future. We've also spent a lot of time just doing fun things: making pizzas and apple pies together, enjoying summer boardwalks and arcades where we've had some very competitive air hockey games.



During these five years, I've also become a member of the BBBSCNNJ Board of Trustees because I want to be a part of the organization that has had such an impact on my life and those of the children they match. I want to see the children who are waiting to be matched have the opportunity to meet and begin their own journey with their Big Brother or Big Sister.

All it takes is a desire to help a child build self-confidence and see their potential within reach. The time commitment is but a few hours per month, but the benefits will last a lifetime. Please consider becoming a mentor; I know how much it has enriched my life, and I know it will be one of the most rewarding things that you can do in yours.

Sincerely,

Heather Meade

Big Sister and Governance Board Member

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO OUR FEBRUARY MATCHES

- Big Sister Lindsey & Little Sister Majiah **9 Years**
- Big Brother Vic & Little Brother Breckin **6 Years**
- Big Brother Dan & Little Brother Naran **6 Years**
- Big Sister Heather & Little Sister Kelis **5 Years**
- Big Sister Lauren & Little Sister Kylie **5 Years**
- Big Brother Christopher & Little Brother Rabbil **4 Years**
- Big Brother Max & Little Brother John **4 Years**
- Big Brother Eric & Little Brother Nicholas **4 Years**
- Big Sister Sofia & Little Brother Alejandro **4 Years**
- Big Sister Mayu & Little Sister Ny'Asia **4 Years**
- Big Brother Matt & Little Brother Dai'Ryus **3 Years**
- Big Brother John & Little Brother Zamyri **3 Years**
- Big Sister Laura & Little Sister Mia **3 Years**
- Big Brother Brian & Little Brother Jihad **3 Years**
- Big Sister Perri & Little Sister Keila **3 Years**
- Big Sister Lisa & Little Sister Jaelyn **2 Years**
- Big Brother John & Little Brother Jonathan **2 Years**
- Big Brother Tim & Big Sister Kim & Little Brother Wiatte **2 Years**
- Big Brother Mitchell & Little Brother Jowan **1 Year**
- Big Sister Nicole & Little Sister Meghan **1 Year**
- Big Brother Samuel & Little Brother Aaron **1 Year**

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS CELEBRATES



BLACK HISTORY MONTH



CELEBRATING OUR BIGS & LITTLES OF THE YEAR

ERNEST EBANKS & DREVEON | Big Brother & Little Brother of the Year

Ernest & his Little Brother Dreveon were matched in March of 2016, and in addition to being named our Big Brother & Little Brother of the Year, they are also being honored statewide as the NJ Big Brother & Little Brother of the Year. Dreveon was without a consistent male figure in his life and going through the process of being in a new school in a new town. A friendship built on his and Ernest's common interest and love for



sports blossomed into a wonderful mentorship. Frequently attending and watching football games and simply spending one on one time together has grown this match into what Dreveon, Ernest, and Dreveon's mother call "family." Ernest ignited a fire in Dreveon by encouraging him with academics & building his self-esteem. Once stating that he felt he would not be able to achieve going to college, Dreveon has now started

to look at colleges he would like to attend in the future. Both Dreveon and his mother have expressed that Ernest is one of the main reasons why Dreveon is more confident in himself and has followed along a positive path. Dreveon has shared that due to his positive experience in the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program with Ernest, he plans on being a Big one day himself to mentor a child in need!



STEPHANIE DEFEQ & JASMINE | Big Sister & Little Sister of the Year

Stephanie & her Little Sister Jasmine were matched when Jasmine was 6-years-old, and they just celebrated their 11-year match anniversary last month! Throughout this time, Stephanie has been a constant support to Jasmine. She was there to offer guidance and support as Jasmine was transitioning into high school, starting her first job, taking her driver's test, and now as she prepares for her future beyond high school. Jasmine has expressed to their case manager on many occasions how grateful she is that Stephanie is always there for her. Jasmine's mother has shared that Jasmine is more open with Stephanie than anyone and credits her for helping Jasmine step out of her



comfort zone by encouraging her to try new things. From going on hikes, grabbing lunch, and trying photo-worthy milkshakes, to seeing concerts, plays, and ballets together, they've created many memories over the last 11 years. Some of these outings have even become annual traditions, such as going back to school shopping at the end of each summer and attending our agency's holiday parties. Although they will be graduating out of our program soon, Stephanie, Jasmine, and Jasmine's mother have all expressed that this friendship is one that will last a lifetime. Stephanie even recently reassured Jasmine, "You have me for life!"



MATCH HIGHLIGHT

Little Brother Jeremiah and Big Brother Eddie have been matched since July of 2019. This past summer, they reached their one-year match anniversary, and all parties were excited about the match continuing. Even through the height of the pandemic, Eddie and Jeremiah remained in touch and participated in social distancing activities like bike riding and walks in the park.



Lately, Eddie and Jeremiah have been working out together outdoors. Jeremiah's mom shared that the fresh air and being active with Eddie has helped Jeremiah since he is home a lot now, and she appreciates how consistent



Eddie is in spending time with Jeremiah. Both Jeremiah and his mother have expressed that Eddie is a good support and encouragement to him, especially regarding his academics. Jeremiah's mother shared an example where Eddie reached out to Jeremiah the day before a test to let him know he believed Jeremiah would do well. She stated, "I think that really helped Jeremiah. Eddie is a wonderful role model." When asked what his favorite thing about his Big Brother is, Jeremiah stated, "He is fun to be around. We have a lot in common." Eddie and Jeremiah continue to thrive in their match friendship and enjoy their quality time together!

YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

Little Brother Josh is a freshman who is dreaming big as his Big Brother Matt inspires him to do well in school. Recently, Josh has looked to Matt for advice and support in learning about business and finance. Josh hopes to own his own business one day, and this past year, he started the process by entering the work force and applying to a vocational technical school. Matt shared that Josh has all the tools he needs to succeed and will continue to support him in all that he does!



TRIVIA

For Kids' Sake

It's about helping kids grow, not what you know!

Friday, March 12 | 7:30-9 PM
Sunday, March 14 | 4-5:30 PM

Find out more at
www.mentornj.org/trivia

LUNCH & LEARN

Join us for a 30-minute webinar on Tuesday, March 23rd at 12:00 PM to learn more about Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern New Jersey and the different ways you can get involved.

Email info@mentornj.org to register!



THE BIG WAIT

Kenny is a smart and friendly 6th grader who enjoys the outdoors. When Kenny is not busy with school, he usually spends his time going on nature walks or playing video games. He's hoping to be matched with a Big Brother he can hang out with, go bowling, and try new things together.

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

OUR MISSION PARTNERS Want to become a Mission Partner? To learn more, contact us at 732.544.2224

Mission Maker



THE MORRIS & CLARA WESHNAK
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