

# TOGETHER, WE ARE DEFENDERS OF POTENTIAL

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Big Brothers Big Sisters' JEDI Initiatives

ASBURY PARK, NJ — Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern New Jersey (BBBSCNNJ) is committed to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) with ongoing initiatives. The youth mentoring organization has created its JEDI Steering Committee, a diverse group of stakeholders dedicated to making intentional steps toward a more inclusive agency and community. Led by co-chairs Monmouth University Professor Dr. Vernon Smith and Healthcare Executive and BBBSCNNJ Board Trustee Patricia Howard, the committee is focused on three main objectives: Recruitment of volunteers, staff, board members, and interns that reflect the diverse community the agency serves, ongoing JEDI training for all levels of the organization, and programmatic initiatives that focus on youth empowerment.

BBBSCNNJ is collaborating with various local organizations on these initiatives including the African American NJ Chamber of Commerce, Black Caucus for NJ Young Democrats, Garden State Equality, The Pride Center of NJ, and the Monmouth-Ocean County Pan Hellenic Council. The agency plans to kick off its Young Black Males Leadership and Girl Empowerment Programs in the coming months.

Together, we affirm that every person has the opportunity to reach their full potential," stated William Salcedo, BBBSCNNJ Executive Director. "We are committed to creating and cultivating a safe environment where all individuals feel respected and valued equally."

BBBSCNNJ's JEDI statement reads as follows: Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) are integral parts of our values and mission. We recognize, affirm, and celebrate the diverse backgrounds, lives, and experiences of all our stakeholders, including youth, families, donors, volunteers, and staff. In the workplace, we foster an environment where all people can be their best selves. We affirm that every person [regardless of ability, age, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender identity,

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gender expression, ideology, income, national origin, race or sexual orientation, marital or veteran status] has the opportunity to reach their full potential. We strive to realize the potential that is within all of us by ensuring that all voices and perspectives are heard and honored.

BBSCNNJ serves 1,200 children throughout 10 counties in New Jersey. From emotional support to the joy of having a trusted friend in their corner, Bigs provide the stability that Littles need to achieve their full potential. To learn more about BBSCNNJ, visit [www.mentornj.org](http://www.mentornj.org) and follow the agency on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

**About BBSCNNJ:**

For the past 45 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern New Jersey has been making a positive difference in the lives of at-risk children through professionally supported, one-to-one mentoring relationships with adult volunteers. BBSCNNJ empowers children to achieve their highest potential as they grow to become confident, competent, and caring individuals. For more information on becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister or to make a donation, visit: [www.mentornj.org](http://www.mentornj.org).