

BIG HAPPENINGS NEWSLETTER



65 North Main Street
New City, NY 10956



www.bbbsofrc.com
info@bbbsofrc.com
tel:(845) 634-2199 ext. 5

In This Issue:

- Virtual Graduation
- Camp Scholarships
- 37th Anniversary Gala
- TRUNK OR TREAT

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!

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



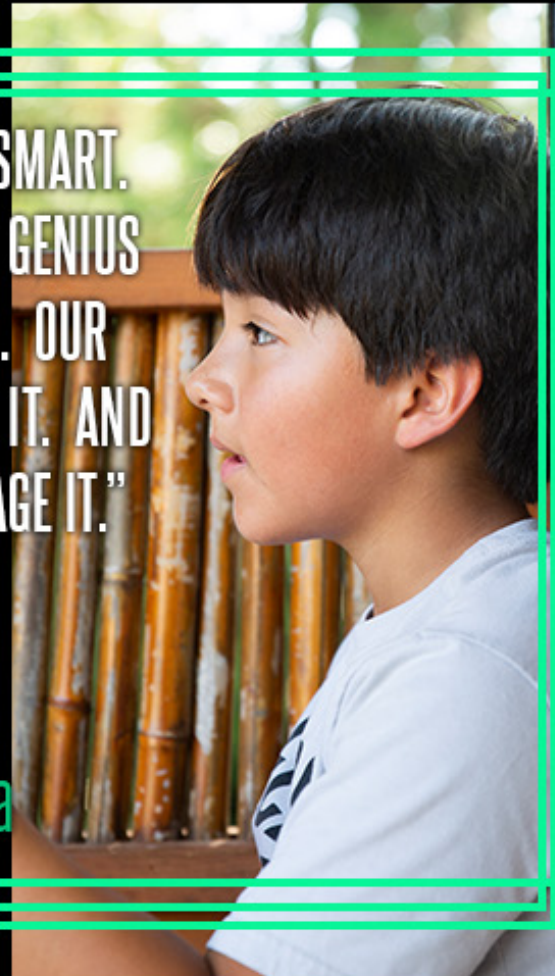
@big-brothers-big-sisters-of-rockland-county



@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:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County's mission is to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

Knowing that Mentoring offers supportive pathways to aiding in this effort with the goal of improving academic and behavioral outcomes among children and youth living in Rockland County, we have for over 37 years been making a positive difference in their lives by developing and implementing a wide range of mentoring services.

At this time, we are, therefore, pleased to announce that once again, we have partnered with the Office of Juvenile

Justice Department of Prevention to offer and provide prevention and - assist with- intervention in the pandemic of substance abuse! The key to reaching even more children who may be in need is imperative and the ability to partner with like agencies is a specific one because it not only brings resources to more youth who may be experiencing substance abuse-related impacts, but also because it allows for a greater nurturing of the mentor relationship which is so key for a child's success

To learn more about getting involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters, please visit www.bbbsofrc.com or contact Program Supervisor Sarah Arras, at sarras@bbbsofrc.com.

We believe that by changing the course of young lives we can, in turn, alter the course of a community's future which will lead to a reduction in poverty and unemployment, to safer schools and neighborhoods, and to a renewed optimism for growth. It will even lead to change on a broader, more far-reaching scale. We believe that opening a child's eyes to what is – opens their minds to what could be.

Anyone can be a Big Brother or Big Sister – no experience or expertise is required! A couple of hours a couple of times a month is all it takes, and you would be amazed at how much you will get back.

The role that BBBS plays in providing quality mentors helps our youngsters beat the odds and break negative cycles through positive life choices. It takes family members, teachers, religious leaders, coaches, neighbors and so many others to add to the mix but BBBS of RC heads the way to illustrate that people are making a positive difference in the lives of children. My task in this equation is an easy function as I fully believe in mentoring and am proud of the part we are playing in helping our community at home and at large.

Being a Big is being a friend, a mentor, someone who shares time with a child who is in need of an additional positive adult in their life. Whether you are 22 or 82, there is a rewarding experience online at info@bbbsofrc.com.

Your continued support is appreciated and much needed! If you don't find yourself with the time to volunteer as a mentor, then financial assistance from you enables us to continue as well as expand our services across the county.

Thank you, stay safe, stay healthy and stay with us!

Gillian Ballard, President & CEO



MEET THE OFFICE STAFF!



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



Anne Nissen
Match Coordinator
(845) 317-6113
anissen@bbbsofrc.com



Judie Greenstein
Match Support Specialist
(845) 634-2199 x 5
info@bbbsofrc.com



Karen Lewis
Data Entry Specialist
(845) 634-2199 x 5
klewis@bbbsofrc.com



Patrice Brenner
Bookkeeper
(845) 634-2199 x 5
pbrenner@bbbsofrc.com



Kristin Rossetti
Case Manager
845-317-6116
kristin@bbbsofrc.com



“JUST HANGING OUT”
-Anne Nissen

Big Brothers Big Sisters has a set pattern for making match support calls, which are chances for staff to promote the development of match relationships, help ensure child safety, and support positive youth development through match coaching and guidance. This means that we speak regularly with Littles in the program.

Lately, what are we hearing? We hear the profound enjoyment children and teens get from just hanging out with their Bigs. Littles appreciate even the simplest match outings more than ever. Having the opportunity to talk about any old thing while eating burgers or getting a haircut seems to fulfill a deep social hunger for the children. Bigs and Littles may also talk together about profound topics, of course. But it is when staff hears Littles talk about “hanging” around with someone “cool” that gives us the sense that that Little is smiling while answering our question. These simple in-person outing experiences are better than band-aids. It reminds us to value the simple things.





IN THIS NEW YEAR

Heading into this New Year I would be remiss if I did not say how overjoyed our team was at the outpouring of support that made this past Holiday Season a bit brighter for our participants in this uncertain time. Through a combination of Halloween Trunk or Treat, Thanksgiving Dinner Donations, Holiday gift donations from Christie's International Realty, Crowne Plaza Mahwah Suffern and Girl Scout SU 413 families, the outpouring of support was overwhelming. Our team definitely missed not having our Annual Dave & Buster's Party and seeing all of our families, but we are looking forward to a Spring event as we are changing with the times to keep Covid safety a priority for our matches. We hope everyone is enjoying the outdoors more than ever and trying new things like hikes along the Hudson or throwing a football. Please share your experiences with our office.

Ring in the New Year also meant celebrating National Mentoring Month. Please, Parents and Littles, continue to share with us your stories of how a mentor has made an impact on your life. Help us encourage others through your experiences to become a

Big. Our agency knows we cannot do this without the families who entrust us with their children and the mentors who choose to give of their time. So many of our mentors at their Little's graduation from BBBS have said they never realized how much the experience of mentoring a child would change them and help them grow as a person. Please consider helping us invite others to become a Big today so that the children who are waiting to be matched don't have to wait another day.

With thanks and appreciation,
Sarah Arras
Program Supervisor





“FROM A FRIEND”

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland has, “From a Friend”, received a charitable gift of \$5000.00 in memory of “Ric” McKay. Heartfelt thanks is extended to our anonymous donor and prayers and sympathy to the family of Mr. McKay.



LOSING ONE OF OUR VALUED MENTORS

This week our agency had the unexpected loss of losing one of our valued mentors, Kenny Mandel. In the short time that our office got to know Kenny all of us were amazed by his passion and enthusiasm for youth and helping others. Kenny was someone who answered the call of others and always showed up. Kenny enjoyed working with our agency as a Big Brother, but also as part of our fundraising team and played a vital role in our 2021 Signature Fundraiser.

Our agency wants to deeply thank his family and wife Jane for sharing Kenny with us and allowing our agency to be one way people honor his name through our Honor/ Memorial Gift Program. <https://www.bbbsofrc.com/donate/honor-or-memorial-gift/>





JANUARY - NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

January was National Mentoring Month, but you can start any time. Sign up to become a Big. Start 2022 by giving back and become a Big!





Big Brothers
Big Sisters.

NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH







Big Brothers
Big Sisters.

NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OF SERVICE





Big Brothers
Big Sisters.

NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

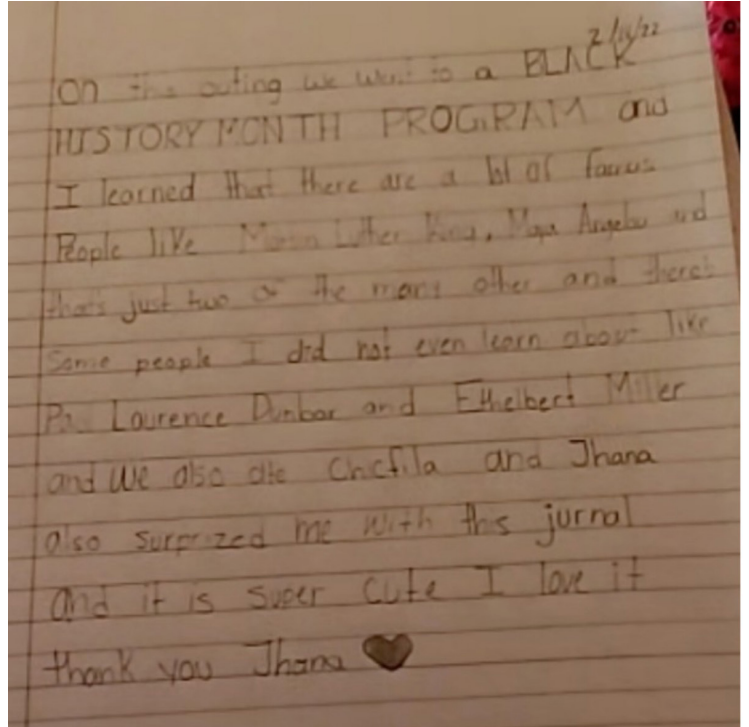
INTERNATIONAL DAY OF MENTORING

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. We honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through service and our unwavering commitment to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. You can #JoinTheVillage today and empower a young person in your community through mentorship. Get started here: www.bbbsofrc.com #MLKDay #NationalMentoringMonth

January 17th was International Mentoring Day. Youth empowerment is a catalyst for positive change in communities – and around the world. #InternationalMentoringDay We invite you share your mentoring story and encourage others to #JoinTheVillage and mentor a young person in your community. Become a Big today. Get started here: www.bbbsofrc.com #NationalMentoringMonth



In February our Big Sister Jhana attended a Black History event with her Little, Julia. This Big Sister was touched that her Little wrote a letter in her journal to remember the event and day with her Big Sister.



In January her Big Sister also took her to a Martin Luther King Day of Service event in which they made quilt squares based on the quilts of Gee's Bend, which are, according to Wikipedia, "quilts created by a group of women and their ancestors who live or have lived in the isolated African-American hamlet of Gee's Bend, Alabama along the Alabama River. ... The quilting tradition in Gee's Bend goes back beyond the 19th century and may have been influenced in part by patterned Native American textiles and African textiles."

Big Sister Jackie and her Little Brother, Carmello, went to Teaneck High School's Black History Month celebration. It was put on by a black student group. Carmello said the dancing and singing and poetry were fun. The presentation also chronicled the history of significant events in African American history and how they are so relevant now. It ended with the thought that we all can do better with kindness and understanding. Teaneck's high school is a Gothic-looking building, all spread out, like a mini version of a college. It's certainly very different than the school building Carmello attends. He was impressed. (Photo from another outing)





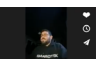
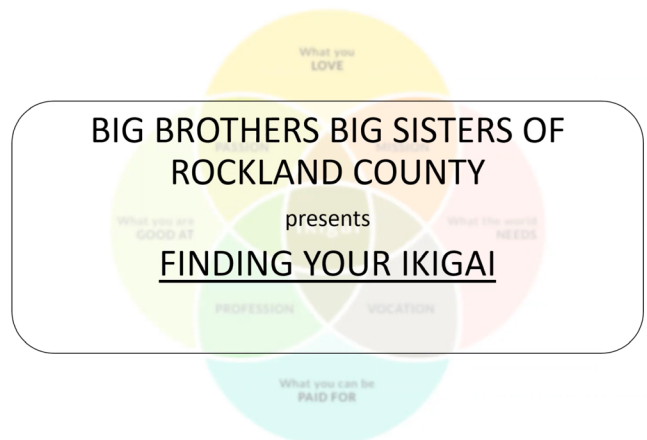
Big Brothers Big Sisters is excited to honor Black leaders of today and in our JEDI-focused approach to mentorship. We invite you to join us by creating a safe space for Black voices to be celebrated, recognized and empowered through lived experiences and storytelling.



NILE'S PRESENTATION ON IKIGAI AND HELPING OUR YOUTH IN BBBS

Thank you to everyone who attended Big Brother Nile's presentation on Ikigai and helping our Youth in BBBS find their interests and direction. Thank you to Nile for putting a great presentation together. It gave us a lot to think about.

We invite all our Bigs to share their experiences and hope to bring everyone together again in the near future to support one another and find resources.





WELCOME TO BOARD MEMBER, JOANNA KRIESEL

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland extends a warm welcome to Board Member Joanna Kriesel. Joanna has been voted as the organization's Recording Secretary for 2022.





“TOYS FOR TOTS”

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland extends heartfelt thanks to Crowne Plaza for its initiative in the creation of a “Toys for Tots” donation gift box.

BBBS is deeply grateful for the vast collection of donated gifts for distribution to “our kids” last holiday season.

Seen below is the Crowne Plaza “A” Team and third from the right is BBBS Board Treasurer Keith Brown. Keith was an honoree at our 37th Anniversary Gala this year in acknowledgment of his leadership and commitment as Immediate Past Board Chair.





THANK YOU FOR THE DONATIONS FROM THE NEW CITY AND NYACK OFFICES OF CHRISTIE'S INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE WESTCHESTER | HUDSON VALLEY.





TRUNK OR TREAT

Thank you to Crowne Plaza Suffern-Mahwah for sponsoring our Big Brothers Big Sisters and Rockland Youth Empowerment Trunk or Treat. Due to the efforts of our BBBS Board Member Keith Brown and the wonderful Hospitality staff of Crowne Plaza Suffern Mahwah, the Trunk or Treat was a big hit with attending children, mentors, and family. Our agency is looking forward to future events at your hotel for our participants.





SENATOR ELIJAH REICHLIN-MELNICK PRESENTED BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF ROCKLAND COUNTY WITH A CHECK FOR \$13,000

NEW CITY, NY - Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick presented Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County with a check for \$13,000 and honored BBBS president and CEO Gillian Ballard with a commendation award for 25 years of service with BBBS at the organization's annual gala event in New City at La Terrazza restaurant.

Senator Reichlin-Melnick secured the funds in the 2021 New York State budget. The funds come in the form of a grant of \$13,000 from the NYS Office of Children and Family Services in support of the Court Ordered Supervised Visitation Program.

State Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick (D-Rockland/Westchester) said, "Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County is a phenomenal organization that is deeply dedicated to serving the children of Rockland County, and I am honored to be able to deliver this critical funding to help support their efforts in providing services to the most vulnerable children in our county."

"Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County extends heartfelt gratitude to Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick for securing these grant funds," said BBBS of Rockland President and CEO Gillian Ballard. "Now more than ever, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland is stepping up to find innovative ways to serve its community, and the Senator's commitment to a service providing non-custodial parents an opportunity to meet each week with their child(ren) in a safe, child-friendly environment under the supervision of court approved supervisors, is truly appreciated."

The Supervised Visitation Program is an effective and necessary tool that promotes the bond between a parent and child where there are safety or other issues present that may make conventional, unsupervised visitation contrary to a child's best interests. The program aids in supporting the critical social and emotional development needed to help build resilience and promote the mental health and well-being of the many children served throughout Rockland County.

Senator Reichlin-Melnick also presented a special commendation award to BBBS's Gillian Ballard at the event, commemorating her 25th year of service to the organization.

"Congratulations to President Ballard, who has been a steadfast champion for BBBS of Rockland for two and a half decades, and has touched countless children's lives during her tenure," Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick said. "I am thankful for her leadership and work, and wish her the best of luck as she continues to steer and grow BBBS into the future."





37TH ANNIVERSARY GALA WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County enjoyed a fantastically successful fundraiser in celebration of its 37 years of service and wishes to express heartfelt gratitude to Apple Bank as the Main Event Sponsor, sincere appreciation to all the many sponsors who enabled the event to be so wonderful; the many dinner attendees and super generous donors of our Live Auction! Your generosity will be forever remembered.







BBBS STATE GRANT

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland is the proud recipient of a State Grant from Assemblyman Ken Zebrowski, a long and valued supporter of our mentoring mission.



THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF OUR CAMP SCHOLARSHIP COORDINATOR

Through the efforts of our Camp Scholarship Coordinator, Judie Greenstein, 14 children were able to attend camp this summer and she is avidly working to raise scholarships and sponsors for this year. We partnered with the National Council of Jewish Women, Rockland County YMCA & MLK Center that offered additional financial aid and discounts that made it possible for the kids to attend camp. An arrival of thank-you letters flooded our office during the latter part of 2021, from children and parents who appreciated the assistance given to their families. If you are interested in making a donation to the camp scholarship fund, donations can be made at www.bbbsofrc.com/donate

TO Whom it May Concern,

I want to thank everyone that was part of making my son enjoy part of his summer. Thank you all for the donations and scholarships that was put in to allow my son to go to camp this year. He was so happy to know that his mom and him got help to go to camp this year. Thank you all for making it possible for my son.

God Bless you all

To the wonderful people that made this happen for me. Thank you for letting me go to camp. Thanks for the Scholarship and donations. I really appreciate everything. I really enjoyed it and I hope I can go next year. The staff and the director were very nice.

Thank
you
so
much



PALISADES MALL FOR COMMUNITY FOCUS DAY

Thanks to our mentee volunteers who helped us staff our table at the event, to our firefighter Big who showed us some of the gear his station uses, and our partners.





VIRTUAL GRADUATION

The Rockland County Legislature hosted last year's graduation ceremony for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County, honoring eight mentees and their volunteer mentors for their accomplishments.

"Big Brothers Big Sisters makes a positive difference in the lives of children and youth," BBBS Legislative Liaison, Harriet Cornell said. "The adult mentors deserve great thanks for their devotion to the program and to the children they mentor over a long period of time, during the child's formative years.

The mentees are to be praised as well for their participation in the program and for valuing all they learn from their mentor that enables them to enter adulthood with strength, confidence and resilience."

Among those joining Legislator Cornell for the virtual graduation ceremony were, Legislature Chairman Alden H. Wolfe and Big Brothers Big Sisters' President & CEO Gillian Ballard, Board of Directors Chairwoman Jennifer Sislin and Board members Robert Barilli, Jim Lugo and Keith Brown together with Judie the agency's monitor for child safety.

2021 honorees:

- Little Sister Daphkar Albert Ducasse and Big Sister Susan Armenio, matched for six years.
- Little Brother Shawn DeRonde and Big Brother Michael Barr, matched for seven years.
- Little Brother Daniel Gutierrez and Big Sister Ellen Block-Stone & Big Brother Steven Stone, matched for eight years.
- Little Sister Nicole Pena and Big Sister Janelle Colon, matched for six years.
- Little Sister Clayanna Jarrett and Big Sister Ashley Leveille, matched two years.
- Little Sister Julianne Pelcak and Big Sister Kaitlyn Montera, matched five years.
- Little Brother Anthony James and Big Brother Keith Wallenstein, matched six years.
- Little Sister Aniyah Gibbs and Big Sister Paula Williams, matched three years.

Big Brothers Big Sisters is a one-to-one relationship program that allows children to build trusting friendships, engage in meaningful conversations and activities, and to realize their self-worth and potential – all with the help of their adult mentors, who act as positive role models. 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 a study by Public/Private Ventures, a Philadelphia-based national research organization.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County pairs a volunteer mentor with a youth between the ages of 7 and 18 who is facing adversity. The Bigs & Littles share simple low-cost or no-cost outings allowing them time to get to know each other and to converse.

Part of the program's success lies with the parents of the mentees, who support their child's participation in the program so their youth may flourish.

Due to the virtual nature of this past year's graduation, statements about each Little & Big, solicited from them and including a favorite memory they shared, were read by BBBS Program Supervisor Sarah Arras, and BBBS Match Coordinator Anne Nissen. Here's a summary:

Daphkar Albert Ducasse heads to SUNY Buffalo in the fall, where she plans to major in neuroscience and behavior. She hopes to eventually become a psychiatrist. Her favorite memory with her Big Sister was when they spent time in the pool relaxing and later watching movies.

Big Sister Susan Armenio said one favorite memory was the night they went to the Cheesecake Factory to celebrate Daphkar's new job. She also offered encouraging words to her Little Sister: "You are a bright light in this world, and a bright light in my life. Have strong opinions, but always be able to explain both sides of an argument, and never be afraid to change your mind. 'Be a voice, not an echo.' You are strong, intelligent, kind, and hilarious! Most of all, you are loved. My life would be less without you and we will be in each other's lives forever."

Shawn DeRonde heads to the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park. Shawn said his Big Brother is always supportive of him, gives him good advice and is like a father to him.



Big Brother Michael Barr said his favorite memory was when they visited the Jersey Shore for a daytrip, Shawn's first exposure to the ocean and the beach. He also wants Shawn to always remember that his success began with his mother's love and his family's support, and that his education and accomplishments will uplift his entire family.

Little Brother Daniel Gutierrez and Big Sister Ellen Block-Stone & Big Brother Steven Stone were together since Daniel was 8-years-old. Daniel's favorite memories include going to Mt. Fuji, meeting his Big's family and eating Thanksgiving dinner at their home.

Little Sister Nicole Pena will attend the Nursing program at Rockland Community College in the fall. She has great memories with her Big Sister, including when they went snow tubing, and she considers her Big Sister to be a true and forever sister.

Big Sister Janelle Colon was once a Little Sister herself and has many fond memories of her time with Little Sister Nicole, including when they handed out 30 Starbucks gift cards as acts of kindness on what would have been the 30th birthday of Janelle's friend, Colby. She also offered encouraging words: "Keep reaching for the stars, always remember you're worth it; keep striving to be a wonderful human being and never settle for less!"

Little Sister Clayanna Jarrett will attend the Nursing program at Rockland Community College in the fall. Clayanna and her Big Sister Ashley Leveille were paired during Clayanna's later high school years, but they still developed a close relationship and hope their friendship continues. Little Sister Julianne Pelcak is also headed to Rockland Community College in the fall. Her favorite memories with her Big Sister include walking around Congers Lake and going out to eat. Big Sister Kaitlyn Montera decided to become a Big after she saw how much her cousin enjoyed being a Big Sister. Her favorite memories with her Little Sister include going out to eat and being able to talk about anything. She wants Julianne to know that she can be the best she can be and should always push for her goals.

Little Brother Anthony James will attend Rockland Community College in the fall and hopes to eventually work in TV production. Anthony's favorite memories with his Big include enjoying lunch, fishing, and visiting the park. "There's no word that can describe how much Keith has done for me. I don't think just 'thanks' can be enough. He has helped me grow from being a shy and reserved boy into a young man that is able to think for himself, not follow others. He gave me self-confidence."

Big Brother Keith Wallenstein enjoyed sailing on the Hudson River with Anthony and a fellow Big Brother, made possible by a former Little Brother who wanted to give back to the program. Keith said he had never considered the impact his Little would have on him and that he is forever grateful to Anthony. "Anthony, it has been an honor and privilege to be your Big Brother. I am so proud of the young man you have become, and I know your future is bright...The path you desire is in your hands and you will do great things. I am here by your side and will forever be your Big Brother."

Little Sister Aniyah Gibbs will attend SUNY Plattsburgh, where she will study English Language Arts, then switch her major so she can learn how to teach English to youth. Her favorite memory with her Big Sister was when they watched a movie after attending a college fair because it was relaxing, and they had a good conversation.

Big Sister Paula Williams became a Big because her daughter was away at college and she found herself an empty nester. One stand-out memory was when they went to the Challenger Learning Center and she was amazed at how deftly her Little was able to get through all the materials. To her Little, she said: "As you venture into this next phase, keep your head held high, speak from the pit of your stomach, and let your voice be heard. College will come with challenges but know that with determination you can conquer the challenges. Continue to enjoy the arts. Keep striving for greatness - as I know you can! Remember to let happiness outshine sadness. Always put God first and have faith in all you do. You have the ability to shine and make great things happen."

For more information about the Big Brothers Big Sisters program, please visit <https://www.bbbsofrc.com>



GRADUATION PHOTOS

Little Brother Anthony & Big Brother Keith Wallenstein celebrate his graduation together!



Congratulations Julianne on your graduation and all your hard work!!!





Congratulations Daphkar on your graduation and all your hard work!!!



LIA TOYOTA OF ROCKLAND'S CORPORATE MATCHING GRANT AWARD.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County is a proud recipient of the Lia Toyota of Rockland's corporate matching grant award. L-R-John Vitro, General Manager, Lia Toyota of Rockland, Gillian Ballard, CEO, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland, Carlos Inoa and Ralph Arditti, Lia Toyota of Rockland Representatives.





Won'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.

POTENTIAL

IS EVERYWHERE



EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Jennifer Sislin, Chairperson

Edward Brignoni, Vice Chairperson

Keith Brown, Treasurer

Joanna Kreisel, Recording Secretary

DIRECTORS

Robert M. Barilli

Edward Brignoni

Bruce Bortniker

Keith Brown

M. Teresa A. Faherty

Joanna Kreisel

Henry Kwartler

James Lugo

Scott W. Milich

Jennifer Sislin

ADVISORY BOARD

Sheriff Louis Falco III
Rockland County Sheriff's
Department

Hon. Scott B. Ugell
Clarkstown Justice Court

Hon. Alfred J. Weiner
Supreme Court Judge
(Retired)

LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

The Hon. Harriet Cornell



Big Brothers
Big Sisters®

OF ROCKLAND COUNTY