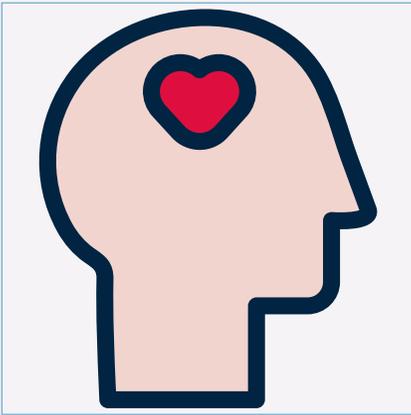




MAY 2022 • VOL.5

# MATCH SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF METRO ATLANTA



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## It's Mental Health Awareness Month!

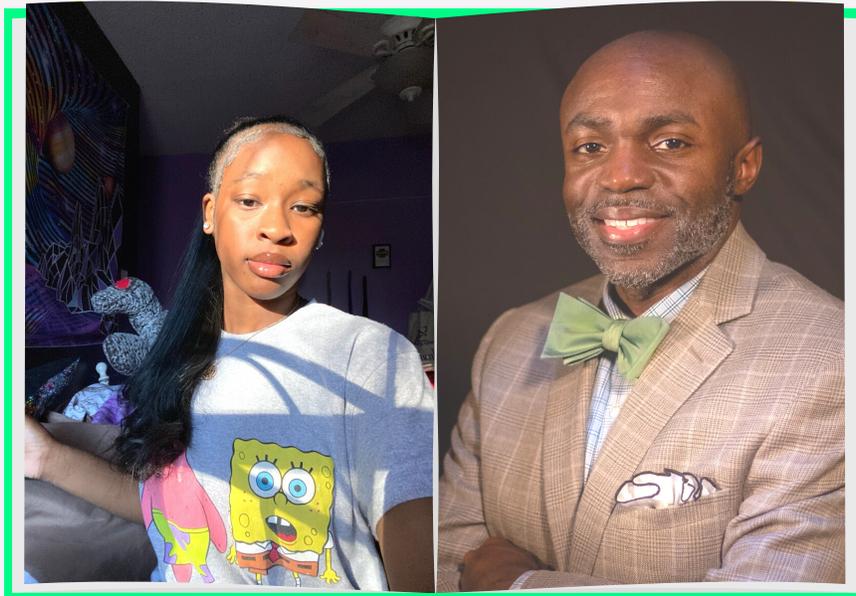
BY SUSAN STUBBS, EDITOR

We have all come a long way in dealing with a pandemic and making it through to the other side. Although experiencing these traumatic events can cause emotional and physical stress, we have become more resilient human beings and are better equipped to deal with what life presents to us in the future. It is important for Littles to learn the positive steps to take when dealing with stress and for Bigs to teach them how to do so.

The following tips can be helpful for Bigs in starting a conversation with their Littles and understanding what's going on in their lives.

- Provide a safe space for them to feel comfortable expressing themselves
- Take the time to listen; this is a very powerful tool when providing support
- Thank your Little for sharing and confiding in you
- Be warm, open, and genuine with your feedback because Littles can tell when you are being true to yourself
- Don't be afraid to tell your Little you do not know an answer. However, you should make every effort to find an answer or someone who can help.
- Get to know your Little very well so you can be able to recognize signs of distress, especially in a suicidal situation

# MATCH HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH



**BY SHANA JACKSON- COOPER, SITE BASED COORDINATOR**

Little Sister **Jasmine** and Big Brother **Larry** have been matched since November 2021 through our Site-Based program. Since then, they have been successful in establishing consistent communication both virtually and in person at Jasmine's high school, and have created a unique bond. They are both interested in sports as Jasmine is an active athlete at her school and Larry has volunteered on his daughter's sports teams for years. Larry is a very supportive and active parent in each of his daughters' lives so being a mentor to his Little and supporting her athletic and educational goals come naturally and is something Larry takes pride in. He attended one of her basketball games at school and when asked about his experience, he expressed he was very happy to be there rooting on Jasmine alongside her parents. He stated, "I believe it takes a village and teamwork to support youth on their life journey". When Jasmine was asked about the best thing she likes about her Big Brother, she stated, "He takes the time to listen and pays attention to the details of what I'm saying and I really appreciate that". Jasmine's parents are also very supportive of the match and appreciate the guidance he has provided to their daughter. Shana, their site-based coordinator also states, "I am very proud of this match. In the beginning, I was nervous about matching them because it is uncommon to match a Big Brother and a Little Sister together. However, I felt that there was a strong possibility that their similarities, as well as their differences, could create a unique balance and inspire a strong bond. They will accomplish great things in the future and I'm looking forward to celebrating all their milestones together!



## Match Tip of the Month:

"Mental Wellness Check!"

Ensure to check in with your Little and ask how they are feeling emotionally; discuss healthy ways to deal with stress

# MATCH ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

**V** Virtual Event   **O** Ongoing BBBSMA Partnership   **I** In Person   **R** Resource

## ● BBBSMA's STE(A)M TRUCK

In partnership with BBBSMA, matches will have the opportunity to engage in activities that involve science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. Workshops will be held every second Saturday of the month and the next one will be on 05/19 from 10 am- 12 pm at BBBSMA. To sign up, click [here](#) and space is limited. **O** **I**

## ● The Futuristic Skyscraper

It's a hands-on architectural design workshop where we collaborate to create a prototype of a Futuristic Skyscraper from cardboard units. This workshop is for all ages and will occur on 05/08, 12-2 pm. Click [here](#) for more info. **I**

## ● Kids Adventure Terrarium Workshop

PlantHouse's kid adventure terrarium workshop is the perfect family activity! A fun workshop where you'll learn how to create a unique terrarium complete with figurines. For ages 6+. Parent supervision is required. Tickets only required for guests building a terrarium. Guests supervising are not required to purchase a ticket. Click [here](#) for more info. **I**

## ● Decatur Arts Festival Kid's Fest

Kids' Fest celebrates the artist in all young people! With plenty of creative activities, dance music, inflatables, and some fluffy surprises, this area will be fun for the young and young at heart and will take place on 05/07 from 10 am-2pm. Click [here](#) for more info. **I**

## ● Tiny Doors ATL Open Studio

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 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](#) for more info. **I**

## ● Taste of Alpharetta

boasts an unforgettable array of culinary magic throughout the area's charming downtown. This annual event will celebrate the vibrant food community of Alpharetta through dining events, cooking demos, culinary collaborations, and tasting tents galore. Click [here](#) for more info. **I**

## Mentoring Resources to Empower Bigs

### ARTICLES / VIDEOS

- [Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors](#)
- [How to Finish High School](#) (video)
- [The Secret to Student Success](#) (video)
- [Talking to kids when they need help](#)
- [50 Things to Do with Your Mentee](#)
- [How to help your mentee set and achieve their own goals](#)

### WEBSITES

- [BBBSMA's Match Resources](#)
- [Atlanta Parent Magazine](#) (outing ideas)
- [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 initiative that contains valuable resources available through our agency and 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    **O** Ongoing BBBSMA Partnership    **I** In Person    **R** Resource

## ★ **BBBSMA's Graduation Celebration 2022**

Attention, Senior Matches! It's graduation time! Please join us to celebrate you, our Senior Matches, at our Graduation Celebration which will be held at Georgia State University's Student Center on 06/04/22 from 12- 2 pm. Please be on the lookout for the RSVP that will be sent very soon! **I**

## ★ **Bearing Bike Workshops**

In partnership with BBBSMA, Bearings Bike Shop is offering "Skills For Life" which is a bike maintenance program where students can earn "stars" in exchange for time spent working. As students earn and save stars, they can use them to purchase a bike, accessories, or repairs. Workshops will be held on the 4th Saturday of each month and the next one will be on 05/28 from 12-2 pm. Matches will need to RSVP to confirm their spot and click [here](#) to do so. **I O**

## ★ **Teen Art Afternoon @ the high museum of art**

Experiment, explore, and create at Teen Art Afternoon! Join the Teen Team for art-making, tours, and more from 2-4 pm on the first Saturday of each month. Free for teens! Click [here](#) for more info. **I**

## ★ **STEAM & Dream – Atlanta Youth Summit**

The Summit is an engaging and unique experience that will equip youth ages 12-17 with the tools to pursue their dreams in technology and entrepreneurship fearlessly. Click [here](#) for more info. **I**

## ★ **BBBSMA's Big Futures High School Resources**

Whether a high school Little is considering higher education, military service, or preparing to join the workforce, our online resources include college roadmaps, life skills, life paths, and the future planning form that will help Little be prepared for their journey. Click [here](#) to access the resources on our website. **R**

## ★ **2nd Annual Summer Teen Hiring Fair**

Teens, do you need a job this summer? WorkSource Fulton Youth Services program provides year-round workforce training and education program for people 16-24 years old who are interested in employment and/or training and live in Fulton County. Participants must meet low-income guidelines and/or possess significant and defined barriers to education and employment. The fair will take place on 05/21 @ 10 am and click [here](#) to register. **I**

## ★ **Teens Leading Change: Informational Meeting**

This informational session about the summer cohort (June 1- July 31) will be partnering with Roots Down, an organization focused on fighting food insecurity, combating climate change, and promoting productive urban landscaping. Teens will use their skills in visual and performing arts to develop an event for the local community. Click [here](#) for more info. and to register. **I**

# IMPORTANT REMINDERS

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## Communication with your Match Support Specialist

Maintaining consistent communication with us is vital to the success of your match relationship and please inform us of any challenges that you are experiencing or questions you may have so we can work through them together. Ensure to also schedule your appointment on a timely basis by using our scheduling system and keep in mind that a lack of communication may lead to match closure.

## Survey Completion

The Strength of Relationship survey is important for Bigs and Littles to complete because it allows us to better understand how your match is progressing. It is a short survey to complete and you will receive an automated reminder via email and text. Please ensure to complete it because it provides valuable feedback for us to know how to better support your relationship.

## 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. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America headquarters have decided this is in the best interest of our matches. If you have any further questions regarding this change, talk to your Match Support Specialist for guidance and support.

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

## 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:

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



If a Big or Little has been infected or exposed, please **DO NOT** meet in person. Quarantine yourself for the time recommended by the CDC and ensure you test negative before resuming outings. You can continue to maintain the relationship through phone or virtual chats and reach out to your MSS for further support.

# GET TO KNOW US

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**Alysha Alimohamed**  
Match Support Specialist

## MEET ALYSHA!

Alysha first joined the BBBSMA team in September of 2019 as a Match Support Specialist and has recently returned as she missed the organization and the meaningful work we do with supporting our matches. She graduated from a small state school in her home state of Minnesota with her Bachelor's in Social Work and then worked in the field working primarily with children and families. She decided she needed a change and moved to Atlanta, GA to live with her sister and worked in retail management for 2 years and finally felt recharged and went on to attend graduate school. Alysha obtained her Master's in Social Work from Georgia State University in 2015. Since then, she has served in many capacities, but as a social worker, she loves collaborating with children and families and helping them feel empowered to achieve their goals. Alysha currently holds her LMSW and loves opportunities to learn new things about the social work and human services fields! Fun facts are she is a new mommy to a beautiful boy, a certified scuba diver and loves animals, especially dogs! 🐾