A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WILLIAM SALCEDO

Dear Friends,

One year ago, the world was full of questions ... would we see our families for the holidays? Would schools and offices safely reopen? The world may still be full of uncertainties but looking at how far we’ve come and how much has been accomplished is both encouraging and staggering.

Today, our schools have largely reopened, and children returned to in-person classrooms for the first time in over a year. Sporting events, holiday parades, and events are starting to fill calendars. The restrictions and isolation of last year as well as the return to so many ‘normal’ things this year have undeniably taken a toll on our mental health.

The ongoing mental health crisis reminds me why our program at Big Brothers Big Sisters is essential. In this newsletter you’ll read about how mentoring can help move the needle in a positive direction when it comes to children’s and teens’ mental health. Our Bigs remain dedicated to supporting their Littles as schools opened, like in the case of Big Sister Sandy and Little Sister Eleanor whose academic achievement is a testament to hard work in the face of uncertainty.

One thing I can guarantee as a constant is our continued support of youth in our communities and our dedication to positively impact their path to adulthood through one-to-one mentoring. You’ll see many examples in this newsletter and as always in the communities we serve.

Sincerely,

William Salcedo
Executive Director

MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS & MENTORING HELPS

Big Brothers Big Sisters joined the world in shining a spotlight on mental health this month in honor of World Mental Health Day. This day reminds us that it is important and essential for everyone to manage and care for their own mental health, as well as that of others. At BBBSCNNJ, our mentoring programs are proven to positively impact the mental health of vulnerable youth, to help them realize their full potential, and to become successful and responsible adults.

Our success has been recognized by many, including the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) which prioritize preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) – traumatic events during childhood that directly affect health as adults. ACEs can have lasting effects on health, behaviors, and life potential. The CDC states that preventing ACEs could reduce the number of adults with depression by nearly half. According to the CDC, mentoring is recommended as one preventative strategy and BBBS is a proven, evidence-based approach that is the “oldest and best-known example of a one-to-one mentoring program.”

Our program has powerful results due in part to the dedication and commitment of our volunteer Bigs who directly contribute to preventing or addressing ACEs in the lives of our Littles. Studies show that children who have been mentored in a BBBS program are more likely to achieve a healthier lifestyle and more positive life outcomes.

There are over 100 Littles waiting to be matched with a caring adult mentor. Join us and become a Big today mentornj.org/beabig.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR LITTLE SISTER ELEANOR

BBBSCNNJ is proud to highlight Little Sister Eleanor this month for her outstanding achievement being accepted into the Academy of Law & Public Safety (ALPS). Last Spring, in the midst of the pandemic, Eleanor applied and passed the admissions exam. Sandy, her Big Sister of over 8 years, is so proud of the hard work she put in especially considering the challenges of remote learning during her application process. Eleanor is looking forward to a fresh start in a new school where she will continue to focus on her specific goals. BBBSCNNJ wishes her the best of luck in her last two years of high school at ALPS!
On September 30th BBBSCNNJ held the Bigger Together Celebration at Cross & Orange in Asbury Park and raised $115,000 for our one-to-one mentoring programs. Board of Trustees President, Barry Weshnak, kicked off the evening followed by a warm welcome from Board Trustee and owner of Cross & Orange, Bob Fahey. Big Brother Matt Matey and Little Brother Josh shared a moving testimonial about their friendship and the different ways they’ve supported each other, including a recent push up challenge they completed virtually.

A highlight of the event was the live auction led by Board Trustee Michael Salerno, that included the opportunity to “Make-A-Match” where attendees pledged the cost of bringing a child together with a caring, adult mentor and for professional supervision of the match for the first year. A total of 20 matches were funded during the live auction.

Remember Jones duo provided live music which infused the evening with a fun energy. Attendees enjoyed a variety of passed hors d’oeuvres and Confections of a Rockstar donated the desserts.

Big Brother Luke and Little Brother Caleb just hit the six-month mark of their friendship. Caleb was very excited to hear that Luke was a police officer since his dream is to one day become a police officer himself. Although they are not yet at the year mark, they both know they are in it for the long run. Since being matched in March of 2020, Luke and Caleb have enjoyed a variety of activities including hiking, going out to eat, and martial arts. Luke stated he could not have asked for a better Little and he truly enjoys his time with Caleb. Caleb’s mother always says, “Luke is a blessing to Caleb’s life.” Caleb said Luke has taught him so much already and he is thankful for a positive male role model coming into his life. Luke and Caleb are the perfect match and they both look forward to the great memories they will continue to make.

Delta Dental, a Mission Partner of BBBS, hosted a fun night of Virtual BINGO on October 7th. Everyone enjoyed the evening and Delta Dental was generous in providing each Little that joined with a gift card.

October has been filled with sporting events for our Bigs and Littles. Our generous donors have provided free tickets to see the New York Yankees, Jersey Shore Blue Claws, New York Giants, New York Jets and the New Jersey Devils! Win or lose, these Bigs and Littles have enjoyed the exciting opportunity to see their favorite teams play. We are grateful to our donors for thinking of Big Brothers Big Sisters and offering these bonding experiences to our matches.
**OUR MISSION PARTNERS**

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

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**MISSION MAKERS**
- Hackensack Meridian Health
- Morris & Clara Weshnak Family Foundation

**MENTOR MAKERS**
- GRUNIN FOUNDATION
- Lowenstein Sandler

**OUR MISSION PARTNERS**
- Garden Savings Federal Credit Union
- Delta Dental

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**THE BIG WAIT**

Little Brother Seeking Aquarium Enthusiast

Joseph is a polite and caring 5th grader. His current interests are riding his scooter, gaming, and learning code in school. He is excited about having a Big Brother who likes aquariums and going to the park.

Become A Big at mentornj.org/beabig

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**SPOOKY FUN AT THE ANNUAL HALLOWEEN PARTY**

On Saturday, October 16th, the Key Club at Saint John Vianney High School hosted another fun and festive Halloween Party for Bigs and Littles. Seven students decorated their cars with spooky themes for trunk-or-treating, and had a pumpkin decorating area, plenty of pizza and treats, a scavenger hunt for candy and a freeze dance. This year it was held outside, and all the Littles came Halloween ready in costumes. Thank you so much to the students and volunteers from the Saint John Vianney Key Club for hosting this event year after year!

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**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO OUR OCTOBER MATCHES**

- Big Sister Crystal & Little Sister Isabella 6 Years
- Big Brother William & Little Brother Richard 5 Years
- Big Brother Denis & Little Brother Anthony 5 Years
- Big Brother Alexander & Little Brother Shawn 4 Years
- Big Sister Deborah & Little Sister Ashley 4 Years
- Big Brother Monty & Little Brother Matthew 3 Years
- Big Sister Andrea & Little Sister Shayla 3 Years
- Big Sister Mary & Little Sister Alanna 2 Years
- Big Sister Sakina & Little Sister Lanise 2 Years
- Big Brother Kevin & Little Brother Sage 1 Year
- Big Brother Ricardo & Little Brother Joshua 1 Year
- Big Sister Shauna-Mae & Little Sister Carly 1 Year
- Big Sister Suhail & Little Sister Carmela 1 Year
- Big Brother Peter & Little Brother Sean 1 Year
- Big Sister Amanda & Little Sister Skyla 1 Year
- Big Sister Denise & Little Sister Ava 1 Year
- Big Sister Lauren & Little Sister Lea 1 Year
- Big Sister Ilana & Little Sister Nora 1 Year
- Big Brother John & Little Brother Justin 1 Year
- Big Brother Matt & Little Brother Caesar 1 Year

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**WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS?**

Spend your lunch break learning about the ways you can make an impact and defend the potential of kids in Coastal & Northern NJ! There are many ways to get involved with BBBS, 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 Wednesday, Nov. 17th at 12 PM.

Email info@mentornj.org to register!