

# BIG HAPPENINGS Newsletter



257 S. Middletown Rd., Suite 204 Nanuet, NY 10954

> www.bbbsofrc.com info@bbbsofrc.com tel: 845-317-0311

In This Issue: -It Takes Little to Be Big -Mentee Graduation Spotlights

To find out how to become a mentor or how to enroll your child(ren), please contact our Program Supervisor, Sarah Arras, at (845) 317-6112 or email at sarras@bbbsofrc.com!

Please donate to help support our mission, please visit our donate page at www.bbbsofrc.com/donate



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USE THESE HASH-TAGS FOR ALL YOUR BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS: #BBBSRC #BeBig #ItTakesLittleToBeBig

#### OUR MISSION:

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Create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland provides a transformative opportunity for children and youth to join our program and be paired with a compassionate adult mentor. These mentors, or "Bigs," serve as guiding lights, steering their mentees towards the path of high school graduation, and further educational pursuits such as college or trade school, while shielding them from the negative influences that could otherwise hinder their lifelong success.



By emphasizing the vast potential within each child, we aim to expand their horizons and instill a deeper understanding of equitable opportunities. Our distinctive one-on-one mentoring program has garnered national acclaim for its remarkable success in meeting the unique needs of at-risk children.

Through a meticulous matching process, we ensure that mentors and mentees are paired in a caring and thoughtful manner, providing the crucial support that these children require. This not only eases the concerns of parents but also cultivates a sense of trust and reliance on the mentors for the safety and well-being of their children.

By addressing these fundamental needs, Big Brothers Big Sisters creates a nurturing environment that significantly diminishes the risks of delinquency, aggression, and substance abuse among the children in our care. Research consistently demonstrates that one-on-one mentors offer the stability and non-judgmental guidance necessary to deter children from engaging in risky behaviors, particularly when they have relational connections with individuals involved in drug misuse.

In summary, our nationally recognized mentoring program effectively addresses the needs of at-risk children by thoughtfully matching them with mentors who provide crucial support and guidance. This mentorship not only reassures parents but also plays a pivotal role in preventing delinquency, aggression, and drug use.

We urge all readers over the age of 18 to consider reaching out to our office to learn more about becoming a qualified mentor. The impact you can make is immeasurable, and you'll never regret the positive change you can bring about in a child's life.

#### Please call Sarah: 845 317 6112 or Jahmel: 845 317 6114

#### III ≫ 三 示 ⊗ Ľ III ≫ 三 示 ⊗ Ľ III ≫ 三 示 ⊗ MEET THE OFFICE STAFF!



Sarah Arras Program Supervisor (845) 317-6112 sarras@bbbsofrc.com



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Jahmel Johnson Program Manager (845) 317 6114 jahmel@bbbsofc.com



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Judie Greenstein Match Support Specialist info@bbbsofrc.com



Kristin Rossetti Match Support Specialist 845-317-6116 kristin@bbbsofrc.com

#### **GREETINGS FROM KRISTIN**

As a Match Support Contact for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County, I have the privilege of working closely with our community's youth and their volunteer mentors. In my second year with this incredible organization, I've seen firsthand the profound impact that one-on-one mentoring can have on a child's life.

What truly sets this organization apart is its commitment to finding the right mentor for each child - one who can truly relate to their unique needs and aspirations. By carefully pairing Bigs and Littles, we create connections that go beyond a simple activity partner; they become trusted confidants, role models, and sources of unconditional support

With each match I oversee, I'm reminded of the power of mentorship to transform lives, open doors, and instill confidence in our community's future leaders. It's an honor to play a part in this vital work.

Wishing all our readers, a Happy, Safe and Healthy 2024 !!

Kristin Rossetti Match Support Specialist 845-317-6116 kristin@bbbsofrc.com

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Hello everyone my name is Jahmel Johnson and I'm really excited to join the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County as the Program Manager! I started working here in February, 2024 and have quickly seen the positive impact this organization has on our community. With a deep passion for mentoring and community support, I hope to add strong commitment to the mission.

My journey began with my Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice from Long Island University, which I completed in May 2021. I have since continued my



education, pursuing a Master's degree in Criminal Justice at the University of New Haven, with an expected graduation date of winter 2025.

Prior to joining Big Brothers Big Sisters, I worked in various roles that showcased my dedication to serving others. My previous role at my last employment involved creating a supportive environment and implementing interventions to promote social skills development for individuals with disabilities. I serve as a Court-Ordered Supervised Visitation Supervisor at RYE, overseeing and facilitating supervised visitation sessions to ensure the safety and well-being of children and families.

My commitment to mentorship extends beyond my professional life as I have been an Assistant Football Coach at Iona Preparatory High School and Albertus Magnus High School. I believe all of this has helped me demonstrate my ability to inspire and guide young individuals.

In my role as Program Manager, I will be responsible for overseeing our mentoring program, and developing and implementing program goals and strategies.

Jahmel Johnson Pronouns: He, Him, His Program Manager Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland Work cell/Direct Line: 845-317-6114 jahmel@bbbsofrc.com

#### To all of our Bigs, Littles, Parents & Guardians

Thank you to everyone for sharing your wonderful pictures with our office of your exciting outings. It warms our heart to see our matches having such a great time together and finding new experiences to share. Our staff was grateful to have received a grant from Big Brothers Big Sisters of America to organize the first annual 2024 Flag Football event. This event would not have been able to take place without our "Referee Board Members" Dan Wugman and Mike Ellman together with our "Last Minute" player, Board Chair Jennifer Sislin. Thank you to our new Program Manager, Jahmel Johnson for coaching us in the game and our Match Support Specialist Dina DiRocco, for keeping us safe throughout the day's event together with our "Cheerers On", Vice Board Chair, Bob Barilli and CEO, Gillian Ballard.



Thank you also to Sophie, a local HS Senior Football State Champion & her

family for participating and supporting us in the day's events. Sophie, we can't wait until you decide to be a Big Sister!

Molina Cares supplied Water bottles and reusable bags to carry away their participants' awards and treats as they wrapped up their game. Rockland Council on Alcoholism and other Drug Dependencies also supplied Deterra Medicine disposal bags for all the attendees. Thank you to Parents and supporters who came to cheer everyone on in the game. Our agency celebrated its 2024 Mentee Graduation with a



ceremony at the Rockland County legislative chambers, 11 New Hempstead Road, New City on May 21st at 6:30pm. Please join us to cheer on our graduates and our long term match relationships.

Summertime is one of the most difficult times for Littles in our program as they lose the social gathering

of school and recess and often have to spend a great deal of time indoors. Please help us recruit some Bigs this Summer. Contact the office or myself sarras@bbbsofrc.com for flyers to spread the word that we are seeking mentors

#### Sarah Arras

Pronouns: She, Her, Hers Program Supervisor Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland Work cell/Direct Line: 845 317 6112 sarras@bbbsofrc.com





WWW.BBBSOFRC.COM

Imagine the future of our communities if thousands of positive adults volunteer their time to mentor a child.

You have what it takes to make a difference.



#### Welcome to Dina- Match Support Specialist

I joined BBBS in January of this year as a Match Support Specialist. In this role, I communicate with Bigs,Littles and the Parent/ Guardians either monthly or every 3 months depending on when the match was formed. This gives me the opportunity to know what activities they have done and how much time they spend together. It allows me to be informed on how much information the BIG knows about their Little and vice versa. It is important that the BIG'S know where to access information regarding BBBS resources and I share suggestions of upcoming events and opportunities for Matches to do in the area. I enjoy communicating with the Bigs & the Littles. I would have to say most rewarding is when a Little sets their goals & then achieves them. I love to hear the excitement and pride in their voice at this achievement.



When I'm not at BBBS, I work FT as a School Nurse, in a school

specializing in children with Emotional disturbances. It is my passion to help people especially children. I have been working in this school for about 7 years and I love every minute of it. Although it is quite challenging and extremely busy it is definitely where I'm supposed to be!!!

Mentoring children is so beneficial to their growth. It helps them learn to build relationships and to trust people. I wish more people would join BBBS and help mentor a child, l promise you will change a child's life for the better! Sign up at our website today!

#### LITTLE BROTHER MANNY & BIG SISTER IRIS

Little Brother Manny & Big Sister Iris have been matched for 11 months and will reach their 1 year Anniversary in July. This Little decided to surprise his Big for mother's day by buying her a butterfly balloon and insisted that they take a picture with it. This pair always has a great time whether they are doing a craft at the park or volunteering at a local cat sanctuary by playing with the cats or taking their towels to the local laundromat. Manny's Big Sister always comes armed with a seasonal craft or card game to pass the time.





#### GET STARTED IT TAKES LITTLE TO BE BIG

#### THE LITTLE MOMENTS MATTER MOST

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IT TAKES LITTLE TO BE BIG

#### 10 MINUTES OVER PIZZA CAN LAST A LIFETIME

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# **GET STARTED TODAY** BBBSOFRC.COM/VOLUNTEER

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Congratulations to Elias who was selected out of all the Cellists in his school to perform for the school district board, representing his school. Elias, you should be proud of your accomplishments and all your hard work that paid off. It did not go unnoticed by your music teacher that selected you!



# HEARTFELT GRATITUDE TO MARVIN PIERRE OF M&T BANK, PIERMONT.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County extends heartfelt gratitude to Marvin Pierre of M&T Bank, Piermont.

Marvin's enduring commitment and steadfast support have made a significant impact on our organization, exemplifying not only a valued longtime supporter but also a former mentor dedicated to our agency's mission. We are sincerely thankful to Marvin and M&T's contribution, which have played a crucial role in empowering and positively shaping the lives of those we serve and we welcome you to the Board of Directors



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Prevention Resource Fair at Ramapo High School. This event was a resource night for teens, school staff and parents or guardians to learn more about prevention efforts for substance use in our youth. Our agency shared information on Mentoring as a resource for Rockland County youth at the event. Enroll a child today!



#### BBBS ATTENDED THE NYACK 14TH ANNUAL AFRICAN AMERICAN DAY PARADE

BBBS attended the Nyack 14th Annual African American Day Parade & Celebration on June 1st, 2024. The day was one for Unity, Peace and Harmony that was filled with music, entertainment and food that enhanced the day and BBBS was glad to be a part of it and was able to spread awareness of our need for mentors at the event.



#### CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR LITTLE DAVONTE

Congratulations to Little DaVonte who was selected for the Counselor In Training Position at YMCA. DaVonte will gain leadership skills to help him gain work experience in the future. DaVonte was selected for the program as he has exhibited these skills as a camper and it has not gone unnoticed. Throughout the summer DaVonte will have a series of tasks, trials, and goals to reach each week, gaining better knowledge to one day work for the camp.



#### THANK THE BACKPACK FOUNDATION

Our agency would like to thank The Backpack Foundation for its annual school supply donation. This donation every summer makes the start of the school year a success for our youth and their families! Smiles like these, say it!





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This year our agency was excited to congratulate our 2024 graduates, Little Brother Michael & Big Brother Ed at the Rockland County Legislature on their match which has reached almost 6 years. Michael plans to become an automotive engineer and will be going to Pennsylvania State University majoring in mechanical engineering in the Fall. His favorite memory with his Big Brother Ed was when they went fishing together for the first time and he miraculously caught over 10 fish and Ed caught zero. It was a funny story to tell and Michael has never caught that many in one day before or ever again. Michael felt that the BBBS Program and Ed got him out of a low point in his life after the death of his mother. Michael needed someone like Ed who was a cop and a person that Michael could talk to. Michael appreciated having someone like Ed as an inspiration because it's good to sometimes hear opinions from adults other than your parents. Michael felt his viewpoints were very linear before meeting Ed and now Michael feels that he can see things from all different points of views. Michael will always remember his time with Ed and hopes to stay in touch with him in the future. Big Brother Edward Brignoni is currently an active Sergeant with the New York City Police Department. His motivation stems from 20 plus year career in law enforcement (NYPD) that has exposed him to the negative consequences youth experience due to the lack of fathers in their household or viable male figures in their communities. Big's favorite memory is fishing trips on the Hudson River, especially the first outing in 2017 when he caught the most fish (9 Striped Bass) out of the 5 guys on the boat and all of our outings to Manhattan when we visited NYPD's Headquarters and the USS Intrepid. This Big feels the most rewarding part about being a part of the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program is seeing his mentee's growth in maturity and confidence from pre-teen boy to a young, responsible adult with the prospect of achieving many personal and professional milestones. Big and Little plan on staying in touch via phone calls/text while he is away in college and plan on meet ups during his school breaks. They hope to maintain this friendship for years to come.





Photograph on the right. Left to Right: BBBS Legislative Liaison Alden H. Wolfe, Big Brother Ed, Little Brother Michael

**LEGISLATURE** This year our agency was excited to congratulate our 2024 graduates, Little Sister Lindzey & Big Sister Jackie at the Rockland County Legislature on their match which has almost reached two years. Lindzey plans to attend RCC for two years and then transfer to Dominican University. Her major is undecided. Lindzey has been with BBBS since 2016 and she has loved every single one of her Big Sisters! All had different personalities and different ways of communicating, for example with Jackie, she was more open as a person, and together they experienced many places and things, such as going on a train for the first time, the Slime Museum for the first time, and eating at new places! Lindzey's favorite memory was going to Rye Playland with Jackie!! Lindzey feels that she has grown so much as a person, when she first started the program she was shy, quiet and now she has grown to become a less shy, more talkative, and extroverted person.

Lindzey has made amazing memories, so she also wants to thank her parents for putting her into BBBS program. She is glad that BBBS, her Big And her parents are here to support her journey! Lindzey hopes to be a Big Sister one day to a Little!

Big Sister Jacqueline Smalls has been a Big Sister since 2014 and enjoys life and uplifting the next generation. Jackie in her life before retirement was a school Social Worker/Administrator. Jackie's personal motto is Each one, Reach one, Each one, Teach one. Big's favorite memory was taking Lindzey to her first Broadway play while negotiating the city, laughing and getting lost. Jackie loves sharing new experiences together with her Little Sister, learning to listen without judgment and being a friend to a younger person. This Big plans on staying connected with her Little Sister by phone calls/texting and staying in touch. Jackie will always be available!



Photograph on the right. Left to Right: BBBS Legislative Liaison Alden H. Wolfe, Big Sister Jackie, Little Sister Lindzey

Adonis plans on studying English Literature and Creative Writing in the Fall and feels lucky to have support from his family, friends and his BBBS Big Sister Margie. One of Adonis favorite moments was whenever Margie & he would drive into the city as the pair would experience the beauty of museums, gardens, parks and even Broadway shows.

Adonis stated "Due to the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program, I am extremely appreciative toward the opportunity to meet Margie. With her help, I was able to come out of my shell as a shy, scared child, and instead become a strong, intelligent young adult. Margie taught me how to acknowledge my feelings and be confident in what I had to say. She gave me the ability to speak my truth and open up to her beyond what a friend could say, but what a sibling would. Throughout my 6 years of being paired with Margie, I have regretted not a single part of it. I owe a great respect to the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program for they paved the way for me to meet Margie, establishing a bond for not only us, but for future Littles and Bigs."

One of Margie's favorite experiences was taking Adonis on his first college tour and seeing his entire world of possibilities open up in front of him. It was as if he was seeing a bright future for perhaps the first time. Margie has been a Big Sister since 2008 after her son went off to college. Margie plans on staying in touch with Adonis as she has with her previous Little who is now 24!!! Margie loves everything about the BBBS program. She has loved every staff member and volunteer that she has been involved with and has found them to be dedicated, supportive and helpful at all times. Margie plans to be a Big Sister again very soon.



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#### LEGISLATOR WOLFE TO GRADS: 'A FUTURE OFFERING ALL KINDS OF POSSIBILITIES AWAITS'

Mentors and mentees were celebrated as the Rockland County Legislature hosted this year's Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County graduation ceremony and shared in the accomplishments of all involved. "This is somewhat bittersweet, as almost all graduations are, because it marks the close of a very important chapter in the lives of both the Littles and the Bigs," Rockland County Legislative Majority Leader Alden H. Wolfe said. "But what's most important, I think, is the fact that it also opens a new chapter – a future that offers all kinds of possibilities for all."

Big Brothers Big Sisters is a one-to-one relationship program that allows children, with support from adult mentors who act as positive role models, to build trusting friendships, engage in meaningful conversations and activities, and realize their self-worth and potential.

Among those joining Legislator Wolfe, the Legislature's liaison to the organization, were Legislature Chairman Jay Hood Jr., Second Vice Chair Phil Soskin, Minority Leader Lon M. Hofstein, and Legislators Paul Cleary, Itamar Yeger, Toney L. Earl, Ray Sheridan, Beth Davidson, Jesse Malowitz, Joel Friedman, Tom Diviny and Dana Stilley.

Participating were Big Brothers Big Sisters' President & CEO Gillian Ballard, Board of Directors' Chairwoman Jennifer Sislin, Board Members Robert Barilli, Edward Brignoni and Mike Ellman, Program Supervisor Sarah Arras, Jahmel Johnson, Program Manager and Kristin Rossetti, Support Call Specialist.. "This year marks the 41st anniversary of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County and that's worth noting because during this time, scores of adults have given not only of their time, but of their hearts to make a difference in the life of a child by volunteering as mentors to local youth, often for years," Legislator Wolfe said.

"Scores of youth have been mentored - and embraced the support and opportunity that has come their way through this program," Legislator Wolfe said. "Importantly, the parents of these youth have lovingly allowed their children to participate in a program that is a proven game changer."

None of this would be possible without the leadership of BBBS CEO Gillian Ballard, the staff and the many community volunteers who serve on the board, Legislator Wolfe said.

Honored this year were Big Sister Jacqueline Smalls and Little Sister Lindzey Estrella Peralta, who were matched for one year and eight months. Lindzey plans to attend Rockland Community College and then transfer to Dominican University.

Big Sister Keri Winnick and Little Sister Patricia Bogdanowich Torres were matched for six years and seven months. Patricia also plans to attend RCC and then transfer to a four-year college to earn her bachelor's degree.

Big Brother Edward Brignoni and Little Brother Michael Duplessis were matched for five years and 11 months. Michael heads to Pennsylvania State University in the fall, where he plans to major in mechanical engineering.

Big Sister Marjorie Goldstein and Little Brother Adonis Ruballos were unable to attend, but they were matched for six years and eight months. Adonis plans to attend college and study English literature and creative writing.

The mentor-mentee relationships encouraged by BBBS can have far-reaching impacts, as a study by Public/Private Ventures, a Philadelphia-based national research organization, has shown. Youth who participate in the mentoring program do better in school and in their relationships with family and friends, and are less likely to use illegal drugs or alcohol, according to the study.

More information about the program, including how to volunteer as a mentor or to sign up as a little is available at https://www.bbbsofrc.com/ or by calling (845) 317-0311.

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Thanks to the help of the National Council of Jewish Women, Private Donors & the BBBS Camp Scholarship Fund, our agency was able to find support to assist 12 youth in attending camp this Summer. Thank you to the Village of Haverstraw Day camp for extending discounts to our families.

Thank you to Rockland County YMCA offering Financial Aid Scholarships to extend the number of weeks our youth are able to attend camp. Also Thank you to the Town of Clarkstown for its efforts as well.



#### 80S FUNDRAISER WAS CERTAINLY "ELECTRIC"

Our 2023 year's 80s fundraiser was certainly "Electric" with all the supporters in the room who brought the 80s spirit and came to help our agency celebrate 40 years!!! Get involved today at www.bbbsofrc.com



#### THANK YOU TO THE RAFFLE PRIZE DONORS

Thank you to the Raffle Prize Donors that made our 2023 Big and Littles Annual Holiday Party such a success and put smiles onto so many faces

- 5 Wits West Nyack #youradventureawaits
- 16 Handles Frozen Yogurt https://locations.16handles.com/16-handles-9dda0333aa0d
- Bach to Rock Nanuet, NY
- Dave & Buster's
- Jackie, A Big Sister & Office Outreach Volunteer
- Judie our Office Volunteer
- Steeltoes Dance Studio
- Wegmans
- Wilma's Tea Cosy



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On June 2nd BBBS invited Bigs, Littles & Families to join us in making connections with one another by making friendship bracelets and working as a team to build 12 foot bracelets. These A.S.K.-tivation Kits were provided by MTV Entertainment teamed up with Active Minds – a leading mental health non-profit working with youth and young adults to champion peer-to-peer mental health programs for the past two decades. Together, we've taken a program that was developed to serve as a 'Stop, Drop, and Roll' for providing emotional support to the people in our lives.



#### THANK YOU TO HOLIDAY DONORS

Thank you to local donors including anonymous donors, Girls Scout, Clarkstown North High School National Honor Society Students, TITLE Boxing Club Nanuet, Hudson Health & Spine, Board Members & Staff for helping fulfill some Holiday Wish Lists for our Littles. All these efforts are appreciated by us and their parents. Special thanks to Big Sister Jordana for helping our elves by delivering some gifts this week. Happy Holidays!





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EMAIL US nanuet@titleboxingclub.com

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#### **BIG SISTER JORDANA AND LITTLE BROTHER ELIAS**

Check out the way this Big Sister Jordana and Little Brother Elias chose to celebrate their 1 year anniversary. Imagine spending your weekends having this much fun with a Little. Sign up today at https://www.bbbsofrc.com/sign-up-to-volunteer/



# THANKS TITLE BOXING CLUB OF NANUET

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County Thanks Title Boxing Club of Nanuet for hosting a Big Brothers Big Sisters Fundraiser in January. 100% of the proceeds were donated back to the agency.

Thank you again Title Boxing Club for showing your support this year with introducing some Littles to the sport of boxing through your donations!



#### GIRL INCLUSIVITY IN SPORTS NIGHT MARCH 12TH, 2024

Girl Inclusivity in Sports Night March 12th, 2024 at 7pm! Thank you to Sophi and her parents for sharing their experience in her girl representation in sports. Click Here for the recording:

https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/922992719

See this Article on Sophia

https://bvmsports.com/2022/06/17/female-defensive-back-sophia-espina-proving-to-be-a-leader-of-tomorrow/

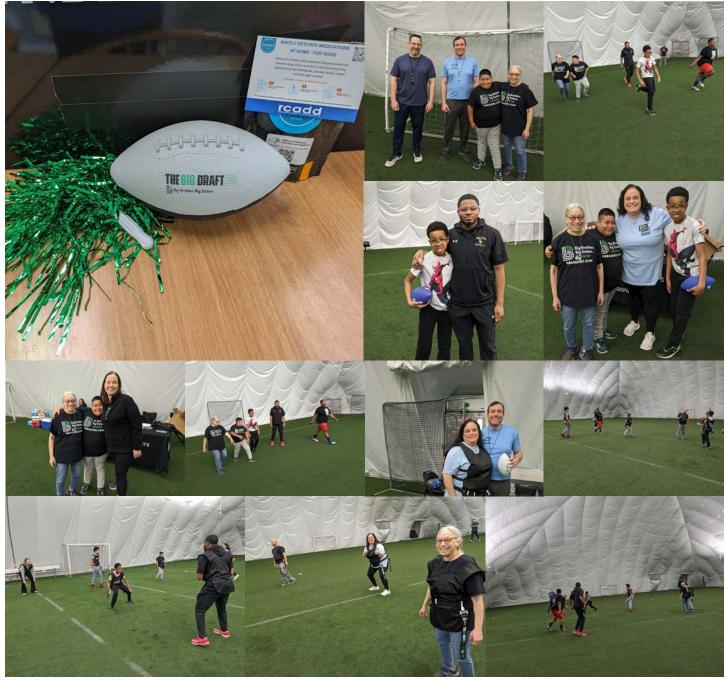


Girl Inclusivity in Sports Night March 12th, 2024 at 7pm



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Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland made a monumental touchdown in community engagement by hosting its inaugural Flag Football event, an ode to both #National Volunteer Month and the NFL's Inspire Change initiative. A heartfelt salute is due to our dedicated referees and esteemed Board Members, Dan Wugman and Mike Ellman, whose guidance ensured smooth gameplay. Gratitude extends to our Board Chairwoman, Jennifer Sislin, whose participation on the field culminated in a remarkable touchdown. Furthermore, the invaluable support from #MolinaCares of Spring Valley, who generously provided refreshing water bottles and the donation of Safe Medicine Disposal kits, underscores the collaborative effort towards fostering a safer and healthier community.





# MENTORS, EEEDED

#### Do you qualify to be Mentor?

In order to become a Big Brother or Big Sister in our program, you must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- · be at least eighteen years of age
- · have a valid driver' s license
- have transportation and be covered under automobile insurance
- · be able to commit to volunteer for a minimum of four hours a month and a minimum of one year

Being a Big is an opportunity to not only impact a child's life today, but to transform his/her potential for tomorrow.



CONTACT US Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County 257 S. Middletown Rd. Suite 204 Nanuet, NY 10954 Phone: 845.317.6112 E-Mail: info@bbbsofrc.com



# Von't You Be Part of our Success Story

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland is a non-profit organization supported through the government of Rockland County, its villages and towns. Federal, state and corporate grants, as well as fundraising, directly support the children in your community.

When you donate to Big Brothers Big Sisters, you help make a difference in the lives of young people. Your financial support helps us provide programs and services throughout the Rockland community so we can nurture more college graduates, community leaders and entrepreneurs. In addition, your support enables BBBS to:

- offer cultural and social activities to enrich the opportunities and lives of children.
- recruit new Big Brother and Big Sister volunteers.
- cover the costs of background checks, while ensuring trained professionals match Littles to responsible Bigs.
- provide ongoing supervision and relationship support for every Big, Little and Little's family.





Big Brothers Big Sisters . OF ROCKLAND COUNTY

#### **EXECUTIVE OFFICERS 2024**

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