

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2023



LETTER FROM BIG SISTER MJ

Hello BBBS Friends!

I'm excited to share my experience as a Big Sister and the impact it's had on my Little Sister, Yas, and on me. We've been matched for about two years and were fast friends from the start. **Many things along the way have surprised me, but two key things have remained true throughout - it's the little things that strengthen our bond and mentoring has had a hugely positive impact in both our lives.**

When we were first matched, Yas was experiencing a lot of strong emotions, as we all do. Our first few outings included casual meals and a lot of talking. We talked about everything...parents (*they just don't understand...or do they?*), friendships (*the highs and lows*), music (*Thomas Rhett vs. Bad Bunny*), elementary school vs. high school, and the possibilities of her future. **Simply giving Yas the opportunity to discuss these different emotions and thoughts plus giving her space to ask questions without judgement helped to ease her mind of the stress and pressure that often builds up.**

I believe these easygoing outings and conversations gave Yas the courage and perspective to take more control of and better understand of her own feelings. She has grown and matured so much since our first meeting. And it's not just me, her mom recently shared with our case manager that since we've been matched, Yas's behaviors and attitude toward everyone in their family have improved.

For me, witnessing Yas gain strength through our friendship and her own experiences has been rewarding beyond measure. It's never felt like "volunteering" to me because I just look forward to our time together and I can't wait to see what's next.

Thank you for taking time to read about my experience. If you're considering becoming a Big please visit www.mentornj.org to learn more!

Sincerely,
Big Sister MJ



Match Highlight: Silly Faces, Serious Friendship

Little Brother Jeremiah and Big Brother George are approaching their one-year friendship anniversary! They've had a lot of fun together during their first year matched including going on bike rides, visiting arcades, and exploring museums like Liberty Science Center and Insectropolis. George even brought Jeremiah to a Monmouth University basketball game, since he knows that Jeremiah has an interest in basketball. Jeremiah's mother enrolled him in the program in hopes to provide him with a positive male presence and role model, and George has proven to be exactly that! From the first day they met until now, there's nothing but smiles (and some silliness) between these two!

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH!



"Remember that it's okay not to be okay; **seeking help is a sign of strength.** Take care of yourself, prioritize your mental health, and remember that recovery is possible. **You are not alone!"**

Solomon Thomas,
NY Jets Defensive Tackle

**Scan to watch
Artis & Solomon's
IG Live
about
mental
health.**



Youth Spotlight: Little Sister, Big Ambitions

Little Sister Madison is 16 years old and was matched with her Big Sister Carmen in the fall of 2021. They have developed a meaningful and strong connection that they both describe as a “real sister bond.” Madison loves experiencing new things with Carmen like taking jiu jitsu classes, visiting NYC, going on fishing trips, shoe shopping for her prom, and Carmen has even helped her learn how to drive. Madison is looking ahead to her senior year with enthusiasm as she’ll be participating in an honors program that focuses on preparing students for careers in education. Regarding her ambition, Carmen recently shared, “Watching Madison flourish and be willing to push her limits has been so amazing. I know that many opportunities will continue to come her way and I cannot wait to be by her side to support her through it all.”

Madison often expresses her appreciation for her friendship with Carmen and how well they’ve connected from the beginning. During a recent outing to celebrate their one-year anniversary, they reflected on the last twelve months together and Madison asked Carmen, “Can we be matched for 10 years?!”



CARES Corner! Creating Access to Resources, Events, and Support



Thank you **Freehold Subaru** for choosing BBBSCNNJ as beneficiary of the annual "Share the Love" campaign which ran from November 2022 to January 2023 and raised more than \$28,000 for our mentoring programs. The team at **Freehold Subaru** invited Bigs & Littles to celebrate recently with a luncheon!

The BIG Wait

Quinn is an 8-year-old who doesn't shy away from adventure. He enjoys a variety of hobbies including waterskiing, singing, and dancing. Quinn is looking forward to being matched with a Big Brother and spending outdoor time together at the park.

Happy Anniversary to our May Matches!

6 Years

Big Brother Brian & Little Brother Michael
Big Brother Jonathon & Little Brother Gavin

5 Years

Big Sister Margaret & Little Brother Savon

3 Years

Big Sister Laura & Little Sister Alexandra
Big Sister Sabeha & Little Sister Sha'Niyah
Big Sister Alicia & Little Sister Ireland
Big Sister Kathy & Little Brother Elias

2 Years

Big Brother Simon & Little Brother Emi
Big Brother David & Little Brother Julian
Big Sister Kimberly & Little Sister Meghan

Big Sister Reena & Little Sister Libia

1 Year

Big Brother Nick & Little Brother Sean
Big Sister Maria & Little Sister Skarleth
Big Brother Rob & Little Brother Shriyan
Big Sister Jordyn & Little Sister Ryleigh
Big Brother Matthew & Little Brother Lawson
Big Sister Sophie & Little Sister Jordi
Big Brother Christopher & Little Brother Gabriel
Big Sister Kathleen & Little Sister Allison
Big Sister Nipa & Little Sister Makayla



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

