



## LETTER FROM BIG BROTHER HUNTER HULBERT

Dear Friends,

I'll never forget the night I came out to my parents. Here I was, standing nervously in the doorway of their room at 19-years-old, getting ready to drop the biggest bombshell on the two people who mattered most to me. "What will they think? Will they still love me? What if they won't?" were a few of the thoughts bouncing around in my teenage brain. Finally, I mustered up the courage to utter those three, life-changing words: "I am gay."

That moment made me proud – not just of myself, but of my mom and dad – because they did something that so many parents don't. They looked beyond the words, beyond the emotions of the moment, and they saw me... for me. Yes, my shorts may be a bit shorter and my voice may not be as masculine as I once made it seem, but they realized I'm still the same "Hunter Bunter" I've always been. (Thanks for the nickname, mom!) In that moment, our bond became stronger than ever.



If my coming out story is any indication, empathy is a powerful force for connection. Having that foundation of understanding builds stronger families, stronger friendships, stronger communities and, ultimately, a stronger human race. Now, as a Big Brother to Jehki, I've been able to experience more of the beauty found in being empathetic. That journey has taken us to tennis courts, jungle gyms, and fast food joints, and I've learned more about anime than I ever imagined I would in three lifetimes. But you know what? I wouldn't trade it for the world because I'm proud to be able to show him that there's nothing wrong with who he is. That's the vision of BBBSCNNJ after all – to empower youth to achieve their full potential – and in reading through this month's newsletter, I hope you can share in the pride of the work being done across the state by this great organization.

Sincerely,

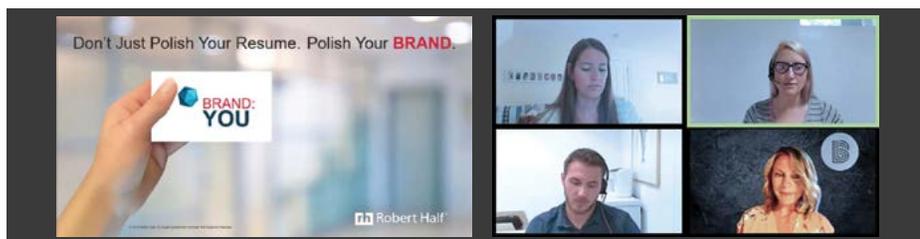
*Hunter Hulbert*

Hunter Hulbert  
Big Brother

## LITTLES LEARN HOW TO LAUNCH THEIR CAREERS

The staffing experts at Robert Half recently gave a presentation to our high school mentees on interview skills and resume building. They provided an interactive and informative experience where Littles

learned that each of us carries our own "brand," how to customize a proper resume, and that every job can be used as a learning experience to get to where we want to go in the future.



## COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI)



As we celebrate Pride Month, you heard from Big Brother Hunter in this month's letter. In addition to Hunter's involvement as a mentor, he also serves on BBBSCNNJ's **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)** 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 DEI training for all levels of the organization, and programmatic initiatives that focus on youth empowerment. Stay tuned as we kick off our Young Black Males Leadership and Girl Empowerment Programs in the coming months!

## THE BIG WAIT

Shaheed is an intelligent and mature 13-year-old boy who wants to be an engineer when he grows up. When he has free time, Shaheed enjoys going for walks outside and to the park. Recently, he has become interested in learning how to play different sports. Shaheed is hoping to be matched with a Big Brother who is interested in outdoor activities, playing sports, and trying new things with him.

Become A Big at  
[mentornj.org/beabig](http://mentornj.org/beabig)

## BEST FRIENDS RIGHT AWAY

Big Sister Maria and Little Sister Erika are approaching the six-month mark of their friendship. Although they are still early on in their match, Maria, Erika, and Erika's mother are already confident that this is a friendship that will last a lifetime! Maria's mother even said that it already looks like they've been "besties for a very long time."

After they met for the first time, Erika's mother expressed gratitude to BBBSCNNJ for finding "the right person" for Erika. She explained that she didn't know it would be possible to find a Big Sister with the same personality as her, and she feels they were "meant to be matched." Erika also said that Maria is nice, funny, cool, and that she "likes everything about her!"

Erika and Maria have done a wide range of activities so far. From visiting Jenkinson's



Aquarium, to painting ceramics, going bowling, and going out to lunch just to talk, they always have a great time together. During their outing to the aquarium, they even got matching stuffed animals to cherish for years to come.

Conversation has come easily for Erika and Maria and they discuss things such as friendships, relationships, family, and school. Erika

told her case manager that Maria is a good role model because of how much she cares about topics she talks about with her. It's clear that in their first few months of being matched, Maria has been a much-needed safe space for Erika to talk about things going on in her life, and she will continue to be this for Erika as she grows.



## TUTORING PROGRAM IMPROVES LITTLE'S GRADES

Little Brother Jayden enrolled in BBBSCNNJ's Tutoring Program this past school year and has brought up his grades tremendously! Jayden's mother Alexis shared, "Jayden was struggling academically at the beginning of this school year. It has been exceptionally difficult with all students trying to learn remotely due to COVID-19. In math class, there were complicated equations, limited opportunities to ask questions, and things quickly became overwhelming as Jayden's first report card included an 'F.' He was frustrated, felt lost, and knew that the next marking period was only going to be harder.



As if by magic, within days of the report card, I received an email in my inbox from Big Brothers Big Sisters. They were offering free tutoring sessions on Wednesdays, and as his Mom, my fingers couldn't type 'sign him up' fast enough. Soon thereafter, Jayden logged in and was matched with his amazing tutor, Sammy. She filled in the blanks on the lessons Jayden was missing with online learning and taught strategies and tips to enhance his knowledge of mathematics. Sammy asked Jayden follow-up questions and answered every question Jayden had as they worked through countless equations. They also looked ahead and prepared for upcoming lessons and tests.

Sammy gave Jayden confidence and support to be a successful student. After a few weeks of hard work and dedication from both Jayden and his tutor, his average increased by 24 points. For Jayden's final report card, he is on track to have a 'B!' Jayden's mission was focusing on learning and improving his grades, and Sammy was committed to helping him achieve that goal. Mission accomplished!"



## LUNCH & LEARN

Spend your lunch break learning all the ways you can make an impact and defend the potential of kids in Coastal & Northern New Jersey! There are many ways to get involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters, and a Lunch & Learn webinar is a great opportunity to learn more with zero pressure to sign up. Best of all, it'll only take 30 minutes of your day!

Join us on  
**Thursday, July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 12 PM.**  
 Email [info@mentornj.org](mailto:info@mentornj.org) to register!

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



## HONORING SUZANNE HATFIELD

The Hatfield Family Scholarship Fund was established in 2010 by Suzanne Hatfield who, like Big Brothers Big Sisters, believed in mentorship and the potential of youth. Suzanne was passionate about helping our Little Brothers and Little Sisters reach their goals by getting a 2-year degree at Brookdale Community College. The Littles who were selected for the scholarship were so fortunate to have their first two years of community college paid for AND their own personal cheerleader in Suzanne! Suzanne hosted a luncheon each year for the students to celebrate being awarded

their scholarship, and she always shared a few words of wisdom that inspired them for their future.

Suzanne also supported "Project BAM" in which Monmouth University students mentor Asbury Park High School students. Suzanne wanted to help our Littles achieve their goals and dreams and made a personal connection with each one, even attending the wedding of a former scholarship recipient. Suzanne passed away on May 18<sup>th</sup> and will be remembered fondly by Big Brothers Big Sisters and all who knew her.



Join us at the Manasquan River Golf Club in Brielle for a day of golf for a great cause. Proceeds benefit our one-to-one mentoring programs that help children realize their potential and build their futures. Sponsorships and tee signs are available! Learn more at [mentornj.org/forethekids](http://mentornj.org/forethekids)



Spend a day in the sand at Manasquan beach to support our mission! Join this great community fundraising event to raise funds and play volleyball to benefit our one-to-one mentoring programs! Learn more at [mentornj.org/volleyball](http://mentornj.org/volleyball)

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO OUR JUNE MATCHES

- Big Brother Kenneth & Little Brother Jah'Sim **8 Years**
- Big Sister Sandra & Little Sister Eleanor **8 Years**
- Big Sister Adelina & Little Sister Keira **7 Years**
- Big Sister Elisabeth & Little Sister Alexandra **7 Years**
- Big Brother James & Little Brother Jason **7 Years**
- Big Brother Terrence & Little Brother Yasir **5 Years**
- Big Brother Matt & Little Brother Micah **5 Years**
- Big Sister Rachelle & Little Sister Maddie **5 Years**
- Big Brother Matthew & Little Brother Joshua **5 Years**
- Big Sister Dee & Little Sister Amina **4 Years**
- Big Sister Laura & Little Sister Myaisa **4 Years**
- Big Brother Matthew & Little Brother Samuel **3 Years**
- Big Brother Andy & Little Brother Shane **3 Years**
- Big Brother Pascal & Little Brother Devon **3 Years**
- Big Brother Michael & Little Brother Isaiah **2 Years**
- Big Sister Kathleen & Little Sister Nevaeh **2 Years**
- Big Sister Shela & Little Sister Bryana **1 Year**
- Big Brother Nick & Little Brother Adonis **1 Year**
- Big Brother Ryan & Little Brother Jacob **1 Year**
- Big Sister Tracey & Little Sister Helena **1 Year**
- Big Brother Corey & Little Brother Riley **1 Year**
- Big Sister Joyce & Little Sister Luna **1 Year**
- Big Brother Samuel & Little Brother Isaiah **1 Year**
- Big Sister Nicole & Little Sister Rebecca **1 Year**
- Big Sister Alexa & Little Sister Daniella **1 Year**