A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Josette Rider

Thank YOU— that is an understatement!! Thank you to our amazing staff, Board, volunteers, families, donors, school partners, potential volunteers, former staff, former Bigs, and EVERYONE who touched the Big Brothers Big Sisters Mission in some fashion during 2020. We appreciate your patience, understanding, and the overwhelmingly positive responses and constructive criticism. Serving the mission through 2020 was tiring and stressful for everyone. Facing the unknown while trying to provide stability - well that was a herculean effort, our Board of Directors, and staff stepped up. The development team took on two or three jobs (thank you Shelley and Alex) and did an outstanding job of stepping up in a crisis!

We hired a wonderful new Director of Programs, Nicole Penar and then we took money out of savings to buy $50,000 in technology to create safe and effective eLearning pods for our Littles and their working parents. The staff was given an option to work the eLearning pods or stay at home. We hired additional staff to provide meals and tutoring as well as free counseling. We provided computers and reliable internet connections, meals for the youth as well as countless mental health check ins. For those that wanted to meet, we added technology for matches to meet virtually.

With challenges and uncertainty surrounding everyone and every decision, we along with the entire country were witness to tragic and outrageous events that focused public attention on the issues of racism, bigotry, injustice, and inequity. For many, and often for children, these events, and responses to them heightened feelings of frustration, powerlessness, anger and even fear for personal safety. There is a demand for honest dialogue and willingness to change and a need for empathy and shared respect.

Equity-focused work is inherent in the foundation of Big Brothers Big Sisters and the heart of one-to-one mentoring. Connecting people from often very different backgrounds, using positive adult volunteers committed to community and to helping every child access their full range of opportunities, creates understanding and is a powerful tool in addressing bias and racial or cultural division. Our matches gain understanding by seeing society through different, but trusted and supportive eyes. Mentoring helps young people achieve things they may not have believed possible, and as they increase their knowledge and their capacity to do and create, they hold themselves accountable for life choices. This creates an upward spiral of good decisions, successful decisions, and generationally defining decisions.

Our staff is developing additional resources, trainings, and tools to help Bigs and other volunteers improve the quality of the mentoring and support they provide through greater understanding of and appreciation for the racial, cultural, and economic diversity found in the children we serve, leading to closer, more supportive relationships. And we continue to ensure that our Staff receive training and support in these important areas, including excellent training opportunities developed and provided by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. We believe the strong bonds created through one-to-one mentoring relationships can be a powerful part of solving the divisions that exist between people.

Thank you for being a part of the incredible work in which we are privileged to participate in. I’d like to thank the Staff for stepping up in a year of change and showing grace and understanding – and to be honest – sticking with the mission! And I’d like to thank our Board for keeping the organization accountable to the mission of creating and supporting one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of our youth. This mission empowers each of you to invest in individual lives leading to positive generational change!

Josette Rider, Executive Director
At the conclusion of six years as a member of the Board of Directors and a two-year term as president, I’d like to express my sincere gratitude to all the volunteers, donors, and staff for getting through a crazy 18 months of Covid-19. The agency came out on the other side stronger than it went in, which is incredible, and it certainly could not have been done without the dedication of those three groups of people.

Financially, we’re stronger because we didn’t really see a dramatic decline in donations and support even though we weren’t able to provide two of our major fundraising events for the year. That’s pretty amazing and I’m so thankful to each supporter of our mission. Our incredible staff came through these challenges stronger because they had to be more creative than they’ve ever had to be before, and this will be the foundation of our agency’s future. Our volunteer’s dedication to their matches was also strengthened because people want more than ever to be part of their Littles’ lives, and that is significant and touching to see.

I felt I was well-prepared to be president, but I’ve learned a great deal during my tenure, such as the complexity of the day-to-day operations. I was probably not as in-tune with what goes on during a typical day because there are just these moments of chaos throughout the day-to-day operations. You are dealing with so many different contingencies from donors, volunteers, the Littles’ families, the employees, and the board. The number of stakeholders the team must appease at all times was probably a little more than I anticipated. From the outside, it doesn’t seem all that crazy, but from the inside there’s sort of this frenetic movement and chaos occurring. We have such an amazing team, and they do wonderful things.

I plan on staying involved in the organization, certainly from a giving standpoint as well as a volunteer standpoint. I’ll be around and be involved and be a resource for the folks who need it. My passion for the agency will never wane and I look forward to staying involved in any way I can.

One thing we ask ourselves as the board and on the different committees when we’re trying to make decisions about new programs or new directions, is some idea may sound neat, cool, or exciting, but how does it fit with our mission? Sometimes it’s hard to really appreciate that mission unless you are a Big and you are living it.

I’m proud of the legacy this board will leave behind these last two years because we’ve had so many good moments and seeing the growth of the leadership team. Getting to see them all grow in their professional careers has been such a privilege to be a part of, and I’m very thankful that I had an opportunity to see it first-hand.

Matt Stout, Board President
Board Roster
BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF NORTHEAST INDIANA

2020 Board of Directors

Providing crucial support and guidance, our Board of Directors is a group of passionate and dedicated individuals serving by our side to defend the potential of youth in our community.

President
Matt Stout
Laura Antil
Chris Graham
John Marshall
Kyle Newman
Vice President
Tony Tranquil
Natalie Axel
Ron Howard
Dion McGlown
Bill Schenkel
Wade Owen
Vice President
Chris Johnson
Bill Becker
Martin Huttenlocker
Brian Miller
Treasurer
Phil Henry
Josh Byers
Todd Hollman
Laura Kapp Miller
Secretary
Jake Petters
Sal Farias
Chase Lockwood
Ex-Officio
Past Board President
Aaron Schaffer

Chris Yesh
Denise Mills
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Indiana is thankful for our sponsors, partners and donors who have made Big Futures programming possible. A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO:

Ambassador Enterprises
American Family Insurance Dreams Foundation
General Motors Community Impact Program
International Paper’s Foundation Grant
Lincoln Financial Foundation and the NIPSCO STEM Academy

FOR EMPOWERING THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE CHILDREN WE SERVE.

We view the Class of 2020, as a class of Overcomers, Achievers, Visionaries, and Leaders. We are proud and honored to celebrate this major accomplishment with them. Our Littles continue to inspire, ignite, and empower us to do all we can to serve more youth.

Breanna Adcox
DeKalb High School
Adrian Allen
New Tech Academy
Nicholas Combs
Bishop Dwenger High School
Jackee Dunn
South Side High School
Kameron Kelly
Northrop High School
Kaytlin Lee
Central Noble High School
Trenasia Middlebrook
North Side High School
Gilbert Pavlovsky
Crossroads High School

Congratulations Graduates!
Triston Andorfer  
Homestead High School

Joseph Armstrong  
DeKalb High School

Joycelyn Armstrong  
DeKalb High School

Adrian Beiter  
Cornerstone Christian Academy

Ariana Buell  
North Side High School

Ashelmee Gann-Gatt  
East Noble High School

Dorismar Garza  
South Side High School

Irasema Hernandez  
Snider High School

Brandon Jodway  
Northrop High School

Megan Justice  
Warsaw Community High School

A'ssata Lundy  
New Tech Academy

Letaziah Martin  
Warsaw Community High School

Tristen Martz  
New Haven High School

Autumn McDonald  
Garrett High School

Zeah Merritt  
New Tech Academy

Rick Perez  
Snider High School

Gage Rhodes  
Warsaw Community High School

Sunique Rogers-Reed  
Concordia Lutheran High School

Emery Schindler  
East Allen University

Courtney Scoles  
Bishop Dwenger High School

Denver Wilson  
North Side High School

Levi Worl  
Warsaw Community High School

Mason Zent  
Snider High School
As many schools remain closed, families and our youth needed alternatives to the virtual classroom. Big Brothers Big Sisters identified these needs, opened our doors and created

LEARNING PODS

When the pandemic shut our schools down, many of our families and children didn’t have the resources or support at home to conduct ongoing virtual learning.
More than e-learning, we provide daily transportation, meals and tutors to help our children navigate a new way of learning, stay on track and achieve academic successes by gathering in a small groups to learn, explore, and socialize.

Having a mentor makes a BIG difference

- 48% Interact better with their families
- 43% Doing better at avoiding delinquency
- 76% Increased self-esteem
- 70% Less likely to use illegal substances
- 89% Doing better academically
- 38% Improved school attendance
Serving Youth with the Greatest Need and the Least Opportunity

1,651 Families Served

2020 Financial Data

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<td>$186,109</td>
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<td>Other Income</td>
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Expenses $2,329,572

2020 Total Net Assets $5,806,920 (includes endowment campaign)

Programs

Site-Based: Bigs in School
356

Community-Based: Traditional Matches
788

Total Matches Made in 2020: 1,144

244 Real Men Readers
1,388 Active Volunteers
236 Waiting Littles
LITTLES’ ETHNICITY

- White: 53%
- Black: 20%
- Other: 18%
- Hispanic: 9%

47% Minority Children

LITTLES’ AGE

- 5-9: 21%
- 10-12: 38%
- 13-14: 17%
- 15-17: 17%
- 18+: 7%

67% | Single-Parent Homes

100% of Our Littles Graduated from High School

Elementary Schools Services Provided To

71
Our programs and for supporting the children in our communities during 2020.

Special thanks to our Corporate Community Partners for underwriting...
As a kid, Little Sister Sidneya struggled with being unmotivated or disinterested for much of her primary school years. Many times, she had no one encouraging her to put in extra effort or go the extra mile. That began to change when she was met her Big Sister Irene.

Throughout the years, Irene and Sidneya have spent their outings exploring creative or artistic pursuits like painting, drawing, fashion, or whatever other art medium interested Sidneya at the time. During their time together, Irene repeatedly and persistently reminded Sidneya of her potential and encouraged her to dream bigger, to follow through, and to work hard to achieve her goals.

Gradually, Sidneya grew from a shy second grade kid to a confident, strong young woman. Irene describes it, saying “Sidneya has grown a lot in the last few years and she has matured into a bright young woman with a lot of potential.

Following Irene’s encouragement, Sidneya got a job during high school which sparked an incredible surge of growth for her. Sidneya began realizing her own capability and potential, even beginning to consider attending college for the first time. Having seen Sidneya’s potential all along, Irene became her biggest supporter in this process. From visits to applications, Irene stayed right beside Sidneya offering her the guidance and encouragement she needed.

After graduating in 2018, Sidneya decided to attend Indiana Tech to study radiology – and, like always, Irene was there to help her adjust to college life. As the pair have adjusted to this new season, their relationship has grown stronger than ever. According to Sidneya, “Irene is kind, supportive, and wise. She is fun and intelligent, and she is always there for me, taking an interest in my life.”

Many say “it takes a village,” others say, “it takes just one,” Irene says, “it begins with me”.

2020 Diane Humphrey Award Recipient Irene Walters

The Diane Humphrey Award recognizes women who demonstrate passionate volunteerism, strong community leadership, and a lifelong commitment to serving others. Irene Walters encompasses these values and continues to demonstrate them on a daily basis.

Many say “it takes a village,” some say, “it takes just one,” Irene says, “it begins with me”. Known for her compassionate nature, optimistic attitude, and cheerful personality, like Diane Humphrey, Irene is a living legacy who devotes her time and energy to helping others and building a community. With kindness, honesty, and gratitude, she is a proven community leader, devoted friend, and mentor.

Big Brothers Big Sisters is proud to celebrate and recognize Irene Walters for her outstanding leadership and philanthropic efforts with the 2020 Diane Humphrey Award.
As a little kid, Tristen was shy and struggled in school. He had a loving blended family but needed more academic support than his parents could provide with their many kids. In 2009, Tristen's teacher referred him to Big Brothers Big Sisters in hopes of finding a Big who would make him feel special and help him improve his reading abilities. Shortly after signing up, Tristen was matched with Jason and a friendship began.

“I didn’t quite know what to expect going into this match at the beginning,” Jason recalls, “I remember being excited, yet nervous. He had a pretty scary looking Mohawk haircut! I didn’t want him to dread me coming every week, but Tristen was great. I started by being silly and a little goofy. I think kids open up to someone they can relate to” – and it worked.

Jason and Tristen began having weekly lunches together. According to Jason, “we’ve had some fun times, some drag-out basketball and football games, some reading battles, and some stellar school lunches. His friends all thought I was a principal for the first couple of years because we had a shirt and tie dress code at work. He actually called me Uncle Jason a couple of times.”

Beyond just having fun together, Jason set out to encourage Tristen in his reading. “I knew I had to find a fun way to get Tristen involved so I introduced him to the art of goal setting. Thinking of how I could make goal setting fun, I asked myself ‘What does every little guy like?’ Food! That’s where the change started. For every reading goal he met, he got a lunch of his choice – always from Taco Bell: 1 Doritos Locos Taco, 2 Chili Cheese burritos, and a Pepsi.”

The food incentive proved very effective. Tristen began to improve his reading abilities and, as he did, the rest of his academics followed. According to Tristen, “Jason is a great Big Brother and he is fun to hang out with. We have a lot in common and he helps me with school. I wouldn’t change a thing about him or my match.”

“In addition to the reading goals,” Jason explains, “I’ve slowly tried instilling some basic life skills and values. Things like the Golden Rule, respect, manners and even the value of laughing and having fun.”

These lessons have made an impact. Tristen recently commented that “Jason has taught me to be more responsible, to be more caring, loving, happier.” Throughout their time together, Jason has consistently given Tristen advice and life lessons while simultaneously allowing Tristen to grow into an independent, mature, young man.

Jason has encouraged Tristen over the years to pursue wrestling, both in middle school and in high school, while helping him learn how to balance sports and grades. As Tristen entered high school, Jason kept him accountable for his grades and attendance in order to help Tristen succeed both academically and athletically.

Through Jason’s ongoing encouragement, Tristen has developed a determination to do his best in classwork and on the wrestling mat. So far in his high school career, Tristen even became a decorated wrestler and has worked towards a wrestling scholarship to attend college. Jason has commented that “I enjoy seeing Tristen’s boost in confidence overall and his willingness to try new things and new events.”
Jason reflected on his many conversations with Tristen about his future – conversations that started when Tristen was young. Jason recalls, "I have discovered just how unfiltered a child’s mind is at a young age! Conversations about what he wants to be when he grows up – those are the conversations I really enjoy the most. I like that we can think outside the box and I like discussing what his interests are and how he can use them to find something he wants to do with his life."

These conversations are beginning to payoff. Tristen graduated high school and received a scholarship to attend college, majoring in Education to become a teacher.

Jason said once, "I’ve always donated my time and money to various church and charity groups, but I was looking for something to push me outside of my comfort zone. Starting out, I felt like Big Brothers Big Sisters was a way to truly make a difference. Personally, I get a lot from being a Big Brother. Probably the most satisfaction I get out of our time together is just the opportunity to help plant some positive seeds in his life. It’s very cool to see that some of those seeds that I had been planting have started to grow and all of the little things we did together were adding up to help make a difference in his life! It’s neat to see that I am getting through to him and having a positive impact on his life!"

Jason remarked many times that he has thoroughly enjoyed seeing Tristen grow from a shy little kid into a confident, outgoing, friendly, and hardworking teenager – who has even grown taller than him! "Being able to coach and mentor him in the coming years as he continues to grow into a fine young man is exciting for me." Jason explained, "I feel the opportunity has never been greater for the next step! He’s part of my life. We have a brotherhood kind of relationship."

Their bond runs deep – and others notice. According to Tristen’s mom, "sometimes I forget that Jason is a Big because he’s become a permanent fixture in our family. Tristen is fortunate to have an army of people in his corner, including Jason."
In Memory of

ELDORA “DORIE” SITKO
1927-2020

Dorie was a truly remarkable woman who will forever be remembered as an energetic, compassionate and loving person, able to bring the best out in anyone. She was a beloved member of our Big Brothers Big Sisters family and dedicated so much time to the children in our programs. Dorie championed our mission and encouraged countless women to become Big Sisters.

Dorie’s greatest impact was on the three young women who called her Big Sister. For these young women, Dorie was more than a volunteer role model, she was a friend, and someone they could rely on to help guide them through life’s challenges. She was a constant in their sometimes-unstable lives and remained connected with them for years.

Everyone lucky enough to interact with Dorie found her energy and passion inspiring. She had a tremendous impact on countless people and was always willing to lend a hand to anyone in need. Dorie’s legacy lives on in her family, friends and community whose lives she changed forever.
Mission
To create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

Vision
To see all youth achieve their full potential.