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# MATCH SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF METRO ATLANTA



## FUN IN THE SUN

BY SUSAN STUBBS, EDITOR

Summer is here and we hope all of our matches are enjoying the season, but most of all having fun with one another. This should be the primary focus, especially after everyone has experienced a challenging time coping with the pandemic. Having regular fun in life can help one feel less overwhelmed by the stressors we face. This can help change attitudes toward lifestyle stressors and be less reactive and more productive with handling stress in general.

The following are the many benefits that matches can receive by having good old fun, so read on and get inspired to play, relax and enjoy the summer with one another:

- Fun activities provide a source of "eustress," the good kind of stress that keeps one feeling vital and alive such as riding a roller coaster, or competing in a sport. Get out there together and feel the good stress!
- You know what they say, "Laughter is the best medicine!" It draws people together in ways that trigger healthy physical and emotional changes in the body so engage in laughter often with one another.
- Matches who engage in new activities and have fun together often create a closer bond, therefore, maintaining healthier and supportive relationships with one another.
- Life's demands as a Big or Little can cause "burnout" and this has definitely been experienced throughout the pandemic. Having fun can release this negative type of stress and reset one mentally and physically. So what are you waiting for - let the fun begin!



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## Match Highlight of the Month

BY LEO RODRIGUEZ, SENIOR MATCH SUPPORT SPECIALIST

**LITTLE BROTHER JAYLEN AND BIG BROTHER TAYLOR** have been matched since December 2019 and have spent a lot of quality time with each other before the pandemic started. However, that has not stopped them from continuing to pursue their relationship, and they've survived the pandemic by consistently maintaining their conversations via scheduled phone and virtual calls. As things have begun to open back up, Jaylen and Taylor have been able to do some activities together, such as having lunch and taking nature walks, all with safety measures in place. Jaylen and Taylor have shared some very special experiences, including one of their best memories, going to an Atlanta Hawks game. While they had very low-cost tickets, Taylor entered a raffle to upgrade his tickets, and to the surprise of both, they won! They got moved to closer seats and were able to watch the rest of the game with a better view of the players. Jaylen and Taylor enjoy virtual reality and video games and they normally spend part of the time together visiting virtual arcades. Although Jaylen had to adapt to virtual learning, he was able to maintain good grades and at the end of his school year he had A's and B's. Taylor can't express how happy he is to be matched with Jaylen and hopes to be in Jaylen's life as long as he desires. They both have learned a lot from the time they've spent together. Big Brother Taylor says, "My hope for Jaylen's future is that he can lead a successful life". Taylor has also had a significant impact on Jaylen, who has learned a lot from his Big Brother and says, "Taylor has shown me the importance of school and how good grades are important for my future." Great job guys, and BBBSMA encourages both of you to continue the great work!



# MATCH EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

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## **Back to School Event**

Our annual Back to School Event for all grades will take place on Saturday, July 31st from 10 am- 12 pm. It will be a drive-thru event and will provide an opportunity for our Littles and parents to pick up a backpack along with school supplies, and also speak with educational vendors so they are classroom-ready. The location will be announced soon so stay tuned to our emails.

## **Movies at the Park**

Grab your lawn chairs and blankets and head out to one of these area parks for a free movie night. Click [HERE](#) to get more information on different locations, dates and times.

## **Virtual Escape Rooms**

What else can be more fun than escaping a room with your Little! A virtual escape room is all about solving riddles, and puzzles to get out of a situation. There's usually a theme of some sort and some questions you'll need to answer about that subject while others are just about figuring out clues that incorporate the theme. What's great is you can do this through a Zoom call with others, as long as someone is willing to share their screen. Click [HERE](#) for more info.

## **Hunt for Tiny and Secret Doors**

Tiny Doors ATL is an Atlanta-based art project bringing big wonder to tiny spaces in Atlanta and beyond. The 7-inch doors are sculptures created by artist Karen Anderson Singer at the invitation of the neighborhood or institution. They are designed to reflect the spirit, architecture, and other unique elements of the surrounding community. The numbered doors around Atlanta are always free to visit and accessible to people of all ages. Click [HERE](#) to start the fun!

## **Crafty and Creative Facetime Activities**

Video calls do NOT have to just be chit-chat and you can do some fun, crafty, and creative activities even when you're not in the same room with your Little. Click [HERE](#) for 50 ideas and let the fun begin!

## **Bowling**

Select bowling centers and schools around the country are participating in the first-ever Kids Bowl Free program. This program is designed by bowling centers to give back to the community and provide a safe, secure, and fun way for kids to spend time this summer. Children whose age does not exceed a limit by a participating bowling center are eligible to register for 2 free games each day of the KBF program, all summer long, courtesy of the participating bowling centers along with the schools and organizations. Click [HERE](#) for more info.



# IMPORTANT REMINDERS

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## Communication with your Match Support Specialist

Maintaining consistent communication with your coach is vital to the success of your relationship with your Little. Please inform us of any challenges that you are experiencing so we can work together and find a healthy resolution. Make sure to schedule your appointment through the acuity link that you receive. Keep in mind that a lack of communication may lead to match closure and we want to avoid this situation.

## Survey Completion

The Strength of Relationship survey is important for you to complete because it allows us to better understand how your match is progressing. It is short, takes only 1-2 minutes to complete, and is automatically sent to your email 45 days before they are due. Please complete it in a timely manner, as they provide us with valuable feedback so we can better support your match.

## COVID-19 Match Safety Checklist

Safety and health will always be our main priorities for our community-based matches. If your match decides to meet in-person, here are the guidelines we recommend to follow:

- ✓ consider and discuss the level of exposure in the community for all parties in the match
- ✓ wear a mask and use hand sanitizer
- ✓ meet in an open and well-ventilated area away from groups of people
- ✓ choose to do an activity that provides social distancing
- ✓ remember- you do not have to meet in-person if you are not ready and can maintain phone or virtual chats with one another

## Mentoring Resources to Empower Our Bigs

### ARTICLES

- [What is My Role as a Mentor?](#)
- [12 Characteristics of a Good Mentor](#)
- [How to Motivate Your Little to be More Active](#)
- [Setting Boundaries with your Mentee](#)
- [50 Things to Do with Your Mentee](#)
- [Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors](#)

### RESOURCES

- [BBBSMA's Match Resources](#)
- [ATL Bigs on Facebook- Join to engage with other Bigs](#)
- [MENTOR](#)
- [Mentorga](#)
- [The Search Institute](#)
- [Teens Against Bullying](#)



## GET TO KNOW US

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### **Karmesa Battle**

Match Support Specialist

### **Meet Karmesa!**

Karmesa joined the BBBSMA family in February of this year and holds an extensive background in working with children. Karmesa obtained a bachelor's degree in Human Services from Kennesaw State University and a graduate degree in Social Work from Tulane University. She is an Atlanta native who enjoys reading and traveling. She is also very family-oriented and during her free time, you can find her at a local eatery or hanging out with friends and family. She enjoys sports and is a big fan of the Falcons, Hawks, and Atlanta United. She hopes to get a chance to meet with you as your Match Support Specialist or at our future BBBSMA events!

