



LETTER FROM BIG BROTHER TERENCE

Dear Friends,

Happy Black History Month! Representation and mentorship mean a lot to me. As a Black man, I feel fortunate and blessed to have had such amazing role models in my life. Role models of all shades, who've shown me what it means to be a man, a leader, and a brother. As a beneficiary of mentoring, I've always wanted to pay it forward and share that wisdom with the next generation. There are so many powerful ways to give back, but there is something extra special about being someone's Big Brother.

When I first heard about Big Brothers Big Sisters in the Spring of 2016, I was intrigued, but I also had questions and concerns. I wondered things like, *What if it's not the right match? Will I really be able to have an impact? Am I ready to make a commitment like this?* When I met with my Case Manager for the first time, she eased my concerns and answered all my questions. I felt prepared and excited to make the commitment to be a Big Brother.



That summer I was matched with my Little Brother, Yasir. Five years later, I can honestly say I'm not sure who has gotten more out of the program, me, or him. We've had so much fun experiencing new things together and learning about each other. I've gotten to know his family and he has gotten to know mine. **The gratitude I feel for having had the opportunity to be a part of Yasir's life is immense. To watch him grow, and mature, is to be reminded of the power of mentorship,**

representation, and brotherhood. This month, I invite you to reflect on all the mentors and role models who've had a positive impact on your life and consider joining me in paying it forward by becoming a Big.

Sincerely,

Big Brother Terrence

YOUTH SPOTLIGHT: COMPUTER WIZ!



Little Brother Andy is a tech and computer whiz. During the match process he shared with his Case Manager and Big Brother that he had built a computer at age 13! When he first met his Big Brother Bhagyesh, they bonded over their shared interests in programming and coding. In fact, Bhagyesh said, *"I was around that same age when I built my first computer."* While Andy doesn't know yet what he wants to do in the future, learning to code with Bhagyesh has given him so much exposure to things he could do. With Andy's new skills he is beginning to believe he can have a career similar to Bhagyesh, perhaps these two have cracked the mentoring friendship code!

THE BIG WAIT

Carter is a curious, engaged, and sweet 7th grader. He's described as caring about others and in his spare time he loves to play basketball. Carter also loves to write fiction because he can 'make up his own worlds'. He's looking forward to having a Big Brother who is as excited as he is to go to the beach, bowling, and an arcade together.

Become A Big at mentornj.org/beabig

EMPOWERING YOUNG BLACK MALES LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Our Empowering Young Black Males Leadership Program continues to thrive! Through this initiative, students from Neptune High School have the opportunity to learn from Monmouth University student mentors and Black leaders in the community. The young men in our program recently took a tour of the campus at Monmouth University and learned about access to support and resources from campus leadership. We look forward to helping the students learn more about how to overcome challenges, stay motivated, and empower one another.



PROGRAM UPDATE: GIRLS ON F.I.R.E EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

The Girls on F.I.R.E. (Fierce, Influential, Resilient and Engaged) Empowerment Program is currently serving 30 young girls in collaboration with Dropping Jewels, whose mission is to inspire and motivate women and young girls to push through on purpose. So far this year the girls have created vision boards to help positively influence their future and learned about self-care practices that affect us physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. At the end of each program session, the girls always sign off with a self-affirmation and sign language - "I am smart, I am beautiful, and I am important."



MATCH HIGHLIGHT: ONE YEAR MATCHED



Little Sister Maleah and Big Sister Jacki are about to celebrate one-year being matched. They've already formed a wonderful bond and both look forward to continuing to grow in their friendship. Maleah and Jacki have done a variety of fun activities together which include baking, going to the movies, and pumpkin and apple picking. Being a pre-teen, Maleah needed a little extra guidance and support, Jacki has been able to provide that and more. Maleah shared her appreciation for the time spent with Jacki, expressing how good of a listener Jacki is and how much fun they have together. Maleah and Jacki have been talking about going snow tubing for quite some time and are excited to finally be able to do that this winter! We look forward to seeing Maleah and Jacki's match continue beyond their first year!

TRIA BOWL

For Kids' Sake

Join these community events and raise funds for the Big Brothers Big Sisters' one-to-one mentoring programs.

Register today at mentornj.org/forkids



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO OUR FEBRUARY MATCHES

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| ■ Big Sister Lauren & Little Sister Kylie 6 Years | ■ Big Brother Matthew & Little Brother Dai'Ryus 4 Years | ■ Big Couple Kimberly & Timothy & Little Brother Wiatte 3 Years | ■ Big Sister Hallie & Little Sister Tayonna 1 Year |
| ■ Big Sister Heather & Little Sister Kelis 6 Years | ■ Big Brother John & Little Brother Zamyr 4 Years | ■ Big Brother Mitchell & Little Brother Jowan 2 Years | ■ Big Brother Jim & Little Brother Tyler 1 Year |
| ■ Big Brother Max & Little Brother John 5 Years | ■ Big Brother Brian & Little Brother Jihad 4 Years | ■ Big Sister Nicole & Little Sister Meghan 2 Years | ■ Big Sister Eliana & Little Sister Nayelie 1 Year |
| ■ Big Brother Eric & Little Brother Nicholas 5 Years | ■ Big Sister Lisa & Little Sister Jaelyn 3 Years | ■ Big Brother Samuel & Little Brother Aaron 2 Years | |
| ■ Big Sister Sofia & Little Brother Alejandro 5 Years | ■ Big Brother John & Little Brother Jonathon 3 Years | ■ Big Sister Jessica & Little Sister Cassandra 1 Year | |



OUR MISSION PARTNERS

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

