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BACK IN BLACK GALA
Dear Friends,

Our agency continues to make great strides thanks to the support of our volunteers, donors, Mission Partners, and community stakeholders.

Our presence in 10 counties has grown as we continued to put the BBBS mentoring model front and center. Bolstered by your support, our efforts have established BBBSCNNJ as a resource for delinquency prevention, trauma-informed care, and combatting the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

**Last year we served 1,300 youth through 150 new Community Based matches and 35 School, Workplace, College, Bigs in Blue, Diversion, and Education/Empowerment programs.** The C.A.R.E.S. Program continues to expand including the addition of our tutoring, college/SAT Prep, and Girls on F.I.R.E. Empowerment programs. We also formalized a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Steering Committee which places focus on education, recruitment, and programmatic efforts at all levels of the agency.

In our magazine, *The Big Picture*, you’ll read more about each of these programs and our plans to continue on a path of growth.

On behalf of the entire BBBSCNNJ family, thank you for supporting and igniting the power and promise of our Littles. Please continue to support our agency so that we may reach more youth in need of mentoring.

With gratitude,

Barry Weshnak
President, Board of Trustees

William Salcedo
Executive Director
Big Brothers Big Sisters is an organization working to clear the path to a child’s biggest possible future. Partnering parents with our staff, we match each child with a mentor to foster a friendship built on trust, learning, and growth.

Together, we are defenders of potential.
Each time we pair a child with a Big Brother or Big Sister, we start something incredible: a one-to-one relationship built on trust and friendship that can blossom into a future of unlimited potential. And thanks to the nationwide impact study of mentoring organizations, we have the facts to prove it.

Locally, our 2021 Outcomes Report was compiled from completed Youth Outcomes Surveys (YOS) given to our Littles and shows the positive impact of their friendship with their Big.

**2021 YOUTH OUTCOMES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self Esteem</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>felt confident in their social acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>maintained or had improvement in their relationship with their parent(s)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Risk Attitudes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>were competent in avoiding risky behaviors like tobacco, drugs and alcohol use</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>were competent in avoiding peer violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>reported that they had not been arrested for a crime, offense, or violation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>maintained or improved their grades in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>believe they will graduate high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>believe that they will go onto and graduate from college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>improved or stayed the same in their school attendance</td>
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Dear Big Brothers Big Sisters Community,

Parents often find themselves grasping at straws when trying to balance their lives. When it comes to our children, there are even more unknown variables. I was in that “what can I try next” phase with my son James when Big Brothers Big Sisters brought Rich into his life.

Two peas in a pod! That is what comes to mind when I think of their friendship. Not so much because they are similar, but because I feel like they were “cool” with each other immediately. As long as food and expended energy was involved, the day was amazing. And even now, two years on, their outings always involve food and active adventures!

I feel like Big Brother Rich is family. Family takes so many beautiful forms and I guess my definition is “those who care and look out for each other”. It did not happen quickly. At first there was some resistance to texting each other but this worked out well because as I helped to nudge along the communication, I learned so much about them as individuals and as new friends! James is becoming a poised and passionate young man. Rich is always happy to engage in conversation and brainstorm ideas on how to handle a teenager – some of these conversations trigger ideas that make me a better mother!

Now they are on to the next phase of friendship, the deeper stuff. The things that can only start when the bond gets solid and comfortable. I know they will continue to have important conversations about how to live life and about... football and chicken wings and the best sushi!

I am grateful that the universe has given James a mentor, and for Rich’s perspective to help guide him. Thank you, friends & supporters of Big Brothers Big Sisters, for making this mentorship possible.

Denise Fredericks
Mother to Little Brother James
Match Anniversaries are just one of the many ways we celebrate the dedication of our Bigs & Littles. More than 60 matches celebrated 5 or more years together in 2021 and we can’t wait to see what other milestones these matches reach!
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ASPIRE TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS

MICHAEL SALERNO
NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL PLANNING GROUP

STEVEN TSIMBINOS
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
GENERAL COUNSEL

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Our support allowed us to serve 1,300 local children facing adversity in our mentoring programs in 2021, and we look forward to serving even more by the end of 2022. Our programs produce strong results, as evidenced by a national independent longitudinal study of the Big Brothers Big Sisters’ model. Out of the Little Brothers and Little Sisters who participated in our programs, 89% were competent in avoiding risky behaviors like tobacco, drugs, and alcohol use; 90% maintained or improved their grades in school; and 87% felt confident in their social acceptance. Children in the programs were also found less likely to resort to violence as a way of solving problems and had improved peer and family relationships.

We perform ongoing evaluations of matches, examining three key outcome areas: educational success, avoidance/reduction of risky behaviors and socio-emotional competency. Local evaluation data from 2018 revealed the Littles in our program showed statistically significant improvement in all of these key outcome areas.
BEST WISHES

Hackensack Meridian Health is proud to support Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern New Jersey on the occasion of their Back in Black Gala.

Best wishes for a successful event!
Best Wishes To

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OF COASTAL & NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

on a successful

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Michael Salerno • National Professional Planning Group
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DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

BBBSCNNJ STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

At Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern New Jersey, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is an integral part 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. We ensure the opportunity for all voices and perspectives to be heard and honored.

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, 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 full potential that is within all of us by ensuring that all voices and perspectives are heard and honored.

DEI STEERING COMMITTEE

Our agency launched a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Steering Committee responsible for instilling these values and initiatives in every aspect of our agency’s work. The DEI Committee is comprised of staff, board, volunteers, and community stakeholders. Responsibilities include creating an environment that welcomes the presence of differences that may include race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, language, (dis)ability, age, religious commitment, or political perspective. The committee will maintain best practices as it relates to strategic planning, tactical execution, education and training, recruitment of volunteers/mentors, board members, staff, and hiring of diverse vendors.

Additionally, we provide a DEI Training for all staff and volunteers including our Governance Board, Regional Board, and Bigs.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Vernon S. Smith, Ph.D.
Chair, and Assistant Professor and Graduate Program Director of Educational Counseling & Leadership at Monmouth University

Patricia Howard
Chair and BBBSCNNJ Governance Board Member

Barry Weshnak
BBBSCNNJ Governance Board President

William Salcedo
BBBSCNNJ Executive Director

Shannon Oreficé
BBBSCNNJ Director of Programs

Carolyn Cannon
BBBSCNNJ Regional Board Member and Big Sister

Pamela De La Nuez
BBBSCNNJ Regional Board Member and Big Sister

Hunter Hulbert
Big Brother

Sakina Namazi
Big Sister

Jennifer Obodo
Big Sister

Sylvia Jacobs
Director of Diversity & Inclusion at Monmouth Medical Center and Big Sister

Dymareah Debnam
Little Sister Alumnus

Marlyn Marcellus
Little Sister Alumnus

Stephanie Brown
Mother of Littles enrolled in BBBSCNNJ

Shantell Cherry
Mother of Littles enrolled in BBBSCNNJ
The Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) is a diversion program developed by BBBSCNNJ with the goal of providing guidance, positivity, and empowerment to youth with minor involvement in the juvenile justice system. Now in its third year, the Youth Empowerment program has connected 34 youth with mentors in the community from all different backgrounds. Mentors engage youth in various discussions targeted at increasing self-esteem, future preparedness, perspective building, and development of life skills.

Sessions are facilitated by BBBS staff and typically begin with a larger group discussion and allow breakout rooms for one-to-one time for a youth to connect and discuss an activity or topic with a mentor. The group of mentors remain consistent throughout each session and youth may be matched with the same one throughout all sessions or with different ones to gain more perspectives.

Youth complete an interview upon enrollment to help us to learn about each individual and adjust content to what may be beneficial and engaging for them. Previous content has included debate workshops, financial literacy, college and workplace readiness, current events discussions on social issues, activities to strengthen coping mechanisms and healthy habits, as well as guest speakers.

Dear Friends,

The Youth Empowerment Program is critical for kids who feel their problems are insurmountable. Mentors and mentees build a relationship of trust and confidence, together cultivating their strengths and helping them see their potential to succeed in life.

As a mentor for the Youth Empowerment Program, I had the pleasure of working with Bella over a 12-week period. At the beginning of the program, we spoke about her troubles and anxieties, her difficulties with COVID, and how this changed her learning at school. Realizing these are difficult times for all of us, we compared each of our challenges. We talked about how they are different but at the same time similar.

Through the course of the program, I saw her amazing ability to understand and practice the power of gratitude. She shared a story with me about how she encountered a homeless man who barely spoke English. Despite people’s obvious discomfort of him being there, she offered him her compassion and empathy. She helped him in the small ways she could, offering things that she herself had limited access to. I explained to her that this shows how she is thankful for what she has and her willingness to share with others. I told her these qualities will be of great value to her in the future.

The Youth Empowerment Program lets kids see someone cares, assures them they are not alone in dealing with day-to-day challenges, and makes them feel like they matter and that they possess the qualities to succeed in life.

Charlotte
Youth Empowerment Program Mentor
TUTORING PROGRAM

We provide a virtual program for Littles with tutors from Ranney School, Biotechnology High School, Trinity Hall, Christian Brothers Academy, and High Technology High School. The Littles and tutors meet weekly and work on problem solving, homework, and preparing for upcoming exams or papers. This program allows for open enrollment throughout the school year in order to help as many Littles with their academics as possible.

GIRLS ON F.I.R.E PROGRAM

Our Girls on F.I.R.E. (Fierce, Influential, Resilient, Engaged) Empowerment Program launched and grew throughout the year in collaboration with the Dropping Jewels platform, whose mission is to inspire and motivate women and young girls to push through on purpose. The program focuses on empowering young women in many different areas such as leadership skills, self-esteem, financial literacy and more. The program meets once a month in a hybrid of virtual and in-person sessions.

SUBARU SHARE THE LOVE

Thank you to Freehold Subaru for choosing BBBSCNNJ as their hometown charity year after year during the Subaru Share the Love event! The event raises funds each year for our mentoring programs. It was a joy to celebrate the kickoff and later the success of this annual campaign with the Freehold Subaru team and some of our Bigs and Littles.

C.A.R.E.S PROGRAM

Our Creating Access to Resources, Events, and Support (C.A.R.E.S) Program was developed for all youth enrolled in our programs as a way to address needs and provide benefits that go beyond mentoring. Through this initiative, our staff help connect the families we serve to resources for needs such as home and food security, clothing, mental healthcare, tutoring, camp scholarships, school supplies, groceries, and gifts during the holidays. The program is made possible through the generosity of community members and businesses that reach out to support our families both in times of need and all year round. Through community partnerships, our C.A.R.E.S. Program also offers our Bigs, Littles, and children waiting to be matched with opportunities to enjoy experiences like fishing trips, tickets to sporting events, theater, and concerts, holiday parties, back to school events, kayaking, cooking workshops, yoga classes, and more.
CAREER LAUNCH PRESENTATION BY ROBERT HALF

The staffing experts at Robert Half gave a presentation to our high school mentees on interview skills and resuming building. They provided an interactive and informative experience on the important lesson 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.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE PREPS LITTLES FOR A GREAT YEAR

Prior to the start of the school year, 168 Littles and children waiting to be matched, received backpacks and school supplies through our annual Back-to-School Supply Drive. Our generous donors from AT&T, Starbucks, Church of the Nativity, UBS, Manasquan Bank, TDK-LAMDA, Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Fox & Roach Realtors, The Freehold Mall, Geico Cares, The Heldrich Hotel and Aspire Technology Partners, all made it possible for the children to be well-equipped for a successful school year!

HOLIDAY FUN!

In October the C.A.R.E.S. program collaborated with the Key Club at Saint John Vianney High School to host another fun and festive Halloween Party for Bigs and Littles. Students decorated their cars with spooky themes for trunk-or-treating and set up a pumpkin decorating area for Littles. The event also included a scavenger hunt for candy and a freeze dance competition.

We also held two holiday parties for our Littles in Northern and Coastal New Jersey. The first took place at our Asbury Park office and the second was hosted by the Italian American Police Society (IAPS) in Morristown. IAPS has been hosting this event for almost 20 years! Both events included games and refreshments, plus special holiday treats. In Asbury Park our local Starbucks partners served hot chocolate and cookies. Community partners Express, Allure Plastic Surgery, Jersey Property Group of EXP Realty, and AT&T all donated gift cards to brighten this holiday season for our community.
COMMUNITY BASED MENTORING PROGRAM

Our traditional mentoring program connects children ages 6-17 with committed volunteers that are 19 years of age or older. Volunteer mentors, Bigs, and youth, Littles, spend quality one-to-one time out in the community 4-6 hours a month. Together they engage in fun, low-cost, friendship-building activities. The goal of every mentoring relationship is to provide positive guidance and support to enhance the child’s ability to become a confident, competent, and caring adult. A minimum commitment of one year is required for the program with the hope that the friendship will last a lifetime.

We currently serve 1,300 children & teens in 10 counties throughout New Jersey. The need for mentors continues to grow and right now there are 100 children on our waiting list.

Considering becoming a Big? Great!
We host monthly infoSessions to provide an overview of what our program looks like, requirements for being a Big, and other ways to get involved.
Check out our upcoming sessions at mentornj.org/infosessions.

Already a Big? Your commitment to igniting potential in youth is appreciated and admired. You can still help us get more kids off the waitlist by referring friends, family, or colleagues to become a Big. We often hear that a current Big sharing their experience is what inspires others to join.
Email your case manager with any referrals or questions.
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Big Brothers Big Sisters’ School Based Mentoring Programs are developed through partnerships with school districts. These programs offer high school students the opportunity to be role a model and friend to a younger student. The mentoring sessions take place at the school where case managers closely supervise and provide activities for the matches to do together. The commitment for School Based Programs is one academic year, with bi-weekly sessions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School students from...</th>
<th>Mentor students from...</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academy of Allied &amp; Science Health &amp; Communications High School</td>
<td>Asbury Park Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asbury Park High School</td>
<td>7th &amp; 8th Grade Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biotechnology High School</td>
<td>Long Branch Middle School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colonia High School</td>
<td>Colonia Middle School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donovan Catholic High School</td>
<td>Hugh J. Boyd, Jr. Elementary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Gale Wayman Mentoring Program</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lacey Twp High School</td>
<td>Mill Pond Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morristown High School</td>
<td>Alexander Hamilton Elementary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Brunswick High School</td>
<td>Livingston Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillipsburg High School</td>
<td>Phillipsburg Elementary School (partnership with Joseph H. Firth Youth Center)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spotswood High School</td>
<td>Joyce Kilmer School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toms River High School</td>
<td>North Walnut Street Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallkill Regional High School</td>
<td>Franklin Borough &amp; Hardyston Middle Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren Hills High School</td>
<td>Memorial Elementary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Woodbridge High School</td>
<td>Woodbridge Middle School</td>
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Big Brothers Big Sisters’ Workplace Mentoring Programs consist of corporate employees mentoring middle and high school students in the counties we serve. The programs last the entire school year on a bi-weekly schedule at the company or hospital in partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters. Case managers work with the sites to plan and oversee ongoing one-to-one mentoring sessions which also include guest speakers, tours, discussion groups, and projects.

**Employees at...**
- BMW
- Deloitte
- Jersey Shore University Medical Center
- Monmouth Medical Center
- New Jersey Natural Gas (Asbury Park)
- New Jersey Natural Gas (Lakewood)
- Raritan Bay Medical Center
- Saint Peter’s University Hospital

**Mentor students from...**
- Lincoln Elementary School
- Dover High School
- Asbury Park High School
- Long Branch High School
- MLK Jr. Middle School
- Lakewood Middle School
- Perth Amboy High School
- New Brunswick High School

**FORMER WORKPLACE LITTLE GETS MORE INVOLVED WITH BBBS**

Former Little Sister Rebecca was matched with her Big Sister Amy Jo in our Monmouth Medical Center Workplace Mentoring Program during the 2013-2014 school year. Since then, she has enhanced BBBS/NCNJ’s mission by serving as an intern and member of our DEI Steering Committee. Rebecca was the first in her family to graduate from college and received her Master of Social Work degree from Monmouth University. Rebecca shared, “During my time with BBBS, I learned how to find love within my community and realized that being involved in the community can make a huge difference for youth. I will continue to be a part of this amazing organization by becoming a Big Sister within the next year.”
In our College Mentoring Program, students from local colleges and universities volunteer to mentor local high school students from the surrounding school districts. The mentees meet with their mentors on the college or university campus which helps expose them to the college experience. During the mentoring sessions, they explore different college majors, learn about the admissions process, and are provided tools and resources to pursue their dreams through higher education.

**OUR CURRENT COLLEGE PROGRAMS INCLUDE:**

**Empowering Young Black Males Leadership Project**
- **Students at...** Monmouth University
- **Mentor students from...** Neptune High School

**Project BAM (BBBS + Asbury Park HS + Monmouth University)**
- **Students at...** Monmouth University
- **Mentor students from...** Asbury Park High School

**Ramapo College Program**
- **Students at...** Ramapo College
- **Mentor students from...** Paterson High School

**EMPOWERING YOUNG BLACK MALES**

Empowering Young Black Males Leadership Project is a college program that matches students from Neptune High School with Monmouth University student mentors. Sessions take place twice a month and high school students are bussed to Monmouth University to explore the campus and see firsthand the college lifestyle and opportunities. Matches engage in campus tours, explore different departments and hear from various faculty—all while building a friendship. The program was created as an opportunity to give young Black students from Neptune the opportunity to connect with a positive Black mentor and help them understand their potential and all the things they can achieve.
Bigs in Blue (BIB) is a one-to-one mentoring program that connects youth with police, building strong, trusting, and lasting relationships. These relationships help children develop into confident adults and build stronger bonds between law enforcement and the families they serve.

**Officers at...**
Bergen County Sheriff’s Office ➔ Roy Brown Middle School
Morris County Sheriff’s Office ➔ Alexander Hamilton Elementary School

Our current BIB programs have resumed meeting in person after 2 years of virtual program sessions. In the Morris BIB program, we have about 20 participants and activities include K-9 Demonstrations, Sheriff’s Emergency Rescue Team teaching mentees about the different robots used by their team, and a physical fitness day.

The Bergen BIB program had also been meeting virtually, and for their return to in-person sessions the matches were given a tour of the Bergen County Jail. They have also participated in K-9 Demonstrations and a mock crime scene investigation.
OUR MISSION
Create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

OUR VISION
All youth achieve their full potential.
Each Mission Partner package includes specific benefits and your logo displayed at BBBS events and on marketing materials.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT MARYBETH BULL AT MBULL@MENTORNJ.ORG OR 732.444.3538.
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THANKS FOR MAKING THIS EVENT POSSIBLE!
It was my wife who initially encouraged me to apply to Big Brothers Big Sisters. Knowing that I had always wanted a son, my wife suggested I volunteer as a Big after the birth of our fourth daughter. She knew I was partial to athletics and outdoor activities and that those interests might serve a young boy who needed a male role model well.

I knew I wanted to become a Big Brother who would provide a lifetime of support to a child. But there is never a guarantee two people will develop the type of bond necessary to last one year, much less over a decade. Twelve years later, I am honored to say that there has never been a time when the relationship with my Little Brother Daniel felt forced or insincere.

Over the course of our friendship, I’ve been surprised at the tremendous influence Daniel has had on my life. I recall a conversation Daniel and I had when he was 8 years old. We were driving and had just passed an eighteen-wheel truck when he asked me if truck drivers make a lot of money. I said, yes, and he replied that he wanted to be a truck driver when he grew up because he wanted to buy a “house with stairs” just like my house. My response was, “OK, what do you think you need to get a house with stairs?” He said you probably need a lot of money. I agreed and asked him how he thought you go about getting a lot of money. The conversation progressed until we made the connection between education and the qualifications required to secure a job that could lead to that “house with stairs”. It was after that conversation that I knew I was involved in a program that changed lives, both his and mine.

Daniel’s presence in my life has taught me to slow down and has deepened my sense of appreciation for the simpler things in life.

It’s been an honor to experience a fast friendship based on fun shared activities turning into a strong bond. Daniel was a shy, respectful 6-year-old boy in April 2010 when I first met him and over the years he has transformed into a confident and thriving young man who seeks out opportunities to help others.

I believe our friendship and years of fun and influential times together exemplify all the good that comes from providing a caring adult in the life of a young person. This Spring, I look forward with great anticipation to attending his High School graduation. I’m so excited to see what Daniel does with the rest of his life and I look forward to being a part of it.

It is an honor to be named Big Brother of the Year for this incredible organization. Not only am I a volunteer mentor, but I also serve on the Governance Board. I can wholeheartedly say that this organization has changed my life and the lives of so many children and teens through one-to-one mentoring. I invite you to join me and BBBS in igniting potential for local children.

A MESSAGE FROM BIG BROTHER OF THE YEAR: PETE MCGUIGAN

PETE & DANIEL
Big Brother & Little Brother of the Year
My best childhood friend was a Big which is how I learned about Big Brothers Big Sisters. I kept meaning to sign up but continued putting it off telling myself I was too busy. One day I was listening to a podcast about the importance of mentoring and the impact it can have in a child’s life. I was really moved by the stories in the podcast and realized I could be that stable, supportive adult for a child in need. Fast forward to today, I have been happily matched with my Little Sister, Eleanor, for almost 9 years.

Eleanor and I have done a variety of activities in our years together and it has been incredible watching her grow and embrace trying new things. There have been some monumental outings – her first time in New York City, seeing her favorite band in concert, going to Rutgers Day for her first college campus visit, and going on the BBBS fishing trip. The repeat outings that we particularly enjoy are baking together while listening to music or grabbing a coffee and going for walks just to chat.

One thing Eleanor and I really enjoy doing together is volunteering. During the start of the pandemic, we brainstormed how we could help and came up with the idea to put together goody bags for the heroes at a local hospital. We raised $2,700 and put together totes filled with snacks, candy, gift cards, lotions, hand sanitizer, and some cards from the community.

Since I’ve known Eleanor, she has gone from a timid and emotional kid to a bold young woman who knows there is a future out there for the taking and she is determined to find her success. I don’t take credit for her accomplishments; she was always capable of achieving, she just needed a little push to realize her potential and some exposure to more of the world. Sometimes it’s hard to tell if I’m making an impact as a Big or if her growth would have happened regardless of my presence, but it does feel amazing when Eleanor talks about paying it forward someday by becoming a Big.

Thank you, Big Brothers Big Sisters, for the honor of being named Big Sister of the Year. My success as a Big would not be possible without Eleanor, so I share this honor with her. We are proud to represent the agency and the organization, and we hope our story will inspire and encourage others.

Eleanor is an extremely caring soul and always looking for ways to help others. She has been a major influence on me. Spending time with her is the perfect reason for me to stop working and enjoy some local fun, culture, and nature.

A MESSAGE FROM BIG SISTER OF THE YEAR: SANDY KUTZING

“Eleanor is an extremely caring soul and always looking for ways to help others. She has been a major influence on me. Spending time with her is the perfect reason for me to stop working and enjoy some local fun, culture, and nature.”

Since I’ve known Eleanor, she has gone from a timid and emotional kid to a bold young woman who knows there is a future out there for the taking and she is determined to find her success. I don’t take credit for her accomplishments; she was always capable of achieving, she just needed a little push to realize her potential and some exposure to more of the world. Sometimes it’s hard to tell if I’m making an impact as a Big or if her growth would have happened regardless of my presence, but it does feel amazing when Eleanor talks about paying it forward someday by becoming a Big.

Thank you, Big Brothers Big Sisters, for the honor of being named Big Sister of the Year. My success as a Big would not be possible without Eleanor, so I share this honor with her. We are proud to represent the agency and the organization, and we hope our story will inspire and encourage others.

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THANK YOU!
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BBBSCNNJ is like no other team. I speak from first-hand experience being a big sister for 6 years and counting, and also as a member of the governance board for almost 4 years. The leadership and support teams operate with an all-hands-on-deck mindset all to achieve the best outcomes for the children that the organization serves. It’s wonderful to see the agency thriving and growing as it serves more children in our communities. Congratulations on the individual, team, and agency successes. The children you serve should know how fortunate they are to have allies like you in their corner. ~ Heather M.

Heather Meade
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Portfolio Manager
Wealth Advisor
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Dear Big Brothers Big Sisters Community,

If I had the opportunity to tell other kids about my experience with Big Brothers Big Sisters and my Big Brother Pete, I would tell them that having a mentor can be a life changer for them. It has been for me.

Mr. Pete has had a huge influence on my life. We bonded from the moment we met and since then he has shaped and molded me to be the person I am today. I was shy when I was younger, but he encouraged me to come out of my shell. He has taught me life lessons and has guided me on my journey for these past 12 years.

I wouldn’t be the person I am today without him. Probably the greatest lesson Mr. Pete has taught me is the importance of having a good work ethic and being self-disciplined to stay on track for your goals. I visited his office where he showed me his accomplishments and what he has gained from his strong work ethic. We have been ice skating, rock climbing, snow sledding, go-karting, and more – but visiting his office had an impact on me beyond what I could have imagined. It was this experience that inspired me to get a job when I was only 14 and I have worked ever since then to reach my goals. At times I’ve had 2 jobs and made time to volunteer at the local EMT station because one of my goals is to become an EMT and I’d also like to get a criminal justice degree after graduating high school.

I’ve never left a conversation feeling like I didn’t learn something and I know he feels that I have taught him some things as well. I have shown him if you put the time in and have faith and patience in a person, they will grow and eventually mature and sprout in the way you have taught them.

My advice to any Big struggling to connect with their Little is to be patient. Some kids are shy or not used to things like this. That’s how I was at first. Listen to your Little, get to know them and do things they like and have fun while also teaching them. Make them your best friend because that is what Mr. Pete did for me.

I would like other kids to have the same opportunity that I did. Anyone would be lucky to have the experience I’ve had and I am so grateful for it. I encourage anyone thinking about becoming a Big or enrolling their kid in the program to do it – it will be life changing.

Thank you for what you have done for me and many other kids.

Daniel

Little Brother of the Year
MAKE-A-MATCH

COST TO MAKE-A-MATCH:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tr>
<td>Recruitment &amp; intake process of Big, Little &amp; Parent/Guardian</td>
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<td>Volunteer screening &amp; Assessment</td>
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<td>Volunteer training &amp; Matching</td>
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<td>Continuous professional supervision of the match for the first year</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL COST:</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,000</strong></td>
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HAPPINESS IS A GREAT MATCH!

Make a match between a caring adult and a child in need of a friend and role model! Businesses and individuals are invited to donate toward the $2,000 cost to provide a child with an adult mentor and professionally supervise their friendship for the first year. Make-A-Match contributors each receive a photo and description of the match they helped create as well as updates during the year. With your help, we can make a positive impact on a child’s life and future through one-to-one mentoring.

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Congratulations to this evening's honorees.

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Mentorship program opens the door for adults to make a difference

by Shira Vickar-Fox | For Jersey’s Best

Only a few hours each month can change a child’s life forever. The waitlist for a Big Brother or Big Sister is 100 children long and the need is especially great for male mentors and those living in counties including Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Ocean and Warren.

The purpose of the more than 100-year-old organization is to create and support mentoring relationships to positively influence a child’s life. While the mission is life-altering for all participants, there’s also a lot of fun along the way.

“Our Bigs say that they often get as much out of the friendship as their Little does,” said Marybeth Bull, director of development, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern New Jersey. “They get to see life through the eyes of a young person again.”

Bull speaks from experience. Besides working for the organization for 20 years, she has been a Big Sister for the past two years to a now 13-year-old child.

“I’m really blessed that I have my Little Sister in my life,” Bull said. “I thank my Little’s mom for letting her spend time with me because I enjoy her so much.” The two text and play Battleship and Othello on their phones. Their get-togethers can range from an online Bingo program with other Big Brothers and Big Sisters to shopping at Target.

“It’s about spending time together,” Bull said. “It could be working out, shooting hoops, going for a hike. Incorporate your Little into some of the things that you like to do, and have some new experiences along the way, too.”

For prospective mentors, the first step is to get connected with your local chapter at bbbs.org/get-involved. That opens the door to an application and screening process, which includes interviews and background checks.

If selected, Bigs commit to two to three hours twice each month for a minimum of one year. The 12-month commitment provides stability, although relationships can last much longer. “A lot of the kids in the program have adults going in and out of their lives, and we want to make sure we have a consistent person there for them,” Bull said.

Most of the children come from single-parent households; a caregiver might work multiple jobs and not have the time or means for enrichment. “The parent really is a hero,” Bull said. “They’re looking to find a positive person to spend time with their child, to listen to them and be a shoulder to lean on while showing them what the future might hold.”

In turn, Bigs give the gift of their time. The organization recommends free or low-cost activities, and there’s no entrance fee.

The children, who range in age from 6 to 16, also undergo a screening process. Matches are carefully made by staff social workers based on gender, hobbies, interests and geographic location. There’s training for the Bigs, and case managers supervise each match. In addition, there’s ongoing communication with the Little’s parent or guardian.

“It’s mentorship, it’s fun,” Bull said. “At the end of the day, it’s knowing you’re doing something for another person that’s meaningful.”

Big Brothers Big Sisters relies on community support. Each match costs the organization $2,000, which includes the costs of background checks, social worker salaries and more.

To make a donation, visit bbbsnj.org or call 732-544-2224.

Shira Vickar-Fox is the former managing editor of New Jersey Jewish News. She’s a content developer and regular contributor to NJ Advance Media publications.

This article originally appeared in the Winter 2021 issue of Jersey’s Best.

Full Article Available Online: https://bit.ly/JerseysBestBBBSCNNJ
An everlasting connection: Nonprofit fosters relationships with lifetime of impact

by Shira Vickar-Fox | For Jersey’s Best

When Brian Corde met Jihad three years ago, he knew this would be a perfect match. “I knew right away it would be a good situation because, when I arrived at his complex, I could see he was waiting at the door,” said Corde, remembering the 12-year-old boy’s visible excitement about meeting for the first time his Big Brother.

Corde and Jihad, whose family’s last name is not included to protect his privacy, are members of Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of Coastal and Northern New Jersey. The mission of the organization, with chapters in every county of the state, is to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships. Participants are screened and vetted, and matches are carefully considered based on factors such as location, interests and pastimes. Once a successful match is made, a partnership evolves between the child, parent or guardian, and the Big, as the mentor is known.

Jihad’s mother, Kimberly, enrolled him in BBBS to give him “somebody that could show him something other than what he was shown at home… a different side of the world.” She said. Kimberly is the mother of four children; she works two full-time jobs, one as an overnight lab technician and another as a reservations agent for an Asbury Park hotel. In addition, she’s working on her bachelor’s degree in psychology at Kean University. Although his parents are separated, Jihad maintains a relationship with his father. With BBBS, Kimberly sough a mentor to guide her son.

Corde and Jihad’s first meeting was supervised by a BBBS staff member who encouraged the pair to take a walk around the block. Jihad told Brian about his interest in sea animals and dislike for math. Corde, a married father of three children and owner of Atlas Insight, a site selection consulting firm, told Jihad about his favorite movies, and they struck a chord with their mutual interest in “Star Wars” and the Marvel franchise.

By the time they had their first outing alone — dinner at Buffalo Wild Wings — Jihad felt the connection. “It wa like we knew each other already,” he said.

Both Jihad and Corde expressed being forever affected by their Big-Little Brother relationship. Jihad described their tie as “friendly.” He said, “It’s not more fatherly or morechildly, it’s created equally on both parts.” Corde credits Jihad with making him a “more rounded person.” He described some of their conversations as “eye opening,” especially in regard to racism and Jihad’s experience of growing up Black in America. From Jihad, he gained a better understanding “about some of the issues and problems and fears, and the feelings of being marginalized.” For Jihad, Corde made him “more aware of the world… he just makes me think about a lot more things.”

Their twice-a-month outings include fun activities, good food and flowing conversations. Corde took Jihad to his first Giants game and exposed him to shrimp pizza and gyros. Jihad convinced Corde to roller skate, their last outing before the pandemic, which Corde tried for the first time. “I taught him, and he started to get the hang of it at the end,” Jihad said.

Jihad credits Corde with “little habits that I do now,” like carrying a wallet instead of stuffing his money into a pants pocket. The black leather wallet was a Christmas gift from Corde who teaches Jihad financial savviness. For instance, Jihad said that when he shops, he now likes to calculate the original price of items discounted by a certain percentage “to see if it’s really expensive and to see how much of a bargain I’m getting.” He said Corde also taught him “different ways to save.”

Corde also imparts lessons on the importance of accountability. He expressed disappointment about how Jihadquit his cashier job at a pizzeria after only two days of work. Jihad said he felt overwhelmed and stressed by the responsibilities and admitted to quitting “in a very rude manner.” He told a friend to relay a message to his boss that he wasn’t coming back. Corde wouldn’t stand for unprofessionalism and said he told Jihad, “You’ve got to be an adult here… you’ve got to walk in and talk to somebody.” Jihad took that message to heart. “I thank my manager all the time,” he said because Corde taught him to express appreciation to his employers for the time they invest in him. Since August, he’s been a children’s swim instructor and took his lifeguard certification exam in September.

Jihad now works seven to 12 hours a week in addition to maintaining his honor roll status in his sophomore year of high school. He has his sights set on a four-year college and wants to become a marine biologist, veterinarian, forensic psychologist or homicide detective.

Corde said he has enjoyed watching Jihad develop from a reserved child to a confident, outspoken and very tall young man. “He’s got a great mom who really supports him, and I think that’s a big part of this.” Kimberly noticed the changes in Jihad as well. “I see how once he’s been hanging out with Brian his whole attitude, his demeanor changed,” she said. “He’s become more confident, more focused on the goals in front of him.” Shep raised him for obtaining his first job on his own and becoming a respectable young man.

In addition to being a confidante, Corde is a role model and inspiration for Jihad to keep up his 4.1 grade point average. Jihad knows that Corde grew up in a hardworking family of modest means and was the first member of his family to graduate from college.

“Having good grades is one of the things that also (made) him successful,” he said. “I’m hoping one day I can also follow in his footsteps.”

Shira Vickar-Fox is former managing editor of New Jersey Jewish News. She’s a content developer and regular contributor to NJ Advance Media publications.

This article originally appeared in the Winter 2021 issue of Jersey’s Best.

Full Article Available Online: https://bit.ly/JerseysBestEverlastingConnection
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I love you so very much my sonny boy.

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LETTER FROM BIG BROTHER MICHAEL STANDLEY

Dear Friends,

It was a Sunday morning in 2016, when I read an article in the Asbury Park Press about how Big Brothers Big Sisters had over 40 boys, “Littles”, waiting to be matched with “Bigs”, male counterparts. I felt compelled to reach out and learn more about what’s expected in being a volunteer mentor and feeling I could be of good support to this amazing organization, I got involved. For me personally, it was a call to action, so I jumped in with both feet.

I have been a Big Brother to Robert for 6 years. When we first met, he was 9 and he’s now 15 and as tall as I am, HA!

Robert is mature for his years and his interests work very well with my own. I have exposed Robert to the arts and theatre. We have attended many plays and he loves going to them. Also, we’ve been numerous times to “Comedy Sports of the Jersey Shore” Improvisation events, which he really enjoys. Spending time together, going to many sponsored BBBS events and activities like visiting an architectural firm, learning about building design, going to the Monmouth County Fair, attending cooking classes, learning how business operates as I took him to my office one day, and more. I like talking with Robert about school and the importance of embracing education, questioning him about his current projects, essays, or book reports, etc., in general, discussing life’s responsibilities. I also emphasize the importance of being a good friend and having accountability. Robert has a healthy sense of right and wrong and for his age is quite patient with his younger sisters. Robert has an incredibly strong and loving relationship with his mother, which I feel strengthens our relationship as she wants him to enjoy more male balance and influence in his life. Sometimes we go on errands where I show him a male’s perspective to shopping, finding, and selecting items of quality and value, be it at Home Depot, Costco, or the tire store, and then we usually have conversations about the experience.

While our lives are different since the pandemic, we’ve maintained our friendship and kept it as consistent as possible. Now that we can reconvene in more normal ways, we’re both much happier than just talking over the telephone or texting. Face-to-face contact makes a big difference in the depth of our interaction. Activities, such as miniature golf, bowling, topped off with a meal or a snack allow time for us to talk, discuss most anything of interest or concern and usually some good laughs to boot.

As Robert gets older, I look forward to seeing how our friendship further develops as he is an interesting and smart young individual with so much potential. Robert keeps me on my toes and engaged in ways I wouldn’t have known. That makes me feel good and he shows me how much fun it is being around him and learning from a young perspective in our rapidly changing world of ideas.

My advice to anyone considering BBBS and becoming a “Big”, is to extend a helping hand to our future generation while immeasurably enriching their own life. Be like NIKE... just do it!

Thank you,

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**LITTLE SISTER JAELYN IS ON A ROLL… THE HONOR ROLL!**

Since being matched in 2019, Little Sister Jaelyn and Big Sister Lisa have spent a lot of time talking about goals for the future and Jaelyn’s dream to be a nurse when she grows up. With Lisa’s support Jaelyn has worked through various challenges, especially those relating to last year’s virtual learning, to improve her grades and involvement at school with each passing marking period. Jaelyn was excited to see the hard work pay off in the first marking period of this year, as she made the honor roll! Lisa, Jaelyn’s mom, and their BBBS Case Manager are all so proud of her accomplishments and are happy that she has a victory to keep motivating and reminding her that she can achieve whatever she sets her mind to.

**LITTLE BROThER ETHAN GRADUATES HIGH SCHOOL WITH ASSOCIATE DEGREE**

In 2021, Little Brother Ethan graduated high school with an associate degree through his hard work in the Poseidon Program – everyone at BBBS CNNJ including his Big Brother Andrew, were so proud of his success. Ethan’s accomplishments throughout high school showed great determination and discipline by taking on increasingly demanding high school schedules (with college courses) and working an after school job, all while navigating the challenges of the pandemic. Ethan’s case manager notes, “It has been amazing watching Ethan evolve over the course of his involvement in the program. The opportunity to see him grow into a man who seeks to understand and better himself, and to see such a great friendship serve as a backdrop for this growth, is why we do what we do. Ethan’s journey is what we hope for all of the kids in our program.” Ethan has been matched with his Big Brother, Andrew, for over 5 years. We are confident that Ethan will continue to do remarkable things for himself, his family, and his community through these crucial teen years!

**LITTLE SISTER ZOE GROWS IN CONFIDENCE WITH BIG SISTER ALEICIA**

Little Sister Zoe and Big Sister Aleicia kicked off their friendship with an instant bond that has grown by sharing outings to pumpkin patches, aquariums, and Barnes & Noble. Since being matched with Aleicia, Zoe has grown more confident, made friends at her new school, and recently achieved high honor roll. Zoe’s mom said, “I really think Zoe’s success has a lot to do with her time out with her Big Sister Aleicia.” Even Aleicia and their BBBS Case Manager have seen a shift in Zoe’s confidence and interpersonal skills. Everyone is excited to see Zoe continue to grow. If their first few months of outings have made this much of a difference, imagine how much a year can do!

**LITTLE BROTHER JOSH IS FUTURE FOCUSED THANKS TO BIG BROTHER MATT**

Little Brother Josh is a freshman in high school dreaming of the future as his Big Brother Matt inspires him to do well in school. This year Josh has turned to Matt for advice and support in learning about business and finance. He hopes to own his own business one day and has already 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!
**BIG SISTER MARIA & LITTLE SISTER ERIKA**

Big Sister Maria and Little Sister Erika have been matched for about 1 year and although they are still early on in their match, they are already confident this is a friendship that will last a lifetime! After they met for the first time, Erika’s mother expressed gratitude to BBB-SCNNJ for finding “the right person” for her daughter. 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 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, 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 always come easily for Erika and Maria, they discuss things like 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 Maria has become a much-needed safe space for Erika to talk about things going on in her life.

**LITTLE BROTHER MICHYE & BIG COUPLE STEVE & LINDA**

Steve, Linda, and Michye have been matched for two years and love spending time together. During COVID, they kept in touch by having virtual game nights and even making their own bird feeders over Zoom. Recently, Michye, Linda, and Steve went to the park to enjoy science projects and games. Michye had a great time getting hands on science experience and even won a few games of Connect Four.

Michye describes his Big Couple as fun, nice, and funny. **He loves having the opportunity to interact with both Steve and Linda; he often thanks his Case Manager for providing him with two Bigs!** Similarly, Michye’s mother is grateful that her son is getting out into the community and sharing in new activities. Here’s to many more creative outings for this match!

**BIG BROTHER BRYAN & LITTLE BROTHER JAIDEN**

Big Brother Bryan and Little Brother Jaiden have been matched for 2 years and they hit it off right from the start. Fortunately, Bryan and Jaiden live in the same town which made it easy to continue their activities safely during the pandemic. They enjoyed going on socially distanced bike rides and walks to the beach as well as playing tennis and disc golf at a local park. The two even enjoyed some friendly competition by having bike races against each other. While Jaiden told his Case Manager that he won “by an inch,” he also reported, “I was impressed with how fast Bryan could go!”

Prior to the pandemic, Bryan and Jaiden attended many BBBS events including bowling, trips to Sky Zone and visiting the local library. Throughout their friendship, Jaiden has enjoyed learning from Bryan, especially about his job in architecture. Jaiden has described Bryan as “just a really great person who is outgoing and fun” and “really bright and very open.” **In a conversation with their Case Manager, Jaiden’s mother said, “Thank you for everything! One of the best decisions I’ve ever made was enrolling Jaiden into this program!”**
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If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a Leader.
- John Quincy Adams

Michael,
Congratulations to you and this evening’s honorees for the well-deserved recognition of your service and generosity for such a worthy cause.

Love,
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TO ALL THE HONOREES
Dear Michael, Congratulations on being recognized for all the good that you do in support of such a great organization. People like you are rare, special, and a gift to all that interact with you. We are honored to know you and applaud Big Brothers Big Sisters for celebrating your contribution to a great charity.

Karl Kado & Joseph Baumann

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