

# NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2023



## LETTER FROM BIG SISTER OF THE YEAR, JENNIFER SCAMORZA

Dear Big Brothers Big Sisters Community,

In 2013 I heard an ad for Big Brothers Big Sisters on the radio. I'd been contemplating mentoring for a while but hadn't taken the next step yet. The radio ad moved me from contemplating to doing, I pulled into the nearest parking lot and called them on the spot. **As I write this letter, my hope is to be your "radio ad" inspiration.**

I was matched with my Little Sister, Nevaeh, and early on, our "Sister Saturdays" included making holiday cards and gifts for her classmates and teachers, visiting bookstores, or occasionally sharing a meal of chicken fingers and lemonade. As our bond grew stronger, we attended each other's family events, learned each other's hobbies - we even taught a children's yoga workshop for Bigs and Littles!

Our outings didn't consist of expensive activities and shopping trips. Nevaeh made it clear time after time that she didn't need shopping sprees, amusement parks, or concert tickets. What she truly wanted was someone she could count on. She wanted a consistent and steady friendship.

As with most relationships, there were occasional challenges and times where I longed for the days when lemonade made everything better. But during those hard times, I had the support of our case manager whose regular check-ins and guidance was so appreciated by myself and Nevaeh.

After 10 years of friendship, Nevaeh and I truly feel bonded as sisters. Over the next few months, I will see Nevaeh graduate from high school, and she will stand by my side when I marry my fiancée.

One day, I will encourage Nevaeh to become a Big, hoping she'll pay it forward. **Today, I'd like to encourage YOU. Let my letter be the nudge you need to go from contemplating it to doing it.**

Sincerely,

Jennifer Scamorza  
*BBBSCNNJ Big Sister of the Year*



**"Jennifer was always there. She stepped up and stuck around for all these years and I'm so grateful for her."**

**- Nevaeh**

### Youth Spotlight: Future is looking bright!

Little Sister Laila was matched with her Big Sister Jonnelle in the summer of 2022. Recently she's been preparing to take her SAT's and making plans for life after high school with the help of Jonnelle. Laila and Jonnelle's friendship blossomed quickly and has been full of happiness, new experiences, and consistency. When Laila was asked what she enjoys about spending time with Jonnelle, she said, "That's like if someone asked me why I enjoy spending time with a relative, it's just good vibes, good laughs, and good conversations with someone who is always there for you!"

Laila and Jonnelle recently attended our International Women's Day event where Laila was so inspired, she took the initiative to speak with the presenters at the end. Jonnelle was so impressed by the way Laila carried herself and exchanged contact information for future opportunities. Jonnelle recently shared, "Laila is wise beyond her years, and I feel each time we are together we are both learning from one another." We are confident Laila is destined for greatness and can't wait to see this match continue to prosper and work together towards their future goals.



### The BIG Wait

Laguerre is a thoughtful, creative, and active 4th grader. He loves riding his bike and fishing. Laguerre would like to become either a police officer, race car driver, or monster truck driver. He is looking forward to playing basketball and riding bikes with a Big Brother.



## CARES Corner!

### Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

*Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) is an integral part of our values and mission. In this section we will share news, updates, and other materials related to DEI.*

We formalized our DEI work by creating a Steering Committee made up of staff, board members, volunteer Bigs, interns, parents, and even some former Littles that are now adults. The purpose of the committee is to keep DEI front and center in all the work we do at BBBS but specifically in three areas - training, recruitment, and programmatic initiatives. We are proud to say we've made some intentional steps in the right direction including DEI training for our staff, a six part DEI Training for our volunteers, ongoing and intentional marketing campaigns, we've attracted diverse individuals to join all levels of the organization, and we've created a DEI Action Plan that continues to guide us in 2023 and beyond.

Anyone interested in more information about the DEI Steering Committee or DEI in general should email [soreficé@mentornj.org](mailto:soreficé@mentornj.org).



In honor of **National Youth Violence Prevention Week** we hosted a Walk for Peace & Positivity in Morristown. Attendees included Littles and their families, Bigs, and even **Morristown Mayor Timothy Dougherty** was on hand to celebrate and to present BBBS-CNNJ with a proclamation declaring April 24th Big Brothers Big Sisters Day for Peace & Positivity.

Our workplace program partner, **Deloitte**, also hosted us before and after the walk in their beautiful new office space. The walk took place in downtown Morristown and was well-received with a few high-fives and honks for peace!





### Match Highlight: Now & Then!

Little Brother Jose was 12 years old when he met his Big Brother Bob, a retired Air Force General currently working as an airline pilot. Five years later because of their shared love of fast cars, planes and the outdoors, their friendship is still going strong. Two of their favorite activities include taking Bob's wave runners out to get a closer look at the dolphins and hiking the trails in Sandy Hook. Since being matched with Bob, Jose has made great progress in his personal and behavioral development and recently he got his first job at a local restaurant. Bob is impressed by Jose's work ethic and knowing his interest in seeing the world, has encouraged him to consider working for an airline as a flight attendant. When asked how Bob's friendship has helped him over the last 5 years, Jose shared, "I look at life in a different way now and I love Bob. To be honest he's my best friend. I'm grateful to have him."



2019

2023



### Happy Anniversary to our April Matches!

- 8 Years**  
Big Brother Bill & Little Brother Jayden
- 6 Years**  
Big Brother Jeff & Little Brother Jake
- 5 Years**  
Big Brother Christopher & Little Brother Joseph  
Big Sister Lesley & Little Sister Skyi
- 4 Years**  
Big Brother Tim & Little Brother Christian  
Big Sister Carly & Little Sister Vanessa  
Big Brother Anthony & Little Brother Shantae
- 2 Years**  
Big Brother Aaron & Little Brother Alex  
Big Sister Sheyla & Little Sister Ingrid  
Big Brother Ryan & Little Brother Dominic
- 1 Year**  
Big Sister Jessie & Little Sister Tayonna  
Big Brother Matthew & Little Brother Nathan  
Big Brother PJ & Little Brother Jevon  
Big Brother Christopher & Little Brother Drake  
Big Sister Kelly & Little Sister Michaeyla-Nicole  
Big Brother Christopher & Little Brother Aiden



Join us on Friday, June 9th for The Big Idea Gala in celebration of mentoring and the impact of Big Brothers Big Sisters in our communities.

SPONSORSHIPS & TICKETS:  
[www.mentornj.org/thegala](http://www.mentornj.org/thegala)

Our **MISSION PARTNERS** support the fundraising efforts, mission, and vision of BBBSCNNJ throughout the year.

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Hackensack Meridian Health



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