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big

WINTER 2015



Big Brothers Big Sisters

GREATER RICHMOND
HAMPTON ROADS
TRI-CITIES



Being a Big means there is one more adult to help build confidence and a firm foundation for the future with the hope and knowledge that a Little can achieve anything.

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Match Stories

Big Expectations

“I always had an interest in mentoring,” reflects Big Brother Michael Hobson, “After researching area programs, Big Brothers Big Sisters was the right fit for me.” In April 2011, Michael was matched with Little Michael, then 13 years old.

“My mother signed me up for a Big Brother when I was in middle school because my father was not around and she wanted me to have a male role model,” recalls Little Michael.

They hit it off right away, sharing interests in sports and music, but education truly brought the Michaels together. “I knew education is the way to give you options in life – Michael was a good student, so I encouraged him,” stated Big Michael.

Little Michael would be the first in his family to attend college, so his mother didn’t know how to prepare him. Starting when he was 14, the two Michaels spent weekends touring Virginia colleges, including Virginia Union, VCU, William & Mary, Christopher Newport, University of Richmond and University of Virginia. When the time was right, Big Michael assisted him with the college application process, including SAT preparation and financial aid.

“I remember when we were touring UVA, Michael questioned if he could get into a top college,” relayed Big Michael, “I always encouraged him to set his sights high.”

Thanks to Big Michael’s years of encouragement and assistance, Little Michael was thrilled when he was

accepted with full scholarships to both the Universities of Virginia and Richmond. Little Michael eventually decided on Richmond, primarily for the smaller size.

“I am loving it so far,” exclaims Little Michael as he approaches his first midterms. He is grateful to Big Michael for helping him become the first person in his family to attend college. “We were a great fit at a time when I really needed him, and we will always be in touch.” Big Michael is going to an upcoming football game with Little Michael and his family. Go Spiders!



Starry Future

A love of art bonded Big Sister Maria Towle and Little Sister Emma when they were matched at Martin Luther King Middle School last school year. “I always wanted to be a Big Sister,” recalled Maria, and the timing was finally right when she relocated to Richmond from New York. Maria is a Speech Pathologist whose schedule works well with the site-based program which meets in the early evening for one hour each week.

“I love arts and crafts,” stated Emma, “so I was excited when I found out my Big Sister did, too.” Maria wanted to tie in Emma’s passion for art with education, so the two researched the backgrounds and works of famous artists such as Van Gogh and Picasso. Van Gogh’s painting *Starry Night* caught Emma’s eye and, with Maria’s encouragement, she wanted to copy it. The next time they met, Maria brought supplies so Emma could paint her own interpretation.

Emma and Maria kicked off their second school year studying and creating origami. Thanks to Maria’s support, Richmond has a talented and inspiring young artist to watch!



Full Circle

“I saw so much of me in him.”

“I did not have a father growing up and a mentor stepped in and saved me,” recalled C.S. 1 Dickinson who works for COMSUBFOR in the U.S. Navy, “and if it wasn’t for him, I wouldn’t have made it to the Navy and be where I am today.” C.S. 1 Dickinson wanted to give back and became a mentor with Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Big Brother Cedric and Little Brother Omari met in site-based mentoring at Blair Middle School during the 2014-15 school year. They took to each other immediately. “I saw so much of me in him,” relayed Cedric, “He was doing similar things as I was doing at his age.”

Omari’s mother, Stephanie Crudup, has seen positive changes in Omari since he started meeting with Cedric. “Cedric has had such a calming influence on him – he is not as angry, he is making better decisions, and his grades have improved,” stated Stephanie.

Cedric and Omari enjoy being together so much, they moved to community-based mentoring when the school year ended so they could see each other over the summer. Cedric visits with Omari weekly and loves seeing the positive changes in him.

“A lot of kids just need a mentor to point them in the right direction,” reflects Cedric, “and I just want to be there for him, as my mentor was for me.”



Big Brothers Big Sisters is excited to share more of its expansion to Hampton Roads serving military-dependent middle school youth as part of Operation Bigs. To get involved there, reach out to Program Manager Erica Blanding at 757-392-5155 or eblanding@bigbrobigsis.com.

Big Thanks to our Community Partners



Thanks to **Troutman Sanders** who provided the beautiful venue overlooking the James River to host the *2nd Annual Big of the Year Selection Party*. **Mosaic Catering** provided delicious appetizers and drinks. Congratulations to our finalists Sharon Berg, Pam Farnham, Mary Akers Johnson, Chris Cooke, Matt Gay, and Randy Hughes, Sr. The finalists were selected from touching entries made by their Littles and the Bigs then expressed their thoughts on mentoring. Following the remarks, the audience voted for the Big Brother and Big Sister of the Year.

Thanks to **YMCA Bright Beginnings**, 30 Big/Little matches started the school year off on the right foot. After sharing dinner, the Littles were provided with backpacks, school supplies, back to school clothes, and powerful lessons about budgeting and goal setting. Each Big Brothers Big Sisters family who participated had a household income below \$20,000/year, so Bright Beginnings alleviated many needs.

Richmond Multisports selected Big Brothers Big Sisters as the charity recipient for The Tavern Sprint Triathlon at Robious Landing Park. Hundreds of participants visited the Big Brothers Big Sisters tent located in the center of the action to learn how they could volunteer as a Big.

Sara Campbell boutique offered a special event leading up to An Evening for Kids' Sake for attendees to shop for their party dresses and accessories with proceeds going to Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Two days of intensive training from the **Caron Student Assistance Program** taught Big Brothers Big Sisters employees about current trends in alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. This education will help support parents and mentors, and promote the mutual goal of healthy lifestyles so students can achieve and thrive.

For every home run hit during the Richmond Flying Squirrels' season, **Wells Fargo** made a contribution to Big Brothers Big Sisters – culminating in an on-field donation of \$3,000 and a great experience for BBBS matches to sit behind home plate.

Partnership for Nonprofit Excellence wrapped up its first partnership and started its second with Big Brothers Big Sisters in the **Board Immersion** program. Emerging nonprofit volunteer leaders have the opportunity to learn hands on about vision, resilience, adaptability and accountability – a few of the qualities needed to achieve and sustain success.

big
benefits
from holiday
shopping



Shopping for family or friends?

- Kroger supports Big Brothers Big Sisters when you register your Kroger Plus card at [krogercommunityrewards.com](https://www.krogercommunityrewards.com). Register Big Brothers Big Sisters as your charity of choice with organization code 86672 or look for Big Brothers Big Sisters Services, Inc.
- Online shopping is a great way to beat the traffic. If you're buying from Amazon, simply use [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) and select Big Brothers Big Sisters Services, Inc.

Big Time Fun



> Little Sister Jamiyah and Big Sister Carla Pool

There was something for everyone at the Back to School Celebration at the Northside YMCA – whether it was playing basketball, getting a balloon sculpture from All About Fun Entertainment, posing in the photo booth, eating subs or creating art. Starting off the school year with a positive attitude helps Little believe they can succeed in school and make meaningful relationships with peers and adults.

“We had a great time getting out of our comfort zones with the balloons and crazy photos,” reflected Big Brother Genesis Peterson. Genesis and his Little Damien also had the opportunity to play basketball – one of their favorite activities since they started their match this summer. Genesis enjoys attending Big Brothers Big Sisters events because they are opportunities to meet other Bigs and Littles, learn about new activities to do with Damien, and connect with the BBBS mentor coaching team.

Long-time volunteer Mary Dorsey organized the art project with help from Spirited Art’s generous donation of paints, brushes and canvases. The Bigs and Littles painted personalized squares reflecting their passions, ranging from skateboarding to sunsets. The colorful piece was auctioned off at An Evening for Kids’ Sake for hundreds of dollars.

Win Win Win

With year-end quickly approaching, now is a good time to plan your charitable contributions.



If you have held an appreciated stock or mutual fund for more than one year, you can donate those securities to Big Brothers Big Sisters, receive a tax deduction for the fair market value of the securities, and eliminate any capital gains assessments on the future sale of the securities. This is a more tax efficient way to gift larger amounts.

Gifting appreciated securities might make sense for you:

- If you’re unable to establish exactly when you bought a security or not able to easily determine the security’s cash basis.
- If you’ve got a large allocation of appreciated stock then gifting some of it is a very good way to lower your risk exposure as well as further diversify your portfolio.

Discuss your gifting strategy with your tax professional prior to making your gift to ensure you maximize your benefits.

The end of the year is quickly approaching. If you want to take advantage of the tax deduction in 2016, talk to your advisor and then talk to Big Brothers Big Sisters. To make a gift of appreciated securities, please contact Ann Rohde Payes at apayes@bigbrobigsis.com or 804.261.4940.

An Evening for Kids' Sake



Altria



Dominion



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An Evening for Kids' Sake, presented by Altria, was held at the historic Hotel John Marshall and raised over \$119,000 to support 100 matches for Big Brothers Big Sisters! A festive night included signature cocktails from Cirrus Vodka, craft beer from Stone Brewery, heavy hors d'oeuvres, silent and live auctions, dessert from Duck Donuts and lots of dancing to the cover band, Hot Sauce. Favorite live auction items included seats in a private suite to see the Washington Nationals, a year of date nights at Richmond's most popular restaurants, and vacations to Smith Mountain Lake, Corolla, Barbados, and a winter adventure in Montana!

The highlight of the evening was honoring Big Sister of the Year, Sharon Berg, and Big Brother of the Year, Randall Hughes, Sr., with a touching video showcasing each of them spending quality time with their Littles.

Many thanks to An Evening for Kids' Sake committee members, sponsors, and guests, who were dedicated to making this event a success, ensuring Big Brothers Big Sisters can provide more children facing adversity with caring and compassionate adult mentors.



CO-CHAIRS: Jim & Michele Riley
and Joe & Mary Dorsey

COMMITTEE:
Michele & Ron Bedsaul,
Elisebeth Gelardi, Kathy &
Bruce Margopoulos, Lauren &
Craig McCormick, Brooke &
Ken Shepard

> LEFT: Samantha Thompson and Emanuel Thompson / RIGHT: Heather Garnett, Marshall Chambers, Jim Riley, Dan Phipps and Beth Phipps / ABOVE: Ann Payes and Andrea Archer

BIGS OF THE YEAR

2015 BIG BROTHER OF THE YEAR: **RANDY HUGHES**

Usually we encourage our children to get involved. This time it was the other way around. Randy's adult son so enjoyed the experience of being a Big Brother that he encouraged his father to become a Big as well. Randy was matched with Little Brother Roy whose mother was raising him alone and wanted him to have a male role model. "Roy and I were matched when he was 11 and just a little kid," Randy commented, "and now he is a young man. I have had a lot of joy watching him grow up these past four years." Roy gushes, "Randy has been a great Big Brother to me. He was there for me during middle school to guide me when I really needed it with school, manners, and sports." Thanks to Randy, Roy now feels prepared for high school at Highland Springs where he is a freshman member of the football team who loves math and science and dreams of one day becoming an engineer.

FINALISTS: MATT GAY / CHRIS COOKE



2015 BIG SISTER OF THE YEAR: **SHARON BERG**

For the past four years, Sharon has been matched with Little Sister Savannah who is now in seventh grade at Moody Middle School. To Sharon, being Savannah's Big Sister means "that in her life, there is one more adult who can help her build confidence and a firm foundation for the future with the hope and knowledge that she can be whatever she wants to be, and I will be there cheering her on." "Sharon is a great friend to me," beams Savannah, "We are always trying new experiences that I would have never have done like riding bikes, sewing, canning and pickling, picking apples, and much more." Now that Sharon's children are grown, she enjoys sharing time with a young person who is open to new experiences and helps her stay active. "Savannah brings me joy and a sense of fun and purpose," states Sharon, "I love being Savannah's Big Sister."

FINALISTS: MARY AKERS JOHNSON / PAM FARNHAM





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Learn how Big Brother Michael's big expectations helped Little Brother Michael earn a full scholarship to University of Richmond

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BOWL
FOR KIDS' SAKE

save the date:

March 18, 2016

AMF Sunset Lanes

Raise money, make matches, win prizes!

Top fundraisers can win cruises, hotel stays, restaurant and shopping gift certificates. Form your team or become a sponsor now and start 2016 with a BIG impact. Contact Julie Ehlers at jehlers@bigbrobigsis.com or 804-261-4940 to learn more.