

# BIG HAPPENINGS NEWSLETTER



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

www.bbbsofrc.com  
info@bbbsofrc.com  
tel: 845-317-6112

## In This Issue:

- Big & Little Spotlights
- Thank You Yasmine
- Thank You M & T
- Thank You Rockland Nissan

To find out how to become a mentor or how to enroll your child(ren), please contact our Program Manager, Yara Dellolio, at (845) 317-6114 or email at yara@bbbsofrc.com!

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



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MENTORSHIP IS  
NOT JUST ABOUT  
GUIDING SOMEONE  
THROUGH LIFE,  
BUT INSPIRING  
THEM TO DISCOVER  
THEIR OWN PATH



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

#BBBSRC #BeBig #ItTakesLittleToBeBig

## OUR MISSION:

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

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## GREETINGS FROM GILLIAN

Greetings to all our readers and supporters! May 2025 bring you good health, peace, and prosperity.

This newsletter is your invitation to discover more about Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland—our mission, our work, our dedicated staff, and our board. In this edition of 2025, you'll find many reasons to visit our website, where you can learn about upcoming events, celebrations, and our unwavering commitment to the youth of our county.

As Rockland's premier mentoring program, we take immense pride in offering vital services to our community's young people. We believe that every child—across the diverse communities we serve—deserves a caring adult mentor and the opportunity to become part of the BBBS family.

Our commitment to youth extends beyond traditional mentoring. We continuously launch new initiatives aimed at reducing negative behavior patterns and empowering children to reach their full potential. In alignment with our vision and mission, we sought to deepen our impact and address the challenges posed by the opioid crisis. As a result, we were awarded a third three-year grant to support youth and families affected by this devastating epidemic.

As CEO of this transformative organization, I am incredibly proud of the dedication, time, and passion our volunteers bring to their roles as mentors. The relationships built between mentors and mentees are nothing short of exceptional—defined by genuine care, encouragement, and unwavering support. Our mentors listen, advocate, and inspire while also guiding their mentees through life's challenges.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend heartfelt gratitude and congratulations to our mentors for "Making the Difference." We also commend those who have chosen to "Make a Difference" by leading and supporting our community's youth through mentorship.

We warmly invite you to stay connected, visit our website, and join us in celebrating mentoring as a powerful approach to positive youth development. At Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland, our vision is for all youth to achieve success in life. Through one-to-one mentoring relationships, we ignite the spark for a bright and rewarding future. The youth of Rockland County are our future, and with the support of our volunteers and programs, we will continue to help them lead healthy, happy, and positive lives.

Anyone can be a Big Brother or Big Sister—no special experience or expertise is required! Just a couple of hours, a couple of times a month, can make a world of difference. And you might be surprised at how much you gain in return!

At Big Brothers Big Sisters, giving starts with you. We deeply appreciate all of our supporters—donors, volunteers, and advocates. Your generosity helps us create and sustain life-changing mentorships between Bigs and Littles, instantly making you part of our BBBS family. By volunteering or donating today, you are investing in a child's future—and in the future of our world.

Join us. Be the change. Make a difference today.





## SARAH ARRAS - PROGRAM SUPERVISOR & DEPUTY CEO

As our agency and families head into Summer, we are so grateful to share in our Littles' celebrations and achievements during this school year as they tried new things, studied harder, found their passions, and maybe found a new perspective on their future goals. As an agency, we know that the Summer can be lonely as many of our Littles miss their friends and even their favorite teacher or coach.

In early February, our agency sent out an opportunity for Littles to apply for Summer Camp Scholarships, and we are happy to say that with the assistance of a combination of private donations to the BBBS Camp Scholarship Fund and discounts/scholarships from local camps such as Rockland County YMCA, Village of Haverstraw Day Camp, Arsenal Athletics, STACK Sports, and the Town of Clarkstown, we were able to provide these opportunities. Our coordination of camp scholarships would not have been possible without the continued support that our agency received from the National Council of Jewish Women, who comes through for us annually with support. As an agency, we know that the Fall will be here sooner than we think, so we are already planning back-to-school supplies coordination efforts, a comic book night event, and of course, making plans for our October Fundraiser and Annual Holiday Party.

During this past year, our agency had support through Derech Shalom and Rockland Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependencies to assist us with resources for vaping and other substance prevention efforts for our youth and educational tools for our parents and mentors. We are grateful for these opportunities to learn and grow together.

This year, I am stepping into the role of Deputy CEO, and I have been assisting our CEO Gillian Ballard in all her efforts that she has been doing for the agency over the last 30 years to discover funding for the agency through grants and fundraising with our devoted Board Members. There is so much to learn, and I am excited to connect more with the agency on this level. Our agency in December welcomed our New Program Manager Yara this year, and she has been excited to meet everyone and help coordinate United Way Donation Opportunities.

There are many people who work behind the scenes at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland, such as our office volunteer & camp coordinator Judie Greenstein, our Data entry & Match Support specialists Karen Lewis & Kristin Rossetti, our CFO Patrice Brenner, and also Chad Turner who is in charge of our marketing platforms and website, and lastly our CZ Kaufman our technical support who keeps us up and running with our technology. Thank you for all your support and efforts this year to help us run smoothly!



## FACILITATING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

As a Contact Support Specialist for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County, I am dedicated to facilitating meaningful connections between our volunteers and the youth in our community. With a focus on providing exceptional support and guidance, I ensure that every match receives the resources and attention they need to thrive. Whether it's answering questions, addressing concerns, or offering ongoing assistance, my goal is to help create lasting relationships that empower and inspire. Together, we can make a positive impact in the lives of children and families throughout Rockland County.

Kristin Rossetti







## MEET THE OFFICE STAFF!



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



Yara Dellolio  
Program Manager  
(845) 317 6114  
yara@bbbsofrc.com



Judie Greenstein  
Match Support Specialist  
info@bbbsofrc.com



Karen Lewis  
Data Entry Specialist  
klewis@bbbsofrc.com



Patrice Brenner  
Bookkeeper  
pbrenner@bbbsofrc.com



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



## NEW BBBS PROGRAM MANAGER

Hello Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland Family!

While many of you and I have already connected via phone, email, or in person, I'm delighted to formally introduce myself as your new Program Manager. I joined this wonderful organization in December 2024 and am truly honored to contribute to the vital work you all do in our community.

Bringing a unique perspective to this role, child safety has always been a paramount concern for me, both personally and professionally. As a retired law enforcement officer, my career was dedicated to protecting young people and the community, a commitment that continues to drive me.

My connection to Big Brothers Big Sisters goes even deeper. I'm also a proud parent of a fantastic 13-year-old son who has been in the program for over a year and a half. Witnessing firsthand the positive influence of a mentor has only strengthened my belief in the power of this organization.

Furthermore, years ago, in the wake of 9/11, I had the privilege of serving as a mentor with Big Brothers Big Sisters in New York City. That profoundly rewarding experience underscored the crucial role mentors play in offering guidance and support during significant times.

I am genuinely excited to begin this new chapter and look forward to meeting each and every one of you – our dedicated volunteers, supportive families, and committed staff and board members. I am eager to learn from your experiences and collaborate to advance the mission of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County.

Please don't hesitate to reach out; I look forward to connecting with you soon.

Yara Dellolio





Big Brothers  
Big Sisters®  
OF ROCKLAND COUNTY



**RYE**  
Rockland Youth  
Empowerment

# PLEASE JOIN US FOR **AGED TO PERFECTION!** CELEBRATING 42 YEARS-

Join us for an exciting evening in support of two local nonprofits dedicated to helping Rockland County youth and their families.

Enjoy a fun-filled night of dinner, dancing, drinks, prizes, and delicious food while making a positive impact. The more support we receive, the greater the difference we can make!

**Saturday, October 4, 2025**

**Time:** 6p.m. – 10 p.m.

**Location:** Crowne Plaza Suffern-Mahwah

Three, Executive Blvd

Suffern NY, 10901

**Tickets:** \$225 per individual / \$400 per couple

**To Buy Tickets or Sponsor Visit:**

**[BBBSofRC.com/42years](http://BBBSofRC.com/42years) or [RYECenter.org/42years](http://RYECenter.org/42years)**







## BBBS Board Game & RCADD Vape Escape Night

Our agency was excited to host our first Board Game at the suggestion of a Big and Little to connect everyone in our program. The event was further supported with the great event of the Vape Escape Room organized by Rockland Council on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependence, Inc. Director of Prevention, Margarita Santana BA, CASAC-T. Special Thanks to Inserra Supermarkets for providing sandwiches for the event and to the Palisades Mall as always providing community rooms to local nonprofits free of charge. Our agency appreciates the village of supporters that makes these events a success to support our Littles, Bigs & Families. To learn more about the prevention services offered please visit their website at <https://www.rcadd.org/>



## Volunteer Recruitment Drive

We are in our Volunteer recruitment drive so please, keep an eye out for BBBS on the Palisades Mall digital screens! Post a picture with your Match or Family, Like & Share to your own social media. Incentives will be given for the most active BBBS Participant!



## Coming Full Circle "An Alcoholic's Story of Redemption"

Thank you to Derech Shalom for bringing our agency an evening with Guest Speaker Mendy Schusterman who shared his journey with sobriety and how he has turned his life's work into helping support youth who have faced or are facing an addiction struggle. Thank you to the mentors and board members who attended to learn more about supporting youth in our program. To learn more about Derech Shalom and the support services that they offer please refer to their website below. <https://thedscenter.org/>

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County  
in collaboration with The Derech Shalom Center

### Please Join Us

for a powerful evening with the  
Rockland Alive Mentoring Program (R.A.M.P.)

**\*Coming Full Circle\***  
An Alcoholic's Story of Redemption

With Guest Speaker Mendy Schusterman

**New City Library in Hi Tor Room**  
220 N Main St, New City, NY 10956  
Thursday, April 10th  
5pm-7pm



**Mendy Schusterman**

Mendy Schusterman is a committed social work student with four years of sobriety, using his personal and professional experiences to aid others in recovery. As program director for The Neighbors, he supports young men from Orthodox Jewish backgrounds. He is currently interning at the Derech Shalom Center, providing peer support for mental health and recovery, emphasizing healing and connection in his work.



# Look out for Summertime reading programs in Rockland!

Please keep us posted on your favorite reads this Summer during Support Calls and what you earn!

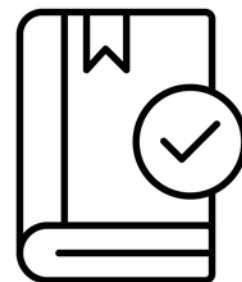
## Summer Reading Incentives

<https://www.barnesandnobleinc.com/wp-content/uploads/2025-BN-Kids-Summer-Reading-Journal.pdf>

<https://www.bookitprogram.com/>

[https://www.chuckecheese.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/LSM\\_Rewards\\_Calendar\\_Reading.pdf](https://www.chuckecheese.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/LSM_Rewards_Calendar_Reading.pdf)

<https://www.mensaforkids.org/achieve/excellence-in-reading/>



## Library and Educational Programs for reaching reading goals.

<https://www.scholastic.com/site/summer-reading.html>

<https://www.rif.org/literacy-central/summer>

<https://guides.rcls.org/YouthServices/summerreading>

### **GRADES 1 & 2**

Catty Corner Lands on Her Feet	Julie Murphy
The Cool Bean Makes a Splash	Jory John
Fox at Night	Corey R. Tabor
Junie B. Jones and the Stupid Smelly Bus: The Graphic Novel	Barbara Park
Pete the Cat's Family Road Trip	Kimberly and James Dean
Pizza and Taco: Draw Your Own Comic!	Stephen Shaskan
Princess Minna: The Unicorn Mix-Up	Kirsty Applebaum
Spider-Man: Animals Assemble!	Mike Maihack
Stella & Marigold	Annie Barrows
Stitch Head: The Forgotten Creation	Guy Bass
Superpower Puppies: Moose and Violet Knock Things Down	Corey Powell
Dragón y sus labores	Dav Pilkey

### **GRADES 3 & 4**

The 13-Story Treehouse	Andy Griffiths
Big Nate: Blow the Roof Off!	Lincoln Peirce
The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe	C. S. Lewis
The Dragon's Apprentice	James Riley
Dungeon Runners: Hero Trial	Kieran Larwood
Ferris	Kate DiCamillo
Katie and the Cupcake Cure: The Graphic Novel	Coco Simon
Tales of an 8-Bit Kitten: Lost in the Nether	Cube Kid
The Tail of Emily Windsnap	Liz Kessler
Try Not to LOL: Jokes for Kids	Rob Elliott
The Twits	Roald Dahl
Ways to Make Sunshine	Renée Watson
Los tipos malos	Aaron Blabey

### **GRADES 5 & 6**

Awesome Road Trip Activities for Kids	Jen Tousey
Choose Your Own Adventure: The Magic of the Unicorn	Deborah Lerme Goodman
Ghost	Jason Reynolds
Greenwild: The World Behind the Door	Pari Thomson
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	J.K. Rowling
It Watches in the Dark	Jeff Strand
The Secret Library	Kekla Magoon
Smile: A Graphic Novel	Raina Telgemeier
Snow White and the Dragon (or, Sleeping Beauty and the Seven Dwarfs)	Kim Bussing
Unico: Awakening	Samuel Sattin
Warriors: The New Prophecy: Midnight	Erin Hunter
El Niño	Pam Muñoz Ryan





GET STARTED

IT TAKES **LITTLE TO BE BIG**



**THE LITTLE  
MOMENTS  
MATTER MOST**

**IT TAKES LITTLE TO BE BIG**

 Big Brothers Big Sisters.

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

**IT TAKES LITTLE TO BE BIG**

 Big Brothers Big Sisters.



**A WEEKLY  
CHECK-IN...**



**...AND A  
'CHECKMATE!'**

**GET STARTED TODAY**

**[BBBSOFRG.COM/VOLUNTEER](http://BBBSOFRG.COM/VOLUNTEER)**



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## SHARE YOUR (BIG & LITTLE) STORY TO POST IN OUR NEXT BBBS NEWSLETTER...

### MEET ERIC & LUCA

First Name of Little: Luca

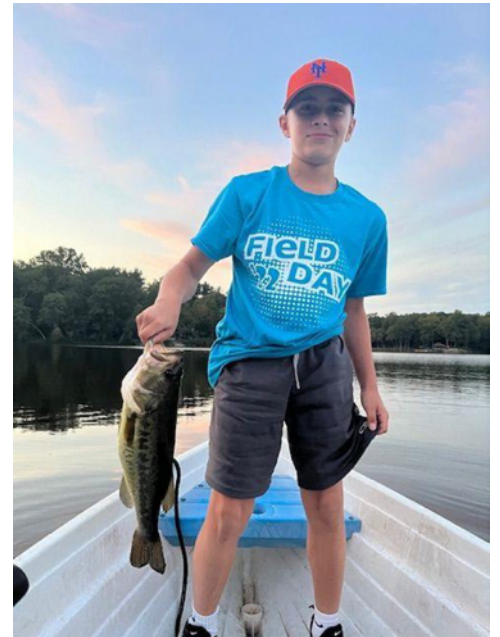
Age of Little: 13

First Name of Big: Eric

Length of Match: 22 months

What did you and BIG do together to strengthen your relationship?

Matched in August 2023 through Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland, Luca and Eric have built a meaningful connection rooted in trust, adventure, and healing. Luca, a shy and thoughtful 13-year-old, lost his father five years ago. Since then, opportunities to explore the outdoors had been few and far between—until he met his Big Brother, Eric. From their very first fishing trip, it was clear this match was something special. Luca had never held a fishing rod before, but Eric patiently taught him how to cast, reel, and appreciate the calm of nature. Since then, their time together has included hikes, nature walks, and simple moments by the water—experiences that have helped Luca open up and grow more confident. Their bond has grown deeper with every outing, bringing not only joy and laughter but also a sense of stability and support. Eric has told Luca's mother that sometimes all a kid needs is someone to show up, listen, and share something new. Together, Eric & Luca remind us how small moments can lead to big changes—and how mentorship can truly transform lives.



### HAPPY 5 YEAR ANNIVERSARY LUCAS & CINDY!!!

First Name of Little: Lucas

Age of Little: 12

First Name of Big: Cindy

Length of Match: 61 Months

What did you and BIG do together to strengthen your relationship?

Big and Little just reached their 5th Anniversary and have reached their initial goals of Little learning patience, having fun and forming a friendship. In regards to Little entering Middle School Big tells him to have an open mind and to be accepting of others so he can have new experiences such as trying sports and joining a club. Big feels that she is always there for him, and they have built trust over the years. Recently in a support call, Little shared If he was in a bad mood that his Big Sister makes him feel happy. Little said that they have a great bond and he is very comfortable with her. Little feels that Cindy kind of feels like a real big sister to him.





## OUR NEW MATCH CINDY & JORDAN

First Name of Little: Jordan Freeman

Age of Little: 9

First Name of Big: Cindy

Length of Match: 3 months

What did you and BIG do together to strengthen your relationship?

Since being matched, this Big and Little have built a strong and meaningful connection in a short amount of time. They see each other every 10 days, and during their time together, Little feels free to be himself—energetic, curious, and full of personality. Knowing that her Little has ADHD and has trouble sitting still for long periods, Big has shown incredible patience and understanding. She's introduced him to new experiences like museum visits, while also helping him develop skills around patience and setting healthy boundaries. Their bond continues to grow with each visit, and Little can't wait to see her each time they get together. Their relationship is one built on trust, encouragement, and genuine joy.



## MACY'S PARTNERSHIP CONTINUING IN 2025 - LOOKING FORWARD TO....

Macys MISSION Everyone in December 2024. Our agency reached out to our local Macys and we were overwhelmed by the welcome we received from their team. Invited to speak to Macy's employees at the start of their round up campaign, we were glad to be able to spread awareness of the benefits of mentoring to their staff that would be encouraging customers to donate their change or their time by becoming a mentor. Also in conjunction with the Holiday our Littles were invited to make ornaments and even had a special guest when Geoffrey the Giraffe from Toys R Us made a visit to our event. We were thankful for the support!







**Big Brothers  
Big Sisters.**  
OF ROCKLAND COUNTY

# MENTORS **NEEDED**



## 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.**



**Enroll a child**

**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](mailto:info@bbbsofrc.com)



**Become a Mentor**





## PARENT OF THE MONTH: YASMINE!!!!!!

We are thrilled to recognize Yasmine as our Parent of the Month! Yasmine enrolled her two sons in Big Brothers Big Sisters several years ago and has been an active part of our community ever since. Beyond being a dedicated parent, Yasmine also volunteers her time and proudly represents our agency at events like Haverstraw Head Start Family Day, Juneteenth celebrations and the Community Health Fair at the Palisades Mall. We are incredibly grateful for her ongoing support and commitment—and we feel so lucky to have her and her sons as part of our BBBS family!



## THANK YOU TO M&T CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Thank you to M&T Charitable foundation for their \$5000 donation to our One to One One Community Mentoring Program. This support will assist our agency in making more connections of Bigs and Littles in Rockland County this Summer. Thank you to M&T for helping us open more doors for a brighter future for our Littles!







## THANKS TO ROCKLAND NISSAN

Special thanks to Rockland Nissan for their donation of \$2500 and spotlighting our agency by offering a \$500 discount to car buyers who show proof of donation to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County. We appreciate the attention and look forward to making connections with the Rockland Nissan customers.



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **September 14th, 2025** - Comic Book Night with James Ferg Comics at New City Library
- **October 4th, 2025 Big-** Brothers Big Sisters of Rockland County & Rockland Youth Empowerment Dinner Gala Location:
- **December 6th, 2025-** BBBS Holiday Party at Dave & Busters



# 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



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

## EXECUTIVE OFFICERS 2025

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Robert Barilli Vice Chairperson

Keith Brown, Treasurer

Mike Ellman, Recording Secretary

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Keith Brown

Jim Lugo

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The Hon. Alden Wolfe, Esq.