

BIG NEWS



SUMMER 2021

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MATCH SPOTLIGHT: BIG BROTHER JIM & LITTLE BROTHER BRANDON



Little Brother Brandon (left) & Big Brother Jim at their Match Introduction.



Big Brother Jim (left) & Little Brother Brandon at the Memorial Day Match Event.

Big Brother Jim and Little Brother Brandon have been matched for nearly two years. For their first outing they went to the Fire Island Lighthouse and climbed to the top. Jim recalls something memorable from that day.

“Initially, Brandon was nervous about climbing the steep stairs to get to the top of the lighthouse, but he overcame his nerves and we had fun. It showed me that he is capable of facing his fears and overcoming them,” shared Jim.

“The relationship I have with my Big Brother Jim is different from the relationships I have with other adults in my life, because he is more of a friend and someone I can really talk to,” said Brandon.

In the time since they’ve been matched, Jim has seen a positive difference in Brandon. “We talk a lot about school, studying, and keeping organized. By the second half of this past school year, Brandon’s grades had improved significantly. Another positive change I’ve noticed, is that Brandon has been showing more gratitude toward others – even the waiters and waitresses when we eat out,” said Jim.

Jim also shared how becoming a Big Brother has had a positive impact on his life. “Being a Big has brought me laughter, friendship, and gratitude. Brandon has taught me that just being there for someone, even if you don’t have anything profound to say, it is important.”

Brandon shared how having Jim as his Big Brother has helped him. “I appreciate that my Big Brother Jim is helpful, kind and considerate. He has helped me find solutions to problems I have had. Our conversations about school and the benefits of studying and being organized were very meaningful and helped me to improve my grades.

Jim was asked what advice he would share with someone who is considering becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister. Jim responded, “I would tell them that the reason I applied to become a mentor in the program was to help a young person grow, what I didn’t realize was that I’d be growing too. It has never felt like a burden or a chore. It has been a true joy for me to be a Big.



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



As BBBSLI endured the many financial and programmatic challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, our focus remained on the children and families in our programs. To ensure the connection between our Bigs and Littles remained strong, we quickly pivoted and implemented new virtual mentoring programs and offered our Bigs and Littles creative ways to stay engaged. Our virtual match events and activities enabled our Bigs to stay consistently connected with their Littles, providing much-needed stability and support.



In the coming year, our goals include increasing the number of Community Based Matches and utilizing our new Activity Center and STEAM room to expand the number of onsite match activities we offer.

Additionally, we will continue our focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in everything we do. We believe that diversity is our strength, and we are committed to promoting the values of inclusion and equity in the services that we deliver to the community.

I am extremely proud and want to thank the entire BBBSLI team as well as our Board of Directors. Our team and Board were instrumental in helping guide BBBSLI through the many challenges brought on by the pandemic. Our Board and so many others really stepped up financially with generous contributions when the agency needed it most.

Lastly, I'd like to give special thanks to the newest members of our Emeritus Board, Stephen Cohen, Dan Greenburg, and John Talotta. Between them they have been involved with the Board for nearly 75 years and all played instrumental roles in guiding our mission with their insights and unique expertise.

Thank you to all for supporting our mission and standing with us to ignite the power and promise of youth on Long Island.

Mark Cox
Chief Executive Officer, BBBSLI

NEWEST ELECTED MEMBERS TO THE EMERITUS BOARD



STEPHEN COHEN
JOINED THE BOARD IN 2001



DAN GREENBURG
JOINED THE BOARD IN 2006



JOHN TALOTTA
JOINED THE BOARD IN 1979





NEW ACTIVITY CENTER

MADE POSSIBLE BY THE BANYAN TREE ROOTS FOUNDATION



Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island (BBBSLI), unveiled their new activity center, made possible by The Banyan Tree Roots Foundation.

The mentoring agency had a goal of eventually transforming a standard conference room space into a full-blown Activity Center for Bigs and Littles to enjoy. A few years later and with the generosity and support of The Banyan Tree Roots Foundation, a family foundation located in Smithtown, NY, this dream became a reality!

After visiting the new Activity Center with his Little, Big Brother Paul said, “Michael and I were thrilled to see the new activity center in Westbury! We were able to play video games as well as browse on the computer and even watch a movie. This would be a great place to go when the weather is bad, or when he wants to challenge me to a game of table tennis! It's a great resource to use when we can't decide on an activity.”

The Activity Center will be available for Matches to sign-up and enjoy the space. They can utilize gaming stations, arts and crafts, board games, STEAM kits, and much more.



“ We are beyond excited to finally have this vision become a reality. Creating a space that our Matches can enjoy year-round and on the weekends is an exciting new venture for BBBSLI. Special thanks to The Banyan Tree Roots Foundation, who made this possible. ”

~ Mark Cox, Chief Executive Officer, BBBSLI





24TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT



On Monday, June 7th, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island (BBBSLI) hosted their 24th Annual Golf Tournament at The Muttontown Club in East Norwich, NY. This year’s tournament honored Brian Sullivan, Owner/Partner, Law Offices of Sullivan and Sullivan, LLP. The annual event is held to raise funds in support of mentoring on Long Island.

Tournament guests began their day with brunch on the outdoor patio before warming up at the driving range and putting greens. The day continued with golfers enjoying a barbecue lunch, cocktail reception, dinner, awards ceremony, and raffles.

“It was an honor and an amazing experience to be able to sponsor this amazing charity and event. We would like to thank Mark and Meredith and their team for all their hard work putting this event together. Our friends and family stepped up to support BBBSLI with us and we are extremely grateful for that. We will see you at the next event and would encourage everyone to get involved with BBBSLI and join us in helping to make a difference in a child’s life,” said Honoree Brian Sullivan.

During dinner, Big Sister Dru Druzynski, spoke about her experience being matched with her Little Diamond for the past two years. She shared in all their amazing memories, their love for creative projects and crafting and a Vision Board match event, which they had so much fun creating together. Their bond is undeniable, and in a recent radio interview, Dru and Diamond joined BBBSLI staff on, Diamond shared that before meeting Dru she never smiled confidently, and now she can’t stop smiling. It was a truly heartwarming moment and shows the impact on mentorship and all that BBBSLI has done for her. Dru also thanked guests for their support in helping to raise funds needed for the mentoring agency to thrive.

In addition to thanking Honoree Brian Sullivan and his brother Robert Sullivan who played a big role in the success of the event as well, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island would like to express appreciation to those who donated raffle prizes, all the golfers and tournament sponsors.



SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



**Congratulations
Scholarship Recipients**

Tyler Collinson	Leonardo Mora
Catherine Davi	Arianna Pantozzi
Davon Mayes	Natasha Pineda
Marissa Mendez	Peter Sansky-Traficanti
Antonio Mingacci	Odin Scorzelli
Brian Topcu-Alterescu	

On behalf of the Talotta, Grant, Trovato and Weisbrod families; the agency; and the scholarship committee, we congratulate our 2021 Scholarship Recipients!



ONE TIME/MONTHLY DONATION

We've gone MOBILE!

BBBSLI now accepts mobile donations via text message.

The gift you make today will change a child's life for the better, forever.

Defend the potential of youth on Long Island with a one-time gift or by making a monthly sustainable gift towards funding our many mentoring programs, including one-to-one matches between Bigs & Littles.

We've gone MOBILE!

BBBSLI now accepts mobile donations

Text "DONATEBBBSLI" to 41444

Simply open your camera phone, hold over the QR code and donate!



Visit: BBBSLI.ORG/DONATE-ONLINE or **TEXT "DONATEBBBSLI" TO 41444**

Thank You

*to our most recent Grant
& Foundation Supporters*

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STERLING NATIONAL BANK CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

THE BANYAN TREE ROOTS FOUNDATION

THE STARBUCKS FOUNDATION

TOWN OF SOUTHAMPTON

SUMMER SHOPPING EVENT



Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island (BBBSLI) wants to extend its deepest appreciation to Robert Certilman, President of Smithtown Acura for his generosity and support of a fun summer shopping event! This event allowed us to provide summer clothes, games, beach/pool accessories and other summer necessities to over 35 children from our program.

“We are so appreciative to once again receive support from Robert Certilman and Smithtown Acura. This funding allows for our Littles to pick-out their own summer supplies and clothing to start them off on a positive note this summer” said Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island CEO, Mark Cox. “During these difficult times, having our past supporters come through in such a big way is truly life changing for the children and families we serve.”



“I am once again proud to have had the opportunity to sponsor another great event for BBBSLI. Giving back to the children in our community is so important and providing them with the necessary items to be prepared for the summer, is my way of giving back and supporting the great work of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Long Island.”

~ Robert Certilman



CEO

Mark Cox

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Chief Financial Officer

Helen Liriano

Chief Development Officer

Meredith Michaels

Director of Programs

Fabiola Turner

Director of Human Resources

Carmelina Vassallo

MANAGERS

Program Managers

Lauren Laurore

Gabriella Ramirez

STAFF

Match Support Specialists

Mary Joya

Shedley Polynice

Enrollment Specialists

Shoana Juin

Rebecca Kornell

Community Recruitment Specialist

Herbert Eric Schramm

Marketing & Event Specialist

Danielle Taylor

Grant Writer

Carrie Thorne



Save the Date

OCTOBER 6TH | 6:30 P.M.
CREST HOLLOW COUNTRY CLUB
POOLSIDE / VERANDA BAY

CATWALK FOR KIDS FASHION SHOW

TO JOIN THE COMMITTEE OR SPONSOR EVENT
PLEASE CONTACT:
MMICHAELS@BBBSLI.ORG
516-731-7880 ext. 232



It's Christmas in July!

OUR HOLIDAY FOR KIDS SAKE PROGRAM
IS JUST A FEW MONTHS AWAY!
WITH YOUR HELP WE CAN CREATE HOLIDAY
MAGIC BY PROVIDING GIFTS FOR
THE CHILDREN IN OUR PROGRAM!
PLEASE CONSIDER HOSTING A GIFT CARD/TOY
DRIVE OR SPONSORING A CHILD THIS
HOLIDAY SEASON!

CONTACT: MMICHAELS@BBBSLI.ORG
TO SIGN-UP AS A SPONSOR