



NOVEMBER 2021 • VOL. 11

MATCH SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF METRO ATLANTA



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Relationship Maintenance

BY SUSAN STUBBS, EDITOR

The most important part of being a mentor is to be a trusted advisor and supporter to a child or youth and to deliver that support in a way that makes sense to them and always keeps the child or youth's best interests in mind. A mentoring relationship is like any other relationship—has a beginning, middle, and end phase and can be a long or short-term relationship depending on where the child or youth is in their life and what their needs are. When a Big mentors a Little for the long-term, you really get to know and understand their personality, learning style, aspirations, and goals. The best part is witnessing Little's transition into young adulthood which is a very critical and important time where mentors can offer advice and guide Little successfully as they develop into an adult. As with any relationship, it is very important for Bigs and Littles to consistently evaluate their relationship every year for maintenance and to ensure the relationship gets more from their time together!

The following tips will help maintain the mentor-mentee relationship:

- determine the best form of communication
- plan a reoccurring day and time to communicate and maintain consistency
- parents and Bigs should communicate at least once a month on Little's progress regardless of their age
- hold each other accountable when follow-through is not met
- compromise and meet each other halfway



Match Highlight of the Month

BY MARCELLA RUIZ, SENIOR SITE BASED COORDINATOR

BIG SISTER NATALIE and **LITTLE SISTER LAUREN** have been matched a little over two years in our Beyond School Walls program. They started off seeing each other in person, but this was abruptly ended by the pandemic. As a result, they had to start meeting virtually and while this was a big change, Natalie and Lauren were able to make a smooth transition. Lauren has expressed how thankful she has been to be able to look to her Big for support during this time and shared that, despite Big's own challenges with Covid, she has not missed a beat in her life. She continues to support her Little Sister with school and her plans for after high school graduation. Little said, "My Big, Natalie, has motivated me throughout my time in the program by consistently encouraging me through our talks. Not only do I feel like I can trust and rely on her to give me honest advice, but Natalie also supports my aspirations and strives to help me build on them. I have always been interested in the field of veterinary science, but it has not always been received well by my peers. However, Natalie has always been there to encourage my future career plans and I am happy I can confide in someone who believes in me and gives me that chance. Thanks to my Big's support, I have been motivated to research different fields within veterinary science and continue to work on making my dream come true!"



Match Tip of the Month: Communication with Parent

Communication with the parent should occur at least once a month to ensure the safety of the match and follow up with the parent's perspective on how the Little is doing, in general, regardless of their age.

MATCH ACTIVITY IDEAS

V Virtual Event

O Ongoing BBBSMA Partnership

I In Person

● BBBSMA's Shark Tank Edition

Little's (ages 10-18) will have an opportunity to pitch their business idea to a panel of judges in this "Shark Tank" style competition. Little's are encouraged to work with their Big/Parent to create a presentation that will "Wow" our judges. Additional instructions will be given prior to the event. Prizes include a \$250 VISA gift card. The deadline to apply is November 10 and register [here](#). **I**

● KIDFITSTRONG CHALLENGE

At the KIDFITSTRONG Fitness Challenge, Little's of all ages get the opportunity to flex their physical fitness by participating in obstacle courses designed to challenge speed, strength, agility, and overall physical fitness. Click [here](#) for more info. **I**

● Chastain Park Arts Festival

Matches will enjoy fine art and crafts, a children's area, and local food and beverage concessions including the gourmet food trucks. Local acoustic musicians will enliven the atmosphere. Click [here](#) for more info. **I**

● BBBSMA's Parent Connect

Parents can now connect with other parents to share, listen and learn. The support group will be hosted by Tanner, a long-time BBBSMA partner, academic coach, and parent supporter who has a wealth of advice and resources to share and will take place on 11/13, 2-4 pm. Click [here](#) to register. **V**

● STEAM Club

Matches can join them for some activities and experiments that explore the world around us and the technology we use every day. No kits required, just bring your curiosity and maybe a few odds and ends you can find around the house! Click [here](#) for more info. **V**

● Coding Class for Kids

Little's can program their own interactive stories, games, and animations and share creations with their Big or with others in the online community. Young people learn to think creatively, reason systematically, and work collaboratively. Click [here](#) for more info. **V**

Mentoring Resources to Empower Bigs

ARTICLES

- [What is My Role as a Mentor?](#)
- [Expressing Gratitude in Mentoring](#)
- [Bisexuality+ 101: Understanding & Supporting People Who Are Bi+ Video](#)
- [5 Tips for Talking to Your Teenager About Mental Health](#)
- [50 Things to Do with Your Mentee](#)
- [Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors](#)

WEBSITES

- [BBBSMA's Match Resources](#)
- [BBBSMA's Virtual Activity Guide](#)
- [ATL Bigs](#) on Facebook
- [MENTOR](#)
- [Mentorga](#)
- [The Search Institute](#)
- [PFLAG](#) (supports LGBTQ+)



TEEN CENTRAL

Teen Central is a resource page supported by the Big Futures program that contains valuable resources available in the community including scholarships, career programs, workshops, and more to support BBBSMA's teens and their future.

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V Virtual Event

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I In Person

★ **BBBSMA's College Essay Writing Info. Session**

In collaboration with Equal Edge, high school seniors are highly encouraged to attend this event. Seniors will learn about their services and how to compose strong essays and write their way into the college of their choice! Click [here](#) to register. **V**

★ **NYARt Art Competition**

Students are invited to submit their artwork that showcases the talents of resilient youth. This year's artwork theme is Reimagining Resilience and contestants may use any medium or combination of media to create an original piece. This year's competition will consist of three divisions, and one winner from each division will win a cash prize. The deadline for submission is January 1, 2022! Click [here](#) to for more info. **V**

★ **AKA's College Admission Process Program (#CAP)**

In partnership with BBBSMA, the [#CAP](#) program assists high school juniors and seniors navigate through the college admission process. The next session is on 11/18 at 6:30 pm and the deadline for open enrollment is on 12/16 which is the final session to enroll. Click [here](#) for more info. or use the meeting ID: 82053489015 and passcode: 509561 to join. **V O**

★ **BBBSMA's Big Futures: Trade and Technical Career Panel**

High School Littles, do you like to work with your hands, build things, or prefer a 2-year degree with job training? Come learn about various careers in the automotive, construction, the healthcare industry, and more that you can do after high school without going to a traditional university. Click [here](#) to register. **V**

★ **Leap Year Fellowship Program**

Leap Year is a nonprofit that supports first-generation and low-income students on their journey to and through college. In our year-long program, Leap Year Fellows enroll at Georgia State University, serve as reading coaches at an elementary school, and get paid \$500 per month. Click [here](#) to for more info. **V**

★ **Year Up Career Program**

In partnership with BBBSMA, Year Up is a career readiness program that supports young adults 18- 26 to move from minimum wage to meaningful careers in just 12 months. This opportunity is available for all high school seniors who plan to attend Atlanta Metropolitan College and will gain 12- 22 college credits after successfully graduating from the program. Click [here](#) for more information and [here](#) to begin the enrollment process. **I O**

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Communication with your Match Support Specialist

Maintaining consistent communication with us is vital to the success of the match relationship. Please inform of any challenges that you are experiencing so we can work through them together and ensure to schedule your appointment on a timely basis. A lack of communication will lead to match closure.

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 a short survey to complete and is automatically sent to your email 45 days before they are due. Please ensure to complete it as they provide us with valuable feedback so we can better support your match.

Important Update Regarding Overnight Stays

Please be advised that overnight stays will no longer be permitted between Bigs and Littles as of 1/1/2022. The National Big Brothers Big Sisters' office has decided this is in the best interest for our matches. Please talk to your Match Support Specialist if you have any further questions regarding this change.

***Note: this change is only relevant for matches made prior to 1/1/2018. If you were matched after this date, overnight stays were never permitted.**

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, we strongly encourage all matches to follow the [CDC](#) guidelines:

- ✔ monitor your health daily and be aware of any symptoms
- ✔ discuss the level of exposure and comfortability in the community for all parties in the match
- ✔ get vaccinated to protect you and others
- ✔ wear a mask, use hand sanitizer and wash hands often
- ✔ choose to do an activity that provides social distancing
- ✔ meet in an open and well-ventilated area away from groups of people



If you feel uncomfortable, please do not meet in person and you can continue to maintain phone or virtual chats. Reach out to your MSS for further support.

GET TO KNOW US



A'shon Williams

Customer Relations Specialist

MEET A'SHON!

A'shon has been working for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta for four months as a Customer Relations Specialist. He obtained his Bachelor of Social Work from Georgia State University in 2020 with an interest in working in the nonprofit sector. He is an alumni member of Peerless Perfexion, a mentoring organization dedicated to fostering and advancing the freshman experience at GSU. During his time with Peerless Perfexion, A'shon has established relationships as a Mentorship Director and as a Step Master. For seven years, he has dedicated his time and service to teaching high school youth and college students the art of Step. Step is a percussive dance popularized by African American fraternities and sororities using hand claps, stomping, and chanting. He hopes to one day have his own dance studio that will not only include step dancing, but mentorship, scholarship, and service opportunities for youth. Keep on dancing, A'shon!