

# Big Sister Bulletin

BIG SISTER ASSOCIATION OF GREATER BOSTON

## Packaging Girlhood

DR. LYN MIKEL BROWN & DR. SHARON LAMB DISCUSS THE MARKETING SCHEMES AIMED AT GIRLS

**T**oday's girls receive a barrage of media images and messages which tell them what to look like, how they should think and what they should feel. Through open discussion and honest dialogue with their Big Sisters, Little Sisters are encouraged to break free of these stereotypes and form their own opinions of themselves. Dr. Lyn Mikel Brown, Professor of Education and Human Development at Colby College, and Dr. Sharon Lamb, Professor of Psychology at St. Michael's College, examine the challenges that today's girls face. In their book, *Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing Our Daughters From Marketer's Schemes* (St. Martin's Press), Brown and Lamb take a closer look at one of the most prevalent challenges to girls growing up in the new millennium—the flood of marketing aimed at them. Below they discuss how the media and marketing landscape for girls has become increasingly aggressive and what parents, mentors and other caring adults can do to keep girls thinking critically about the images to which they are exposed.

### Tell us about Packaging Girlhood and what inspired you to write it.

Our book is about the sexy, diva, boy-crazy shopper image of girls and girlhood that has been packaged and sold by media and marketers as "Girl Power". We wanted to

show how a genuine movement to give girls more power and more choice has been co-opted and turned into a marketing scheme that reinforces age-old stereotypes. Girls are encouraged to use their "voice" to choose accessorizing over academics, sex appeal over sports and boyfriends over friends. We not only wanted to expose these stereotypes, but to give advice about how to guide girls through the media forest of sexy diva princess pink shopping hotties. In short, our inspiration was anger and a revolutionary spirit. We get angry whenever we hear the words "girl power" used to encourage a girl to buy something, to fight with other girls or to be sexy and hot. Revolutionary because we think adults and girls can make a difference and together we can fight both marketers and the media.

### How did you gather your information about what girls wear, watch, read, listen to and do?

We surveyed over 600 girls from across the country and in Canada. We conducted focus groups with girls, mothers and school counselors. We did walk-throughs of the stores girls told us they love, talked to salespeople at malls, interviewed girls at parties and dances, watched hours of girls' favorite TV shows and movies and read loads of books and magazines aimed at girls. We then analyzed these with an eye for stereotypes.

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## Big Sister Welcomes New Board Members & Young Professional Board

Big Sister Association of Greater Boston recently held our Annual Meeting at Jurys in downtown Boston, where we welcomed six new members to our Board of Directors:

**Maxwell D. Bardeen, Jr.**, Managing Director, UBS Financial

**Laura Cafferty**, Community Volunteer and Big Sister

**Terri Campbell**, Managing Director, Eastern Investment Advisors

**Janet Kraus**, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder, Circles

**Sabrina Hundley Nicholson**, Community Volunteer

**John A. Yozell\***, Yozell Associates

"We are fortunate to have these dynamic and talented new board members who will be key players in helping Big Sister evolve and expand our dynamic mentoring programs for Greater Boston's girls," said **Deborah Re**, Big Sister's Chief Executive Officer.

Each of these new board members brings a range of professional experience and philanthropic involvement to Big Sister.

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Robert Egan welcomes Janet Kraus to Big Sister's Board

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## Highlights

- ★ Giving Radiates at Radius
- ★ Vicki Donlan: It's Time for Women to Step up and Lead
- ★ Match Highlight



Big Sister Association  
of Greater Boston

2007-2008 Officers: Deborah Re

Issue 2 of Big Sister Bulletin  
Share your thoughts with us!  
E-mail: [mjohnson@bigsister.org](mailto:mjohnson@bigsister.org)

# Donors “Make the Circle Bigger” at Awards Breakfast

**“If it wasn’t for my Big Sister, I don’t know where I would be.”**

-Little Sister Meghan

**W**ith the smell of coffee and anticipation in the air, Big Sister Association of Greater Boston celebrated some very special Big Sisters and welcomed new supporters to our circle of friends at our June 27 Make the Circle Bigger Breakfast. Many thanks are in order for making the event happen, particularly to **State Street** for underwriting the breakfast, to **Reverend Dr. Gloria White-Hammond** for emceeing the program and to **those who donated to Big Sister at the event**. Through the generosity of these supporters, Big Sister will be able to grow our mentoring programs to serve thousands of girls in Greater Boston this year.

Our biggest “thank you” goes out to our Big Sisters of the Year—our often unsung heroes who stand proudly behind the girls we serve. While we are grateful to all our Big Sisters for making time in their lives to create a lasting



*Big Sister of the Year Angela Johnson with Reverend Dr. Gloria White-Hammond and Little Sister Mariah*

friendship with a girl, those recognized stood out for having gone the extra mile as a Big Sister. These women embody the characteristics we value so much in our Big Sisters—compassion, humor, kindness, strength and a fun-loving nature, just to name a few. They also go the extra mile—and in some cases, literally extra miles—to make sure that their Little Sisters are given the chance to see a brighter future.

This year we honored **Emily Howe, Angela Johnson, Jane Kepros, Betsy Pritzker, Connie Ramelli and Julie White** as our **Community-**

**Based Mentoring Big Sisters of the Year.** Our School-Based Mentoring program honored three women as Big Sisters of the Year: **Alice Dembner, Regina McNally and Jen Tyson.** And finally, we recognized those who have made a difference in our Group Mentoring programs, **TEAM** and **Life Choices**. **TEAM** matches Big Sisters with a group of Little Sisters, so the **TEAM** Big Sisters of the Year are chosen as a team. This year’s winners were dedicated and caring Big Sisters from a group at the Gavin Middle School in South Boston: **Amy Butterworth, Janim Ciales, Jeanne Mansfield and Ruby Richardson.**

*“ We taught each other how to speak louder and listen better. We laughed about our friends and complained about our families. We became stronger women and more confident girls. ”*

Amy Butterworth, now in her third year as a **TEAM** Big Sister, told the audience about her experience: “We taught each other how to speak louder and listen better. We laughed about our friends and complained about our families. We became stronger women and more confident girls.”

For our second Group Mentoring honoree, Big Sister recognized **Paul Hodlin**, Assistant Director at the Suffolk County Court Clinic. Paul was chosen as the **Life Choices** Site Contact of the Year for his dedication to promoting and supporting the groups Big Sister runs in the Boston Juvenile Court Clinic. “They are an agency that understands these girls not as juvenile delinquents, but as adolescent girls. Girls who did not need to be further demonized, but as girls who needed help understanding issues related to self-esteem and body image, friendships and peer pressure, sexuality and women’s health,” said Hodlin.

Special thanks once again, to **State Street Corporation** for underwriting this breakfast, and to all of our donors. Congratulations to all our Big Sisters of the Year and thank you to each and every one of our Big Sisters, who are encouraging Greater Boston’s girls to think bigger and try harder than they ever have before.



*Big Sister of the Year Holly Charron with her Little Sister Meghan and Meghan’s mother Ingrid*



*TEAM Big Sisters of the Year and their group leader Cat Smail*

## Ongoing Collaboration: Adoption and Foster Care Mentoring

Big Sister Association of Greater Boston views collaboration as a means to fully leverage the assets and expertise within our service network, and to provide the girls of our city with the best possible programs and services available. As a way to ensure the best possible mentoring experience for the children of Greater Boston, we recently began a cross-referral partnership with **Adoption and Foster Care Mentoring (AFC)**—an agency which specializes in providing positive mentoring relationships for foster and adopted youth. Through this partnership, Big Sister and AFC will be able to refer both children and volunteers who will provide the best fit for their services. “I was amazed at how quickly and efficiently the collaboration between AFC and Big Sister was put into place, and I’m excited that both agencies will be able to serve more children through this partnership,” said **Justin Pasqueriello, Founder of AFC.**

# Giving Radiates at Radius

**T**he wine glasses have been put away and the last of the dishes washed, but not soon to be forgotten are the memories of a "radiant" evening held at Boston hotspot, **Radius**, on Sunday, June 3rd. The event featured a six-course sit-down dinner paired with wine, and raised more than \$100,000 to support our mentoring programs for girls. In a special "Matchmaker Challenge" guests were asked to help take girls off our waitlist by "sponsoring" a Little Sister in one of our programs. Because of the generosity in the room, Big Sister can now put a friend and mentor in the life of 52 of these girls.

The Matchmaker Challenge was the culmination of an evening that included some very special guest chefs: **Dante de Magistris** of Dante, **Rachel Klein** of Om, **Ting San** of Oishi, **Marc Orfaly** of Pigalle and Marco, **Josh Ziskin** of La Morra and **PJ Waters**, Radius' own pastry chef. Each chef prepared a course ranging from Fluke Carpaccio to Pea Agnolotti and finishing off with a Pilon de Chocolate. Adding to the night's prestigious line-up was an extra special guest chef who, along with **Michael Schlow** and **Patrick Connolly** of Radius, helped prepare the evening's amuse bouche—Little Sister Charlotte. For Little Sister Charlotte, the evening at Radius

was a homecoming of sorts. Two years ago Charlotte and her Big Sister Colleen volunteered to help out at the Radius event. Colleen knew that Charlotte had an interest in cooking, but what she did not know was that that night would be pivotal to Charlotte's future. When the chefs at Radius

discovered Charlotte's interest in the culinary arts they invited her back to spend a day with them learning knife skills, prepping herbs and getting an up-close look at a professional kitchen in action. It was then that Charlotte knew this was the path she wanted to take. With the encouragement of her family and Big Sister Colleen, Charlotte applied for a special program which would allow her to simultaneously complete her senior year of high school and her

freshman year at Johnson & Wales College of Culinary Arts.

On June 3, Charlotte returned to Radius—ready to graduate high school and finish up her first year at Johnson & Wales. Co-owner and head chef, Michael Schlow, and his fellow chefs at Radius warmly welcomed Charlotte back. "It was wonderful to have Charlotte back in our kitchen—maybe someday she'll be here permanently!" said Schlow. Charlotte was accompanied that evening by her mother, her biological sister and her Big Sister

Colleen. With three daughters who have all enjoyed and benefited from caring and supportive relationships with a Big Sister, Charlotte's mother knows firsthand the difference a mentor can make in a girl's life. Grateful for the positive impact that Colleen has had on Charlotte, Karen addressed the guests at Radius, ending her impassioned speech with the simple question, "How do you thank someone who has made your daughter's dreams come true?"



*Chef Michael Schlow and Little Sister Charlotte in the kitchen at Radius*



*Beth and Max Bardeen enjoy the six-course meal at Radius*



*Lisa Scannell and David Carlon with Sheila and Paul LeFevre at Radius*

## Extra Special Thanks to:

Bella Sante Salon & Day Spa  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts  
The Castle Group  
Jennifer Re Drouin  
Great Bay  
Hotel Commonwealth  
Little Sister Charlotte, Big Sister Colleen Kenney & the Clark family  
Christopher Myers, Esti Parsons and Michael Schlow of Radius  
Peter Reinhart & Dan Janis Saragoni & Co.  
Keith Hartstein  
Aileen Keaney  
TPC Boston

The following people purchased tickets, made a donation or participated in our "Matchmaker Challenge" at Big Sister's Celebrity Chef Event at Radius Restaurant on June 3, 2007. Thank you to our generous supporters!

**\$10,000 +**  
Beth and Max Bardeen

**\$5,000 - \$9,999**  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts  
Laura and James Cafferty  
Sheila and Paul LeFevre  
William Roman  
Abby and John Yozell  
Jeanne and Peter Yozell

**\$1,000 - \$4,999**  
Terri Z. Campbell  
Janet and Steve Clay  
Sara Cohn  
Lindsay and Ellen Cook  
Christine A. Creelman

Amy and Ethan D'Ablemont  
Burnes  
Kelly Dukarski  
Colleen Fitzpatrick  
Suzanne Fay Glynn  
Sarah and Keith Hartstein  
Investors Bank & Trust  
Denise Jefferson Casper  
Penny Shultz and Joel Wolff  
Maryanne Hertel and Kevin Counihan  
Janet Kraus  
Susan Littlefield and Martin Roper  
Essence McGill  
Dolores Mitchell  
David and Marion Mussafer  
Margaret Nelson and Carmen Patti  
Sabrina and Bob Nicholson  
Joseph Realmuto, Jr. and Paul Korenberg  
Deborah Re and Peter Reinhart  
William Re  
Lisa Scannell and David Carlon  
Renée Landers and Thomas L. Barrette, Jr.

Tufts Health Plan  
Philip Valley

**\$100 - \$999**  
Jane Alpers  
Nancie Chamberlain  
Laurence P. Chase  
Sandra Cook  
Jim and Wendy Dorsey  
Carolyn Hebsgaard  
Ellen Cohen and James Klopfer  
Aileen Keaney  
Jerry Martinson  
Debra Maxfield  
Jayne Rice  
Jan Saragoni  
Chris Smith  
Ann Szerlip



# Mother Knows Best...

**E**leven year-old Liz knows that she wants to be a pediatrician when she grows up. Liz even knows that she wants to go to school at Northeastern University. She likes books, movies, sports and art, and like most girls her age she doesn't always want to talk with her mom Brenda about these things! So Brenda did what so many mothers in our community have done: she called Big Sister Association of Greater Boston and signed Liz up for our School-Based Mentoring program. Now Liz has Big Sister Stephany Benoy, a friend, confidant, advocate and supporter—someone who, along with Brenda, will push Liz to achieve her dreams.

Brenda found out about Big Sister's mentoring programs through her work at Ellis Memorial, as well as Liz's prodding after seeing her friends get matched with Big Sisters. While Brenda was initially apprehensive about signing Liz up for a Big Sister, worrying that she was somehow deficient in her role, she was assured of the program's strengths after seeing so many successful matches

at Ellis. Brenda knew that Liz would benefit from having someone, in addition to herself, who could serve as a positive adult role model and a friend.

Brenda is pleased that Liz has Stephany to talk to about what's going on in her life. She sees her as a close confidant for Liz, someone who "touches Liz's heart". Brenda believes that Stephany has made a positive difference in Liz's life by encouraging her to be more open, creative and independent. Whether they are playing a game, doing arts and crafts or doing homework, Stephany is supportive of Liz and encourages her to do her best. Brenda

appreciates how encouraging Stephany is and how she gently pushes Liz to be her "best self".

Brenda is thankful for Big Sister's ongoing support of her daughter and believes that Stephany is the "perfect match" for Liz. She credits the match's success to Big Sister's thorough screening and matching process in School-Based Mentoring, which paired Liz and Stephany together. In particular, Brenda thanks

Courtney Gerhart, School-Based Mentoring Social Worker, for making a successful and lasting match for her daughter.

Over the summer Little Sister Liz and her Big Sister Stephany are keeping in touch through phone calls, e-mails and good old fashioned letter writing, as they look forward to seeing each other again every week come fall.



*Little Sister Liz with her Big Sister Stephany Benoy at Ellis Memorial*



*Little Sister Liz with her mom, Brenda, at Ellis Memorial*

## PACKAGING GIRLHOOD CONTINUED

### What concerns you most about the ways media and marketers "package girlhood" to girls?

We're concerned about girls embracing a version of girl power that just perpetuates old stereotypes and makes them feel powerful when they're conforming to the cute, hot, shopper, diva image they see all around them. We think this image sucks up too much of their youthful energy and channels girls' attention away from activities that give them a sense of real power. Some of this stuff is fun, but we'd rather see them use more of their time and energy developing long-lasting skills, some of which could make their world a better place.

**What three pieces of advice do you give adults who worry about the impact of media on the girls in their lives?**

You can't turn off the world. These days TV, movies, the internet, music studios, clothing and toy manufacturers, fast food restaurants and even publishing houses are all part of one big media network. So here's what we suggest:

- 1 **Become familiar with what's out there. Watch what she watches, listen to her music, read her magazines. Know what messages this world sends her.**
- 2 **Listen! Get to know her world from her perspective. Don't assume you know what "hot" means or why she loves the rapper 50 Cent. Ask her and then really hear what she has to say.**
- 3 **Bring her the world on your terms. Reflect on what she says, share your discomfort. Help her notice the bigger picture, for example, how looking sexy like her latest teen idol can be fun but also connects her with a lot of other negative stuff she might not have thought about.**

The goal is to show her how to question, to give her the bigger picture that includes an awareness about who is making decisions about what's hot and what's not, and who benefits from the image of girlhood packaged to her. She may still choose to listen to, read and watch media with plenty of stereotypes, but she'll be less likely to be influenced and duped by all the hype.



*Dr. Sharon Lamb & Dr. Lyn Mikel Brown*

# Vicki Donlan: It's Time for Women to Step Up and Lead

**T**oday's Little Sisters are the leaders of tomorrow. **Vicki Donlan, founder and publisher of Women's Business**, has a powerful message for Big and Little Sisters and women everywhere. In her new book *HER TURN: Why It's Time For Women To Lead in America* (Praeger Publishing, available late October 2007) Donlan challenges women to step proudly into leadership roles, not only for their own sake, but for the sake of the generations of girls to follow. Below are her reasons why women need to believe that now more than ever it is their turn:

"It's time for women to lead in America! Your first question is probably why now? First of all, women are 52 percent of the American population. Then you might say, just because women are the majority why should they lead? Aha! The big question. The answer lies in our history.

First, starting from the day we landed in this new world, women have demonstrated their determination to thrive. The first women's rights convention took place in 1848 in Seneca Falls, NY where one hundred participants signed The Declaration of Sentiments, asking that women be given the right to vote; the right to representation; property rights; child custody laws in the case of a husband's death; the right to work; the guarantee of equal pay; the right to a full education; and the right to be seen as equals. Fast forward ahead, to 2007, and women are still fighting for many of the same rights their ancestors fought for in 1848. Yes, we won

the right to vote in 1920 and started our own schools, in many cases, to gain the education we craved. We can own property and gain custody of our children, but we still earn only \$0.77 on a man's dollar. So the fight for equality continues.

As 65 percent of the advanced graduates in America and almost 50 percent of the small business owners, women have proven that they will not allow obstacles to stand in their way to excel. But, we still do not use our numbers to our advantage or realize the importance of our success to the next generation of women.

So if not now then when, I ask you.  
And, if not you, then who?

Women represent 85 percent of the consumer purchasing power in America. Yes, women buy and influence purchases in much greater numbers than men. Yet, women are only a small number of the senior level executives in America and a fraction of the board members making the decisions at the largest corporations. If we are the buyers shouldn't we have some say as to how these companies are run? And, furthermore, now that I have your attention, as 52 percent of the population, shouldn't women be represented in Congress by more than 16 percent? And, isn't it about time we had a woman president? YES and YES and YES.



*Vicki Donlan,  
founder and publisher of  
Women's Business*

So what can you do to move the next generation of women forward?

- ✦ **First, you must become less judgmental about other women (or girls). We have more in common with each other than we do with the opposite sex and we put ourselves down every time we put down other women.**
- ✦ **Second, don't allow the media or anyone else to define who you are. You are unique and need to believe in the gifts that only you bring to the world.**
- ✦ **Third, you must support women and girls every chance you get. It is up to you to make sure that other women and girls get ahead. So befriend her, promote her and support her."**

## BMW Raffle: And the Winner Is...

**O**n Friday, July 20, Big Sister held its 19th Annual BMW Car Raffle drawing at One Post Office Square. As the clock struck 2 p.m., eight year-old Little Sister Monica, with some help from her Big Sister Eleonora, vigorously spun the gleaming raffle drum and reached in to pull the winning ticket. The winner was ticket number 1117—which belonged to none other than **Dolores Mitchell, president of Big Sister's Board of Directors!** In the 19 years of the drawing, the agency has never personally known the winner of the BMW raffle, so you can imagine our surprise at having such an avid supporter—who had bought her one ticket the day before the drawing—win the grand prize.

Dolores was also surprised when she received the call that she had won because before this, Dolores had never won any raffle. Without hesitation,

Dolores knew exactly what she wanted to do: take the \$38,000 in cash...and give it right back to Big Sister.

"This is the kind of contribution I have always wanted to make to Big Sister. Good fortune has allowed me to do it today," Mitchell said.

Deborah Re, Chief Executive Officer at Big Sister, said "Dolores gives her heart and soul to this organization, and now she is generously giving her winnings to us as well!"

In addition to the car, Big Sister also raffled off a number of additional prizes which went to four other Big Sister supporters. Big Sister sold more than 1500 tickets this year, making it the most successful raffle to date. All proceeds from the raffle will go towards Big Sister's

mentoring programs for girls.

Congratulations to everyone who won and thanks to everyone who purchased a ticket. And a very BIG thank you to Dolores Mitchell!



*Dolores Mitchell, Big Sister Board  
President and BMW winner!*

### Additional Winners:

**Prize #2: Get Cued Up (Ticket #1272)**

**Prize #3: Cozy As Can Be (Ticket #725)**

**Prize #4: Coffee Lover's Dream (Ticket #1431)**

**Prize #5: Shape Up (Ticket #1347)**

## 2007 MATCHMAKER CLUB

The follow individuals, corporations and foundations made gifts or pledge payments of \$100 or more to Big Sister's Annual Fund between March 13 and July 27, 2007. Thank you to our generous supporters!

**Dream Maker****\$50,000+**

BBBS Foundation  
United Way of Massachusetts Bay

**Memory Maker****\$25,000 - \$49,999**

Linde Family Foundation  
State Street Foundation, Inc.  
William E. and Bertha E. Schrafft Charitable Trust

**Magic Maker****\$10,000 - \$24,999**

Amgen Foundation  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America  
Charles Hayden Foundation  
Citizens Bank Foundation  
Grand Circle Foundation  
The Janey Fund Charitable Trust  
John Hancock Financial Services, Inc.  
Klarman Family Foundation  
State Street Global Advisors

**Inspiration Maker****\$5,000 - \$9,999**

Adelaide Breed Bayrd Foundation  
Beth Floor  
City of Boston  
New York Life Foundation  
TJX Companies  
Youths' Friends Association Inc.

**Friendship Maker****\$2,500 - \$4,999**

Anna Harvey Tekulsky Trust

Lynne O'Connor

Jacqueline Smith

**Match Maker****\$1,000 - \$2,499**

Bank of America  
Lisa and Robert Bertelson  
Biogen  
Sara Cohn  
Susan & Gregg Connolly  
Draper Laboratory  
Eaton Vance Management  
Susan Esper  
Madeleine Freind  
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Stephen Hall  
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Leiha Macauley  
Marianne MacDougall  
Roberta Mathews  
Gerald McCarthy (Mortgage Master Inc.)  
Janet Porter  
Putnam Investments  
Irma Tyler-Wood

**Smile Maker****\$100 - \$999**

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Larry Neil Bailis  
Susan Bergmann  
Kristin Blount  
Victoria Bond  
The Boston Foundation  
Margaret K. Carlson  
Keidi Carrington

Susan Connolly  
Gizella Crawford  
Ellen DePaul  
Debra Doncov  
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Karen Voci  
Jennifer Waldner

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS CONTINUED

Big Sister's Board of Directors is charged with fiscal oversight of the agency and is instrumental in helping raise revenue to fund Big Sister's operating budget. Bardeen, Cafferty, Campbell, Kraus, Nicholson and Yozell join 25 other board members who will help the agency raise \$5 million and serve 5,000 girls by 2010.

Big Sister also welcomed the inaugural members of our Young Professional Board at the Annual Meeting. This board was established to help Big Sister connect with young professionals who are committed to the agency's mission and who want to help spread the word about our work, the girls we serve and our organization as a whole. The 11 members of this board bring diverse backgrounds, work experiences and community affiliations and will advise the Board of Directors and staff on how to engage other young professionals in Greater Boston. We are pleased to welcome the following members to Big Sister's Young Professional Board:

**Jose Alberto Betances**, Pediatrician, Boston Medical Center

**Donavan Brown**, Foreign Investment Registration Team, Brown Brothers Harriman

**Kevin Bruno**, Auditor, PricewaterhouseCoopers

**Lauren Corduck**, Corporate Resource Development Consultant, NeighborWorks America

**Chastity Harmon**, Senior Staffing Specialist, Bose Corporation

**Ryan Krouskop**, Consultant, Deloitte Consulting

**Chris Lawrence**, Associate, Meredith & Grew

**Megan Leavy**, Executive Assistant to Managing Partner & Client Event Coordinator, Liberty Square Asset Management

**Sven Meier**, Technical Lead of Engineering & Technology Services, IBM

**Ashlee Piper**, Senior Policy Advisory, the Governor's Executive Office for Administration and Finance

**Claudia Silva**, Account Manager, Argus

\*John Yozell will officially accept the Board position in September



Members of our new Young Professional Board



# Match Highlight: Little Sister Sophie & Big Sister Claire Napoleon

*"An inspiring woman in my life is someone who I can learn something from, laugh with and someone who inspires me to do better in life. There are a few women in my life who inspire me, but I have chosen to write about only one—Claire Napoleon."*

—Little Sister Sophie

This declaration is how Little Sister Sophie began her award-winning essay about her Big Sister Claire—the woman who inspires her. Thirteen year-old Sophie was among nine of her middle school peers in Brookline to attend the 15th Annual Women Who Inspire Us awards ceremony, hosted by the Brookline Commission for Women.

Taking first place in her grade level, Sophie read her essay at the event. While she was surprised to win, Sophie was also proud because the essay was meant to be a gift for Claire. "I just wrote my heart out in this essay because Claire means so much to me. I wanted to win this so badly to give it to her as a present," said Sophie. Claire was surprised as well—not because Sophie won—but because she had chosen to write about her. "I feel like I cannot have possibly

impacted her life so much in the time that we have been together," said Claire.

Sophie and Claire have shared many exciting adventures together, but perhaps the most significant moment for Sophie came when she shared her hopes for the future. Because of her love for the television show *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, Sophie dreams of going to Harvard and becoming a lawyer or working in the criminal justice field when she is older. While we at Big Sister believe there are no such things as "coincidences" because of the care we take in making the right match, even we were surprised to learn that Claire's stepfather creates the sets for *Law & Order*. Because of this connection, Claire was able to arrange a trip to New York City where the two visited the set of Sophie's favorite show.



*"My Big Sister Claire has taught me to be the person that I want to be and the person I am today."*

Although the trip was an opportunity of a lifetime, Sophie says it is the little moments with Claire that have inspired her the most. While the pair has done many new things together, Sophie loves going to Claire's apartment to bake and talk. While their recipes don't always turn out to be award winners, they typically have so much fun making a mess and spending time together that it doesn't matter when their creations are not exactly edible!

"Claire has always been there for me. I can tell her anything and she always gives great advice," said Sophie.

"She taught me that it is okay to be who I am!"

Indeed, it is these little moments that create big magic in all of our matches. While Claire might not have realized the impact she was making on Sophie until she read her essay, Sophie has known all along.

## "Big Thanks" to Community-Based Big Sisters

With bellies full of scrambled eggs, bacon and a dash or two of courage, dozens of Little Sisters in our Community-Based Mentoring program climbed on stage and showed appreciation to their Big Sisters at our annual Appreciation Breakfast held on April 21st at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Cambridge.

*"I like my Big Sister a lot. She does fun things with me and makes me feel special."*

*"We have so much fun and I can tell her anything."*

*"She has always been there for me when times got rough."*



*Celebrating more than one year of friendship!*

was evident that many of the friendships had already blossomed into a lifelong relationship.

While Big Sister asks for a minimum commitment of 12 months in our Community-Based Mentoring program, the breakfast gave the agency the chance to formally recognize Big and Little Sisters who have been matched for at least one year. In total, 250 matches were recognized for having relationships that lasted beyond the minimum required commitment of 12 months. We even celebrated 33 matches who have been together for five years and one who has been together for 10 years—a true testament to the power of friendship!

Each and every year hundreds of Big and Little Sisters in our Community-Based Mentoring program come together during National Volunteer Week to celebrate their friendship. In addition to enjoying a buffet breakfast fit for a queen, Little Sisters created tissue paper flowers and thank you cards for their Big Sisters. The breakfast celebrated "friendship in bloom," yet it

During the speaking program, Deborah Re, Big Sister's Chief Executive Officer, welcomed all matches and personally thanked the Big Sisters for their friendship. "You inspire me to do my job better," she said. "Your friendship and support of the girls of Greater Boston is significant; there wouldn't be a Big Sister Association of Greater Boston without you."



*Matches celebrate over OJ and eggs*

In addition to Deborah, Big and Little Sisters had the opportunity to hear from Little Sister Nicole Hodges, who has been matched with her Big Sister, Jen Guillemain for more than ten years. Now 20 years-old, Nicole has reached the age where she can become a Big Sister herself. She took the opportunity to thank her Big Sister Jen for the positive and significant impact she has had on her life.

"Jen cares about what I do, where I go and if I'm ok. She also teaches me valuable life lessons," said Nicole. "I never told anybody this before, but Jen, I want to say 'thank you' because I swear you are my guardian angel, sent from above, just for me."

Big Sister would like to thank all our Community-Based Big Sisters for their friendship and commitment to their Little Sisters. We would also like to thank **Jacqueline Sonnabend**, the **Royal Sonesta Hotels** and the **Sonnabend Foundation**, who have generously underwritten this Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast for more than a decade.

# Mark Your Calendars!

UPCOMING EVENTS

## Rodman Ride, September 29

Join Team Big Sister! We're looking for riders to join our team as we cycle through scenic Southeastern Massachusetts on a 25, 50 or 100-mile bike tour to raise money for Big Sister's mentoring programs for girls. Cyclists are asked to raise \$750 each. If you want to learn more about Rodman Ride and Team Big Sister, please contact Hilary Marshall at 617.236.8060 or [hmarshall@bigsister.org](mailto:hmarshall@bigsister.org).

## Wicked Big Pahty, October 31

Get ready for a 'wicked good' time because Big Sister's Young Professional Group is pleased to host this year's Wicked Big

Pahty. Don your best costume for a chance to win some great prizes—or just come as you are—to support Big Sister Association of Greater Boston. Details on this event will be coming soon, but save the date for Wicked Big Pahty! Check out [www.bigsister.org](http://www.bigsister.org) in September for more details.



## Big in Boston, November 15

Join us for an evening where we will celebrate friendships, make memories and create new possibilities. The second annual Big in Boston event will be held Thursday, November 15, from 5:30 p.m. - 9 p.m. at the Fairmont Copley Plaza Hotel. This year we will be honoring the sisters who sip, Divas Uncorked! Tickets go on sale online beginning September 1 at [www.bigsister.org/biginboston](http://www.bigsister.org/biginboston) or by phone at 617.236.8060.

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Board President  
**Dolores Mitchell**  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Deborah Re**  
Big Sister Bulletin Editor  
**Maren Johnson**

Tel: 617.236.8060  
Fax: 617.236.8075  
[bigsister@bigsister.org](mailto:bigsister@bigsister.org)  
[www.bigsister.org](http://www.bigsister.org)

161 Massachusetts Avenue  
Boston, MA 02115

Big Sister Association  
of Greater Boston



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