

# BIG HAPPENINGS NEWSLETTER



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## In This Issue:

- Child Safety
- Matching
- RCADD
- Tutoring

To find out how to become a mentor or how to enroll your child(ren), please contact our Program Supervisor, Sarah Arras, at 845-634-2199 x 4 or email at [sarras@bbbsofrc.com](mailto:sarras@bbbsofrc.com)!

To donate to help support our mission, please visit our donate page at [www.bbbsofrc.com/donate](http://www.bbbsofrc.com/donate)



@big-brothers-big-sisters-of-rockland-county



@BBBSofRC

**"NO KID IS UNSMART.  
EVERY KID'S A GENIUS  
AT SOMETHING. OUR  
JOB IS TO FIND IT. AND  
THEN ENCOURAGE IT."**

**Robin Sharma**



USE THESE HASH-TAGS FOR ALL YOUR BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS:

#BBBSRC #DEFENDERSOFPOTENTIAL #IGNITEPOTENTIAL

## OUR MISSION:

To build and support **one-to-one** relationships to ignite the biggest possible futures for youth.



## GREETINGS FROM GILLIAN

For the ease of our "on the go person," we shall be sending quarterly newsletters via email to update you on activities here at the agency.

For more than 37 years, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Rockland County has operated under the belief that inherent in every child is the ability to succeed and thrive in life. As the county's oldest, largest, and most effective youth mentoring organization, Big Brothers Big Sisters makes meaningful, supervised matches between adult volunteers ("Bigs") and youth ("Littles"), ages 7 through 18. The focus of these matches is to develop positive relationships that have direct and lasting effect on the lives of young people. "Bigs" assist their "Littles" in overcoming adversity, often resulting in the Littles attaining higher aspirations, greater confidence, better family/peer relationships, and educational success. Do you know of a child in need of our services? **Then visit our website:**

**[www.bbbsofrc.com/enroll-a-child/](http://www.bbbsofrc.com/enroll-a-child/)**



Things are moving full speed ahead, with new volunteers qualifying each month as mentors to the children and youth. You too can help make that happen by donating your valuable time and incredible talent to this worthy cause and helping change the lives of children. **Interested in volunteering to be a mentor? Then call: 845 634 2199 x 4 or visit our website [www.bbbsofrc.com/volunteer/](http://www.bbbsofrc.com/volunteer/)**

During this year, we continue with not only our 1 – 1 community mentoring program, but have expanded the Court Ordered Visitation Program in delivering four visitation services, In Home; Community; On site; and Virtual, and a most valuable Tutoring Program – thanks to two talented students from the Clarkstown School-District.

Phew! All this in conjunction with navigating our way (like everyone else) around the COVID-19 pandemic as well as organizing our 2021 Mentee Graduation Ceremony, planning the summer Camp Scholarship Program with the aid of dear Judie - not forgetting our projection for an In Person 2021 Fundraiser! It is clear to see why the staff and I are so proud of all we accomplish in our mission. It also explains why we're so busy! **Looking to help us? Please donate by going online to our website and under the link Donate: [www.bbbsofrc.com](http://www.bbbsofrc.com)**

We do so appreciate the generosity of our funding partners, The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, The Office of Violence Against Women, Rockland County Municipality, the towns of Haverstraw and Ramapo and all our individual supporters. Without their generosity and appreciation for what we do, we could never assist the number of children we serve each year. **Want to learn more? Why not drop me an email, any time at: [gballard@bbbsofrc.com](mailto:gballard@bbbsofrc.com) or you can also connect with us on Facebook.**

We are always looking for additional volunteers, particularly those interested in being mentors, tutors, and financial providers; so, if you are already part of our family, please remember to ask any friends, relatives or neighbors who might be interested in being included on this multi award-winning youth service team. **Interested? Then email me: [gballard@bbbsofrc.com](mailto:gballard@bbbsofrc.com).**

**Our Youth are the future for our county, nation, and world; they are growing in wisdom and stature!**



## MEET THE OFFICE STAFF!



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Maha Habib  
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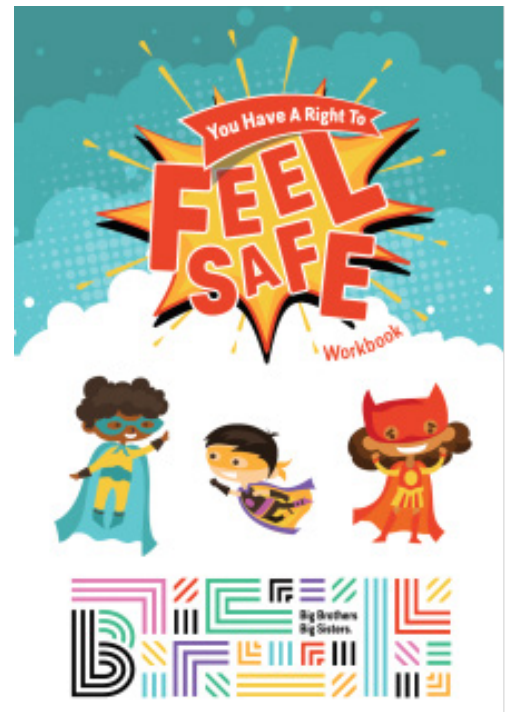


Anne Nissen  
Match Coordinator  
(845) 634-2199 x 3  
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## CHILD SAFETY FOR PARENTS & CHILDREN

Our national BBBSA office recently released more information on Child Safety for Parents & Children. For parents and guardians, there is "Your Child's Personal Safety." The idea is that this interactive online course can help parents and guardians have "an honest discussion about effective approaches to prevention" – focused on what they can do to keep their children safe from sexual abuse and exploitation. This training is optional but highly recommended. Please contact us if you are interested in signing up online for "Your Child's Personal Safety" training. There are also new and colorful workbooks for kids and teens themselves: "You Have a Right to Feel Safe" (5- to 11-year-olds) and "Healthy Relationships for Teens" (12- to 17-year-olds). We have begun rolling the workbooks out to new Littles, but we also recommend that existing Littles read this new information.





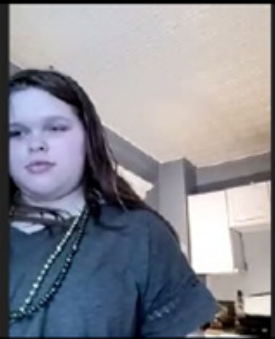


## MATCH INTRODUCTION MEETING

As our world opens back up (hurrah!), our agency has been overwhelmed by the outpouring of volunteers who are now willing and able to meet with a Little at a park, go out to eat, and even go bowling. Our office was delighted to have the first in-person Match Introduction meeting in at least a year, held outdoors. Match Introduction meetings are when we introduce a Big to a Little and their family, remind everyone what they signed up for(!), and schedule their first outing. Luckily, we had lovely weather. It was great to truly see everyone ... with family pods arranged six feet apart!

### Virtual BBBS Match

#### Tiffany & Julia



### IN Person BBBS Match

#### Geraldine & Sasha



## BIGS AND LITTLES

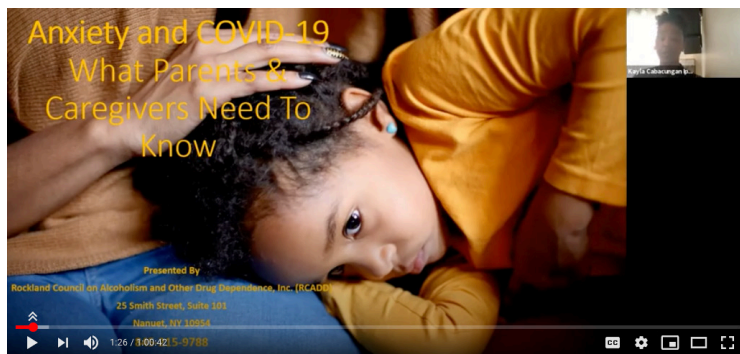
Our agency has been delighted with the promise of Spring and thankful for all the pictures that Bigs and Littles and their families have shared with us of excursions to the park, out to eat, celebrations, bowling and much more. As we look toward the end of the school year and the beginning of Summer we would be remiss if we did not congratulate all of our Littles, Parents & Bigs for making it through another difficult and trying school year. We are so proud of our seniors and are excited to congratulate them at our upcoming graduation in June and hear their stories. It has been great to be able to have our first In person Match Introduction Meeting and welcome so many of you at our door as we distributed food donations from Nyack Homeless Project this Spring. Thank you to our Bigs for continuing to support all of our Littles and helping them explore their interests and passions again as the world opens back up to us.





## SPECIAL THANKS TO ROCKLAND COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM & OTHER DRUG DEPENDENCE, INC & PRESENTER KAYLA CABACUNGAN, BA, INFORMATION & REFERRAL SPECIALIST

A Special Virtual Presentation was offered to our Bigs and Parents on Helping with Anxiety during Covid-19 on October 13, 2020. The purpose of the presentation was to find healthy ways to cope with Anxiety and helped adults look for warning signs if an adolescent is at risk for experimenting with substances or is at risk of suicide due to isolation during Covid. It was a very informative presentation. If you did not get a chance to watch the presentation here is a link <https://youtu.be/2xGxUJ3IMoo>



## SPECIAL THANKS TO NEW CITY BOWL & BATTING CAGES FOR DISCOUNTED BOWLING IN MARCH & APRIL

Our agency was so glad to hear how many Big, Littles & Families were able to enjoy a great deal on bowling through the generosity of the owner Alice Lenna. All our participants complimented New City Bowl on the great job with sanitizing and social distancing which made it a wonderful experience for our Bigs & Littles.





## VIRTUAL TUTORING

Thanks to Sebastien & Aiden, two local high schoolers, our tutoring program was able to resume in the month of April virtually. Sebastien and Aiden are brothers and wanted to give their time and skills in the areas of Math & ELA to our organization. If your child is currently enrolled in the program and in Kindergarten to 5th grade please contact [sarras@bbbsofrc.com](mailto:sarras@bbbsofrc.com) to request tutoring. If any volunteers would be interested in tutoring in a specific area, please feel free to reach out as well.





## COURT ORDERED VISITATION PROGRAM

I'm the new Program Manager for the Court Ordered Visitation Program and enjoying every moment working alongside Sarah and Anne in our large office now that lockdown has been lifted.

For those unfamiliar with the program, Family Court Judges grant non-custodial parents visitation rights to their children and our organization facilitates this service between non-custodial parent, custodial parent, and the child.

Children need consistency in their lives and through our program we provide this service in a safe environment with trained supervisors who observe each visit, and complete a report which is then submitted to the Judges.

Currently, the visitation program offers three kinds of services -Virtual, Community, In-home visitation, and we are now planning resumption of our On-Site Visitation Service!

Virtual visitation is a new feature of this program that was implemented during the start of the CoronaVirus in 2020.

Though new, virtual visitations are working out great and allow parents at a time when we are all socially isolated, to have access to their children even if it's on a screen. Parents usually read stories, draw, and play games with them though they can be miles apart!

Spring has started and Summer will soon be here so we've offered parents the option to have In-Person supervised visits at Haverstraw Bay Park. Parents and children really seem to enjoy visits outside. It makes the experience more relaxed and more like a spring outing where both child and parent get some exercise and sun.

This is another new experience in the world of social service work for me. It's interesting and challenging all at the same time because I get to help children and their families. Every day brings about a new experience, a new problem to solve and I'm constantly having to adapt. I have learned a lot about Family Court and the legal system through this organization like the concept of neutrality! Being neutral means not taking a side and reserving one's judgement towards others. My job isn't to make a judgement, rather, it's to remember that there is a child involved in these matters and that's what my focus has to be in making decisions.





# Won't You Be Part <sup>of</sup> 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.



# POTENTIAL

# IS EVERYWHERE



## EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

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Edward Brignoni, Vice Chairperson

Keith Brown, Treasurer

Louis Gerzofsky, Recording Secretary

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Bruce Bortniker

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**Big Brothers  
Big Sisters®**  
OF ROCKLAND COUNTY