

# NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2023



## LETTER FROM BIG BROTHER, ANDREW MCGIBBON

Dear Friends,

Once again pride month is upon us. To many it is a cause for celebration. I see and recognize the strides we have made, and I understand that we want to celebrate. There has been progress made, however, much work remains to be done.

As a Big who also happens to be a gay cisgender male, one of my primary interests in joining BBBS was to see if I could be the person in a child's life that I wished I had had in mine at that age. Someone who would hold space for a teen to talk about what they are experiencing, which might include bullying, alienation from family and friends, homelessness, and the mistreatment and stigmatization of the LGBTQ+ community in general.

Normalizing and validating a Little's experiences can go a long way in helping them feel heard. They simply need an outlet to express themselves where they don't feel judged. This is akin to opening a sluice gate and allowing water to bypass a dam rather than just flowing over it. It helps to relieve pressure. Unfortunately, we know what can happen if the pressure isn't relieved. The consequences can be tragic.

**Bigs provide an environment where Littles feel they can be honest, and their feelings will be accepted at face value without judgement.** Bigs are responsible for giving Littles the opportunity to relieve the pressure.

It is important to celebrate our gains, like a wider acceptance of LGBTQ+ issues such as marriage equality. I never in my life thought I would be able to marry my husband. But while we take stock of what we have accomplished, we must also be realistic about the work still ahead. Teen suicide in this country has reached epidemic proportions and attention must be paid. The issue of teenage suicide doesn't just affect LGBTQ+ children, it affects all children.

Mentoring has been shown to create positive impact and to improve feelings of social acceptance among the youth involved. **Join me in making a difference by becoming a Big, and the impact you have could save a life.**

Sincerely,

Andrew McGibbon  
Big Brother



## WHAT TO DO IF A PERSON COMES OUT TO YOU

- Thank them for sharing with you
- Be conscious of your reactions and language
- Tell them you care about them
- Reassure them this won't change your relationship
- Be affirming & validating
- Do not make assumptions, ask (respectful) questions
- Do not make it about you, focus on them
- Keep your personal beliefs to yourself
- Respect their confidentiality, privacy, and right to come out in their own time with others
- Stay in touch & offer support afterwards
- Learn more about the LGBTQ+ community
- Be an ally!

## The BIG Wait

Joseph is a 5th grader known for his sense of humor. While his main interests are gaming and Pokémon he also enjoys playing chess and fishing. Joseph is looking forward to spending time with a Big Brother trying new things and sharing his interests.

**APPLY TO BE A BIG:** [mentornj.org/beabig](http://mentornj.org/beabig)

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

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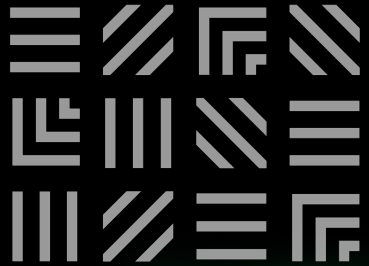
**UBS**  
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## Match Highlight: Big Sister Brings Out Kharma's Spark!

Little Sister Kharma and Big Sister Erin met last spring and will be celebrating their one-year match anniversary this month! In the last year, they've had a great time getting to know one another, with Erin describing Kharma as "an absolute doll" who she loves spending time with. Some of their most memorable outings together include bowling, visiting a local farmer's market, treating themselves to Philly Pretzels, and seeing a local performance of *The Wizard of Oz*.

Kharma's mother has commented on the difference she's seen in Kharma since first being matched with Erin and recently shared that when Kharma comes home from seeing her Big Sister, "She's got this spark in her I felt had been missing for a while." And when asked to share why she likes spending time with Erin, Kharma was quick to say, "Because she's awesome!" We're excited to see how this friendship will continue to grow in the next year of their match!



## Youth Spotlight: Lexi Prepares for High School & Beyond with Big Sister

Little Sister Lexi was matched with Big Sister Mickey earlier this year and they hit it off immediately. Since being matched, Lexi has been doing well in school, focusing, and working hard, connecting with new friends, and completing her homework. She is excited to be starting high school next year and has hopes of going to college to become an engineer. Lexi is interested in different kinds of art, so together she and Mickey have spent time at different craft fairs and discovering new parks, they even made a trip out to Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton Township. More recently they've started working on a mood board and bucket list for their summer activity goals.



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



Woodturning Workshop led by Atlantic Shore Woodturners

## Hackettstown Fish Hatchery



# Thank you to all who supported our **BIG Idea Gala!**



View more photos on Facebook!



[CLICK HERE](#)

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO OUR JUNE MATCHES!

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 10 Years<br>Big Sister Sandy &<br>Little Sister Eleanor      | 1 year<br>Big Sister Katie<br>& Little Sister Diamond |
| 9 Years<br>Big Sister Elisabeth &<br>Little Sister Alexandra | Big Brother Jose<br>& Little Brother Iker             |
| 7 years<br>Big Brother Matt &<br>Little Brother Micah        | Big Brother George<br>& Little Brother Jeremiah       |
| 6 years<br>Big Sister Laura &<br>Little Sister Myaisa        | Big Brother Michael<br>& Little Brother Joseph        |
| 5 years<br>Big Brother Matthew<br>& Little Brother Samuel    | Big Brother Michael<br>& Little Brother Andrew        |
| Big Brother Andy<br>& Little Brother Shane                   | Big Sister Monika<br>& Little Sister Mariah           |
| 4 years<br>Big Brother Michael<br>& Little Brother Isaiah    | Big Sister Jacki<br>& Little Sister Angie             |
| 3 years<br>Big Sister Joyce<br>& Little Sister Luna          | Big Sister Joelle<br>& Little Sister Julianna         |
| Big Sister Nicole<br>& Little Sister Rebecca                 | Big Sister Erin<br>& Little Sister Kharma             |
| 2 years<br>Big Sister Deborah<br>& Little Sister Giovanna    | Big Sister Christine<br>& Little Sister Haylin        |
| Big Sister Brianna<br>& Little Sister Monica                 | Big Sister Jillian<br>& Little Sister Skyla           |
| Big Sister Kim<br>& Little Brother Joey                      | Big Sister Tiffany<br>& Little Sister Tryniti         |
| Big Sister Lindsay<br>& Little Sister Sofia                  | Big Brother Juan<br>& Little Brother Dominick         |
|  | Big Sister Jessica<br>& Little Sister Sophia          |



**FORE! The Kids  
Golf Outing**  
Monday, August 28

[www.mentornj.org/forethekids](http://www.mentornj.org/forethekids)



**Annual Beach  
Volleyball Tournament**  
Sunday, September 10

[www.mentornj.org/volleyball](http://www.mentornj.org/volleyball)