



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Metro Milwaukee

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Newly
Matched



Becoming a
Big: How the
Volunteer
Journey Begins



Partnership
Profile: Kohl's
Department
Stores



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NEWSLETTER

SPRING
2017

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PARTNERSHIP PROFILE:

KOHL'S Department Stores

PARTNERS ARE CRITICAL TO OUR SUCCESS. WITHOUT THEIR SUPPORT WE WOULD BE UNABLE TO MAKE AND SUPPORT LIFE-CHANGING ONE-TO-ONE MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS. But not every partner is alike. Some write generous checks, sustaining our program monetarily. Others treat our matches with in-kind gifts of merchandise or experiences. Many participate in special event fundraisers like Bowl for Kids' Sake and the Big Gala. Volunteers selflessly donate their time and talents.

Incredibly, Kohl's Department Stores give back to Big Brothers Big Sisters in all these ways. Grants from their corporate office have allowed us to carry

out our mission, enrolling hundreds of children from the waiting list into caring, professionally-supported mentoring matches. Individual Kohl's stores have donated items like school supplies, stuffed animals, and books. More than 25 Kohl's associates currently serve as mentors in our program, delivering over 2,300 hours of mentoring every year. A member of the Kohl's leadership team—Mike Baughn—serves on our Board of Directors. Many more associates regularly donate their time through the Associates in Action program. Whether they are serving food at a family activity, creating centerpieces for the annual Gala, or hitting the lanes to Bowl for Kids' Sake, Big Brothers Big Sisters



can always count on Kohl's volunteers.

Thank you, Kohl's, for your outstanding commitment to serve children facing adversity in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. Together we are building futures—one child at a time.

Pictured above: Kohl's Associates Bowl for Kids' Sake every week from February through June.

Starting Off Strong

THE FIRST FEW MONTHS IN ANY NEW RELATIONSHIP ARE A CRITICAL TIME. TO HELP THIS IMPORTANT PERIOD GO SMOOTHLY, BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OFFERS "SMART START" ONCE PER MONTH TO NEWLY-MATCHED PAIRS IN OUR COMMUNITY-BASED MENTORING PROGRAM.

Each evening begins with ice breaker questions that give children and adults an opportunity to get to know each other. Then it's time for a group game that teaches matches to work together, communicate, and be adaptable—three vital attributes that will help them have healthy, successful relation-

ships. Next, matches talk about setting goals, and together they brainstorm action steps needed to achieve their goals.

After sitting and concentrating, matches are ready to get up and move onto the "Match Magic Maze."

The object of this activity is for the whole group to navigate through a maze from beginning to end without mistakes. Once the first person makes it through, the group must help each other remember the path. While the matches are enjoying a fun game, they are also practicing trust-building, problem solving, team work, and supportive coaching.

At the end of the night, matches make a list of activities they would like to try together, and they learn about fun opportunities offered through our REACH program. Finally, adults and children fill in a chart detailing the role of a Big and the role of a Little. Armed with new experiences and information (as well as new purple Big Brothers Big Sisters t-shirts), each match leaves "Smart Start" with a stronger relationship that will change both their lives for the better, forever.

Pictured above: The group game involves team work and communication. Left: Matches work together to set and achieve goals.



UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS



Bowl for Kids' Sake is underway! Hit the lanes and strike it BIG for local children. Each bowler is asked to raise a minimum of \$100. Bowlers receive two free games with shoe rental, food and soda, a notepad and pen, and chances to win prizes while you bowl. Bowl as an individual, or form a team of up to 6 people. For more information, including remaining bowling dates, visit gobowling.kintera.org.



Presented by **BMO**  **Harris Bank**

Join Big Brothers Big Sisters on Monday, August 14 at North Hills Country Club. Each golf foursome is joined by an NFL Alumni player. Proceeds support our mentoring programs for over 1,400 children in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. Go to bbbsmilwaukee.org/golf to learn more about this great golf outing.



Help us Build Futures for Milwaukee and Waukesha children at the **Big Gala, a Celebration of Mentoring on Saturday, November 4** at The Pfister Hotel.



Mentor Joe and mentee Justin look forward to their mentoring journey together.

Newly Matched

MEET JOE: AN ENGINEER WITH A COLLEGE DEGREE. A HUSBAND AND FATHER WITH A FAMILY OF HIS OWN. A MENTOR WHO BELIEVES THAT "THE WAY TO A BETTER FUTURE CAN BE PAVED ONE PERSON, ONE CLASS, ONE EVENT AT A TIME."

In October 2016, Joe started mentoring Justin through the Big Brothers Big Sisters mentor2.0 program, which combines once-a-month in-person meetings with weekly online communication. The goal is to promote high school graduation, college readiness, post-secondary enrollment and success among a student population that will likely represent the first generation in their families to go to college. Justin is a freshman at Veritas High School in Milwaukee and, in the words of his mentor, "a cool dude with a wicked sense of humor."

Joe credits his wife with "dragging him to a Big Brothers Big Sisters mixer" to learn about volunteer opportunities. Once there, he was captivated. "On the more serious side, I really am passionate about education being the cure for a lot of societal ailments," he said.

New beginnings can be nerve-racking, and Joe admits he was a little fearful that meeting Justin would be awkward. "As soon as I walked in and met him for the first time, I knew those fears were unfounded," he remembers. It took very little time for Joe and Justin to develop a great match that is, in large part, built on humor and common trust.

Justin and Joe converse each week through a secure online communication system. Both enjoy the consistent contact that allows them to tackle a weekly assignment together—and to talk about Justin's favorite band, the Arctic Monkeys. But the monthly in-person meetings are the real highlight of their match. "There's excitement in the air because we haven't talked in person for a month," Joe said. "It's fun to see how much high schoolers can grow and change in just a month."

In the short time they have been matched, Justin has learned basic principles and skills, drawing on examples from Joe's own life. As their mentoring relationship progresses, Joe is "looking forward to the journey more than the destination. It will be quite a reward to see Justin succeed in his post high school life."

BECOMING A BIG:

How the Volunteer Journey Begins

IT'S A SPECIAL MOMENT WHEN A "BIG"—AN ADULT VOLUNTEER IN BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS' MENTORING PROGRAM—MEETS HIS OR HER "LITTLE" FOR THE FIRST TIME. BEFORE A MATCH BEGINS, STAFF MEMBERS DEVOTE HOURS OF BEHIND-THE-SCENES EFFORT, LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIP.

Mentoring Commitment

Becoming a "Big" is a very personal decision. We ask for a minimum two-year commitment which is only the beginning of a life-changing relationship. Potential volunteers are given three options to choose from, each based on our foundation of a professionally-supported one-to-one relationship, defined by measurable outcomes for educational success, avoidance of risky behavior and social/emotional development.

Application Process & Staff Assessment

Since child safety is our highest priority, the volunteer application process is rigorous. Lasting relationships are also a priority – we combine all of our gathered data to determine the strengths of each potential volunteer. An in-person interview helps staff determine whether the applicant is right for our mentoring program, and whether the program is a good fit for the applicant's valuable time.

Mandatory Orientation & Training

Volunteers meet our dedicated Match Support Specialists, one of whom will guide them through the duration of their match and conduct training to build knowledge and confidence. Agency standards are reviewed, scenarios are discussed, child and family profiles and challenges are presented, and mentoring resources are shared.

The Match

Placing the "right child" into the life of the "right adult" is a science and an art. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Milwaukee has a 41-year history of success – but it's no easy task. We combine gathered information with our professional assessment to create the most compatible relationship possible. We ask for ownership from all parties to develop a positive relationship and deliver measurable outcomes for each child.

We take our role very seriously. We value each child and their challenges. We dedicate ourselves to intentionally bringing together two wonderful human beings, and to guiding them as both of their lives change for the better, forever.

