Big Sister Bulletin

BIG SISTER ASSOCIATION OF GREATER BOSTON

Why Girls? Why Not!

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, DEBORAH RE, SPEAKS TO THE IMPORTANCE OF BIG SISTER REMAINING GENDER-SPECIFIC



Big Sister's Chief Executive Officer, Deborah Re

Why not have an organization focused just on girls? In September of 2006 I became the CEO of Big Sister Association of Greater Boston. I was thrilled to have the opportunity to lead a well-established organization that had served thousands of girls, through mentoring, for more than 50 years. My predecessor had served for two decades and now it was up to me to increase visibility, expand the community of volunteers and donors, and keep Big Sister competitive.

Who and what are we competing against? We compete against the negative forces that influence the way young girls think about themselves and consequently, the decisions that they make. These influences come in a variety of forms: they are bullies that prey on our girls on the internet or in school; they are demeaning hip-hop messages or suggestive advertising which influence how girls think they should look, dress or speak; they are the burdens of poverty that can lead to isolation and loneliness.

Fewer than 90 days into my new role, however, I found myself facing competition from an altogether different source. Another well-known non-profit organization in Boston, Big Brothers of Massachusetts Bay, decided to incorporate "Big Sister" into its name We have vigorously objected to Big Brother using our name in the market that we've shared for so many years. After more than a year of voicing our strong objections to this course of action by Big Brother and attempting to negotiate an agreement to no avail, we finally had no choice but to bring a trademark infringement suit in federal court to protect a name and reputation more than 50 years in the making.

> "How lucky for the boys and girls of Greater Boston to have two organizations dedicated to their specific needs during the critical stages of their development."

Some donors have asked me, "Why not merge with Big Brother?" To answer that question I paint the picture of what happens when two organizations merge. It starts out with good intentions but over time, just like a corporate merger, it looks inefficient to have two programs serving two customers. In our case, the customers are boys and girls. Do we need that trainer at Big Sister who is an expert in girls' developmental needs and trains

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Dr. Jennifer O'Connor, Suffolk University

Reaching Higher

Dr. Jennifer O'Connor, a professor at Suffolk University, recently took part in a panel discussion which identified ways to support academic achievement for girls, discussed means to overcome obstacles that hinder girls from attending college, and explored the journey to college from a girl's perspective. Below, Dr. O'Connor discusses her research concerning the barriers todays girls face in obtaining higher education, and how strong female mentors can help them to overcome these obstacles.

It is a pleasure to accept the invitation to write this column for Big Sister Association of Greater Boston. I am a first generation college student on my dad's side of the family and attended Amherst College–an elite liberal arts institution. My story as the daughter of a firefighter attending a top tier institution and then earning my doctorate was possible because of the female mentors I had who believed in me at every level of my education from high school through college to graduate school. I cannot speak strongly enough about the value of female mentors in my personal life and as an academic I can also attest that research continually shows that female mentors can play a major role in the success of females applying to, enrolling in, and graduating from college.

Gender as a barrier to access

The American academy originated as an elite educational system for the purpose of training upper-class, white Protestant men for the clergy. Minority students inclusive of women, the handicapped, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans and

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Big Sister Association of Greater Boston
Little Moments. Big Magic.™

Issue IV of Big Sister Bulletin
Share your thoughts with us!
E-mail: mjohnson@bigsister.org

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our Big Sisters? Do we need social workers with backgrounds in girls' social and emotional development who provide critical support to Big Sisters? When economic forces start to invade the operations of an organization as they inevitably do, cuts would be made to create a more "efficient" operation. And when this happens, guess who loses? Girls. One size doesn't fit all.

Big Brother and Big Sister have served side by side in this city since their inception. How lucky for the boys and girls of Greater Boston to have two organizations dedicated to their specific needs during the critical stages of their development. The organizations have also collaborated for years by recruiting volunteers together, supporting children in our public schools together, and leading a foundation together to raise money for both agencies.

Big Sister has exclusively served the girls of Greater Boston, through mentoring, since 1951. We served 2,908 girls in 2007. Our model is based on measurements that determine the quality of the relationship between the Big and Little Sister. We want to be sure that every woman who comes to us is ready to make a commitment to a child. We screen, we train and we prepare women for this important role. We hire social workers and other staff who have expertise in girls' issues. Our mission is to give all girls a chance to reach their potential; it's what we do best.

Is it difficult to raise money for an organization that only serves girls? Just ask all those women's colleges that have begun to admit men. Is it more difficult when a "sister" organization co-opts your name for their own advantage? You better believe it. We're going to survive and yes, we're going to thrive because girls deserve to have an organization that focuses exclusively on them. We have a vision that one day every girl will feel valued, supported and believe that anything is possible because it is. Why not have an organization focused just on the girls? Boston's girls deserve it. So do the boys.

Regards,



Deborah Re, Chief Executive Officer

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other oppressed populations were restricted from access to higher learning. It was not until the early nineteenth century under the leadership of President Jackson that a more egalitarian model of higher education was born with the belief that higher education should be a thoroughly public enterprise for all citizens. Indeed, higher education over the last two hundred years has profoundly influenced American women's lives. Although the impact of women's higher education has had revolutionary implications for American society, educated women have still not achieved equal status with men within the sphere of education.

Following lobbying by feminists, Title IX of the Educational Amendments Acts of 1972 finally included "sex" as a discriminatory category banning sex discrimination in federally funded educational programs whether in athletics or academics. In 1974, Congress also passed the Women's Educational Equity Act, which made provisions for the technical and federal monetary support of local efforts to eliminate obstacles for females in every area of education. Women's share of degrees climbed steadily during the 1970s and 1980s during a period when the fraction of college-age young adults enrolled in school increased slowly but steadily. By 1982, women surpassed men in the number of bachelor's degrees earned. Women have garnered more bachelor's degrees than their male counterparts ever since.

> "Female role models starting from childhood can make or break a female's long-term goals of college ambitions and career aspirations."

The parity women have achieved in higher education is a recent phenomenon; yet there is still progress to be made. While women are more likely to attend community colleges, they are less likely to find themselves at the most selective colleges. For example, there are several prestige hierarchies that exist within higher education, and within them women are better represented at the lower levels of the hierarchy in schools of education, nursing, and social work. Similarly, women hold fewer full professor positions and are underrepresented in all levels of basic science, technology, business, and engineering departments.

Social class as a second barrier to access

The relevancy between higher education and equal opportunity is actually more urgent today than ever before based on socio-economic status. Increasing disparity based on parental economic position has never been anyone's definition of the American dream. During the last fifty years, there has been an explosion of educational opportunities including the massive increases in financial aid, the introduction of need-based aid in many states, the major increases in federal aid that accompanied the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the amendments to that act passed in 1972; however access to America's best institutions remains minimal for students from lower socio-economic groups today. American higher education is more socio-economically stratified today than at any time during the past three decades. First, the economic impact of going to college in general, and going to a more selective college in particular, has never been greater, and some research suggests that this impact may be greatest for the poorest students. It is more important than ever before because one in five American children now has a foreign-born parent, and the children of immigrants are twice as likely to be poor. It is more critical than ever before because our nation's competitiveness depends ever more on the quality of those who graduate from our nation's universities and colleges. And only by assuring access to everyone can the country maximize the quality of our nation's college graduates. Finally, it is more significant than ever before because excellence in education depends on diversity. If college graduates are to learn all they can from each other, higher education must assure that they come from a truly wide range of backgrounds

Action and resolutions to help all girls attain degrees

Research in education continually shows that one of the biggest factors that can make a difference in women achieving success in college is having a female role model who believes in their capabilities and encourages them. Female role models starting from childhood can make or break a female's long-term goals of college ambitions and career aspirations. The importance of at least one female mentor in a young female's life is significantly associated with higher self-esteem and a solid belief in one's dreams for the future. In order for women to continue to make progress in their academic lives and personal lives, supporting the role of female mentors needs to be a priority.

In order to uphold the ideal of the American dream and the ideology of equal opportunity, we must continue to advocate for young girls in our country who may be denied educational opportunities based on gender and/or social class. As Americans, we follow a social perspective that any child can grow up to be President and the belief that even the poorest American can achieve greatness with talent and hard work is one of this society's cherished cultural ideals. Hence, we must all work together to decrease the gaps in opportunities for America's young females and strive to attain the goals upon which our country is built upon.

Focus On: Big Sister Mentoring Academy

Where there's a will, there's a way. This adage rang true for Big Sister's School-Based Mentoring program when it became clear that there was a need for mentors at the **William Monroe Trotter Elementary School** in the Grove Hall neighborhood of Dorchester. To fill the need, Big Sister piloted a new mentoring program between Trotter Elementary and **Boston Latin Academy** known as the Big Sister Mentoring Academy. The Big Sister Mentoring Academy matches high school sophomore and junior girls (Big Sisters) with second and third grade girls (Little Sisters) in mentoring relationships where matches meet once a week during the school day. Now in full swing, despite snow days and school vacations, this innovative program is proving to be an enriching and positive experience for both Big and Little Sisters. "I'm not just teaching her, she's teaching me too," said Big Sister Mara, a sophomore at Boston Latin Academy.

Big Sister currently runs our one-to-one School-Based Mentoring program at 25 schools and after-school sites throughout Greater Boston. While many of the schools are conveniently located near major companies, who encourage their employees to take time during the day to volunteer, Trotter Elementary in Dorchester is not. Just around the corner from Trotter Elementary is Boston Latin Academy, a highly regarded exam school within the Boston Public Schools. Given the proximity of the two locations and Boston Latin Academy's solid reputation, Big Sister explored the idea of piloting a high school mentoring program between the two schools. The partnership would allow Big Sister to put positive female mentors in the lives of girls at Trotter Elementary who might need the extra confidence, competence and care that comes with having a Big Sister. Since many of the Big Sisters at Boston Latin Academy come from the same neighborhoods as the Little Sisters at Trotter Elementary, they make identifiable role models. The Little Sisters know where their Big Sisters have come from, and what they can achieve themselves by following their Big Sister's positive example.



Big Sister Mahilet & Little Sister Chantell

"We are continually looking for opportunities to increase our impact on the neighborhoods we serve," said Deborah Re, chief executive officer of Big Sister Association of Greater Boston. "The Big Sister Mentoring Academy has allowed us to be a part of the Grove Hall community in a dynamic and meaningful way."

On December 6, 2007, the Big and Little Sisters met for the first time at Trotter Elementary. Their weekly visits include a group activity, followed by a structured one-on-one activity, and finishing up with some free time for the Big and Little Sisters to decide what they would like to do together. While matches usually engage in coloring and craft activities, reading, or board games during this time, they also enjoy just sharing some "girl talk" with each other.

Big Sister Tara attended Trotter Elementary as a child and loves that she can not only give back to the girls of her alma mater in this way, but can also share specific insights and experiences with her Little Sister Maya. When asked if she would follow in her Big Sister's footsteps and consider attending Boston Latin Academy herself one day, Maya answered with conviction and confidence, "I *am* going to Tara's high school someday."

The Big Sister Mentoring Academy at Trotter Elementary will continue until school lets out in June. If Karen Harris, who coordinates the program with Big Sister at Trotter Elementary, has anything to do with it, the program will go on far longer than that. "[The program] gives the Little Sisters someone to look up to, something to aspire to," said Harris, who thinks it would serve as a great model for other schools.

Building on the success at Trotter Elementary, Big Sister plans to expand the Mentoring Academy in the near future. For us, finding new ways to fill the need for mentors is just another step toward creating a brighter future for all of Greater Boston's girls.

Big Sister Celebrates, Appreciates, and Inspires

Gratitude filled the air on Wednesday, March 5, when Big Sister held our first (but, not last!) Appreciation Reception at The Liberty Hotel in Beacon Hill. More than 80 guests filled the top floor of the hotel and spent the evening meeting fellow Big Sister supporters as well as staff from the agency. The evening was "no cost, just thanks, no kidding," because of the generosity of **State Street Corporation** who underwrote the event.



Jim Roosevelt, Robert Egan, Nancy Korman, Dolores Mitchell, and Charles & Fran Rodgers

In addition to an extended cocktail hour, the event included a program with featured speaker, **Dr. Jean Rhodes**. Dr. Rhodes is one of the country's leading researchers on mentoring. She shared with guests her findings on why paying attention to gender is critical to the success of mentoring programs.

"I have had the chance to work with a number of mentoring organizations across the country, and Big Sister stands out as one of the best. Their matches are longer than the national average, and their training and support are top notch," Rhodes said.



Thank you, State Street, for all you have done!

In the spirit of appreciation, Big Sister's Chief Executive Officer Deborah Re presented a surprise award to State Street Corporation, for exemplifying what it means to be a responsible corporate citizen. "State Street Corporation sets the standard for corporate citizenship," said Re. They have encouraged 29 of their employees to become mentors with Big Sister, they have invested in our mentoring programs for girls, and they contribute to the leadership of our organization by supporting **Jennifer Waldner**, vice president of the State Street Foundation, as a member of Big Sister's Board of Directors. **Laura Cipriano**, assistant vice president of Community Affairs, and Jennifer Waldner accepted the award on behalf of the corporation.

Special thanks to Big Sister Board Members **Max Bardeen** and **Sharon McNally** for hosting the event, and to everyone who attended.

Community Collaborations Make an Impact

Deepening our reach in the communities we serve is an integral part of the work we do at Big Sister. One way in which we do this is through our collaborations with other community organizations. This past summer, Big Sister was asked to run our social worker-facilitated Group Mentoring program, *Life Choices*, at seven Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF) sites. This collaboration was part of the Boston R.O.C.K.S! (Recreational Opportunities for City Kids) initiative to prevent youth violence around the city.

At the Holland BCYF Community Center in Dorchester, Big Sister led two *Life Choices* groups, which focus on the developmental needs of adolescent girls. One of the groups was run specifically for a Double Dutch team in the S.W.I.R.L.S. program. S.W.I.R.L.S. (Sisters Working in Real Life Situations) is a program that seeks to provide an engaging learning environment for positive youth development through activities such as wellness courses, peer education and competitive Double Dutch. The program also partners with other community organizations that provide workshops on a variety of topics around self-esteem and leadership. Hazel Thornton, the S.W.I.R.L.S. Double Dutch coach, wanted to partner with Big Sister because of our gender-specific mission. "S.W.I.R.L.S. is a program focused on sisterhood and we wanted to work with another girl-focused organization," said Thornton.



The girls of S.W.I.R.L.S!

Thornton also wanted to partner with Big Sister's *Life Choices* program in particular because of our dynamic curriculum. "The subjects [in *Life Choices*] are relevant to what these girls are facing right now," she said. During the summer *Life Choices* session, 17 girls from the S.W.I.R.L.S. Double Dutch team learned about puberty and sexual health, gender roles, the importance of values, and healthy relationships. The structured discussions and activities created a safe space for the girls to talk about the challenges they are facing in their daily lives. The girls told Thornton that they learned a lot from *Life Choices* and found new ways of looking at the issues in their lives.

After the success of the summer program, Thornton asked Big Sister to run another group in the fall with a new Double Dutch team. This group meets at the Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School in Dorchester and has 16 girls enrolled. The girls in this group have participated in structured discussions and activities around media literacy, as well as how to identify healthy and unhealthy relationships with friends, family, and dating partners. At an upcoming session, the girls will discuss sexual health. This will be particularly timely and necessary, given the recent findings in the March report released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that declared one in four teen girls now has a sexually transmitted disease. The girls have overwhelmingly agreed that they have come away from these sessions with a greater understanding of the topics. "I learned to see the signs in my own relationships and make wise decisions to keep myself safe," said one of the girls who participated in the healthy relationships session.

Double Dutch coach Hazel Thornton has seen the positive response to the *Life Choices* program and is looking forward to having next year's Double Dutch team take part as well. "I feel like these girls don't always get the attention and support they need," said Thornton. "With Big Sister's *Life Choices* program I thought 'Wow, this is perfect, this is what I wanted the girls to get involved with.'" Building on the success of the S.W.I.R.L.S. collaboration, we look forward to forming even more relationships within the communities we serve to help change the landscape for Greater Boston's girls.

Big Sister's 20th Annual BMW Raffle!

Ah, summer–sunny days, Red Sox games, grilling outdoors...and YOU in a new, BMW convertible! Could this be your year? Big Sister is celebrating the 20th anniversary of our BMW raffle, and we want you to have the chance to spend the summer with the top down…or rolling in the cash!

Tickets are $100 and only 1,750 tickets will be sold...GREAT ODDS!

Tickets are available online beginning May 1, 2008 and at various locations around Boston in June and July. Check out **www.bigsister.org** for online ticket sales and updates!

The money you spend on a raffle ticket (or tickets!) means you can fulfill one of your dreams–and enable Big Sister Association to help Greater Boston's girls fulfill theirs!



Where Are They Now?

AT AGE 25, FORMER LITTLE SISTER DONNA THACH STILL REMAINS CLOSE WITH BIG SISTER JANE SANDER

Former Little Sister Donna Thach knows that a friendship between a 12 year old Vietnamese-American girl and a 71 year old Irish woman from Quincy is not as unlikely as it may seem. In fact, it has proved to be the friendship of a lifetime. Donna and her family emigrated from Vietnam to the United States 19 years ago when Donna was just six years old. She was the eldest of three children and was growing up in a household where English was not spoken. When Donna's mother heard about Big Sister Association at church, she thought it would be a good way to broaden her daughter's horizons.

In December 1994, Little Sister Donna was matched with Big Sister Jane Sander. Though the two lived close to one another in Quincy, they resided in very different worlds. Donna wondered what, if anything, she would have in common with a woman so much older than herself who might know nothing of the Vietnamese culture. Could she really become Donna's friend and mentor? The answer was a resounding yes. Big Sister Jane soon became Donna's biggest supporter and closest confidant. She also began to open up a world beyond the one Donna had known. Little Sister Donna's wariness of cultures she was unfamiliar with was soon replaced by a genuine curiosity. She also began to feel more comfortable in her own skin as a result of her friendship with Jane. "She would always say 'You're just as American as anyone else,'" said Donna. "I have never forgotten that."

> "I will always consider myself Jane's Little Sister because I am still learning from her."

Spending time with Jane also allowed Donna more opportunities to improve her English. The two loved visiting museums together– particularly the Museum of Science–and these outings provided a fun and interesting way for Donna to expand her vocabulary. It was also a chance for her to see the kind of opportunities she could have as a woman living in America. Growing up female in the 1940s and 50s, Jane's career options felt limited. She wanted Donna to know that as a young woman today her possibilities were endless. Whenever they were out and saw women in non-traditional careers such as pilots, policewomen, or doctors, she made sure to point them out to her Little Sister and tell her "You can do that too."

As Donna prepared to graduate from Smith College, she struggled with career decisions: should she give in to cultural pressures to follow a certain path or should she embrace her desire to make a career out of helping others in much the same way Jane had helped her? In the midst of this struggle, Donna's mother passed away. Having already lost her father when she was 16, this came as a significant hardship to Donna at a critical time in her life. As she had done since she was 12, Donna turned to Jane for the support and guidance she needed.

With her Big Sister's encouragement to follow her passion, Donna decided to join the AmeriCorps VISTA program, a national service program which aims to fight poverty by granting members year-long placements at non-profit organizations or local government agencies. Through her placement, Donna worked with members of the Asian community who to help them increase their opportunities for success.

Having found a passion for helping and supporting others, just as Jane had done for her, Donna accepted a position as a Development Associate at On The Rise, Inc., a local non-profit organization that helps women who are homeless or in crisis. She also mentors Asian teens through the Quincy-based program, Discovering Unique Careers. For Donna, her work as a mentor to girls growing up with similar experiences to her own, makes her feel as though she has come full circle. "Girls need mentors so they can identify with someone, especially women who have done what they want to do," said Donna. "The girls see that I'm not just saying 'You can do it,' I *have* done it."

Though Donna is now a mentor herself, she still relies on Jane for guidance, support and friendship. The two recently celebrated Jane's 84th birthday, at which Donna reflected, "I will always consider myself Jane's Little Sister because I am still learning from her."



Big Sister Jane Sander, on her 84th birthday, with Little Sister Donna Thach

Are you a former Little Sister or do you know someone who is? Write to mjohnson@bigsister.org and find out how you can join our Alumnae Association!

Did You Know?

Edith Taylor, one of Big Sister's co-founders, was Cambridge's first female police officer. Through her work as a policewoman, which focused on youth and families, Taylor saw a need for preventative programs for children in Greater Boston, particularly the girls who lacked mentoring services. In 1951, she joined forces with Reverend Harold Taylor and Frances Marley, an administrative assistant and legal consultant for the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children to start Big Sister Association of Greater Boston. Believing that girls in their community could benefit from the guidance and support of an older female friend, they created our one-to-one mentoring program where girls (Little Sisters) were individually matched with caring and committed volunteers (Big Sisters). Upon her retirement from the police force, Taylor reflected, "My happiest moments come when I meet a former problem-girl who I helped get on the right path, and became a useful, well-adjusted woman."

Today, Taylor's legacy of preventing youth violence and supporting our region's girls lives on. It can be seen not only in the Group Mentoring programs Big Sister offers in the Boston Juvenile Court Clinic, but also in the summer mentoring programs we have run in conjunction with the city's "No More Drama" and "Boston R.O.C.K..S!" youth violence prevention campaigns. However, all of Big Sister's mentoring programs give girls the tools to resist negative behaviors and embrace opportunities to become confident, competent, and caring young women.

2008 MATCHMAKER CLUB

The following individuals, corporations, and foundations made gifts or pledge payments of $100 or more to Big Sister's Annual Fund between November 30, 2007 and March 13, 2008. Thank you to our generous supporters!

Big Sister Association of Greater Boston
Little Moments. Big Magic.™

Memory Maker
$25,000 - $49,999

Sandy & Paul Edgerley

Magic Maker
$10,000 - $24,999

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Inspiration Maker
$5,000 - $9,999

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Match Maker
$1,000 - $2,499

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Thank You!!

The following Big and Little Sisters have celebrated match anniversaries between January 1, 2008 and March 31, 2008. Congrats to all on your lasting friendships!

10 YEARS
Daryl Cook & Lexxanna
Lynder Thomas & Trejonda
Lauren Corduck & Clarinda Evette
Shari Bickford & Jeanne Marie
Tammy Rundle & Jana
Doreen Banaszak & Kandra

9 YEARS
Debbie Williams & Jennifer
Tomasina Lucchese & Chanell
Kate Ford & Cara
Susan Abbattista & Ashley
Sarah Meeks & Cassandra
Sandra Smith & Amanda
Lori MacDonald & Michelle
Jessica Langerman & Jeanette

8 YEARS
Tara Rao & Taneillia
Danielle Santos & Monica
Marisa Jones & Susanne
Alice Palmer & Jai'sa
Adrienne Armstrong & Briana
Ruth Hagearty & Racheal
Jane Alpers & Lesley
Diane Broderick & Briana
Kati Livingston & Felicia

7 YEARS
Kristen Herlihy & Colleen
Tonya Salerno & Yara
Lori Wassermann & Amber

6 YEARS
Barbara Allen & Jessica
Jessica Sandland & Rachel
Donnaleigh Coolidge-Miller & Stephanie
Rebecca Potts & Cynthia
Erica Greany & Sherly
Megan Flynn & Camille
Elizabeth Harris & Tachauna
Ellen Daley & Lisette
Christine Pailler & Tiana

5 YEARS
Erin McCormick & Amaree
Courtney Clark & Cinnamon
Leslie Greenfield & Tanissa
Nancy Christiansen & Angelique
Judy Dombrowski & Ashlyn
Colleen McGonagle & Tara
Elena Proakis Ellis & Kaitlyn
Renee Charpentier & Janice
Katherine Higgott & Victoria
Audrey Paek & Samantha
Catherine Erdly & Rebecca
Rebecca Gilding & Aprile
Julie Sahlins & Samantha

4 YEARS
Terri Campbell & Khalifa
Michelle Dolan & Mabel
Cindy Arens & Helen
Cynthia Dantas & Tay'la
Jessica Ziady & Kimberly
Atara Rich-Shea & Lindsey
Rachel Koebler & Hernisha
Evangelia Lambidoni & Jacqueline

2 YEARS
Heidi Katz & Latikia
Elisha Fielding & Melanie
Ebony Green & Paris
Veronica Hammond & Keondra
Nicole Corvini & Toriana
Logan Hamilton & Nazadeen
Jody Sokoloff & Bianca
Stacy Pyron & Nicole
Anna Spencer & Marina
Erin Wei & Ciara
Katie Basilotto & Jessica
Gennet Fantu & Janessa-Ivory
Angelica Vargas & Paola
Swati Patel & Brittney
Sarah Sachen & Jackeline
Nicole Watkins & Shadajiah
Abby Peterson & Melanie
Mattie Clark & Jovelyn
Kimberly Smirles & Coynee
Beth Favaloro & Cindy
Regina McNally & Cindy

1 YEAR
Leslee Parker & Aleysia
Allyson Allen & Ronazia
Jacqueline Marie Rooney & Nabriana
Jessica Sola & Bianca
Rosena Cornet & Jada
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Match Highlight

BIG SISTER SUSAN ROSA AND LITTLE SISTER CAPRICE



Little Sister Caprice wants to be just like her Big Sister Susan Rosa. She hopes to have a great apartment, a solid career, an active social life, and even become a Big Sister…just like Susan! And as far as Caprice's mom, Malisha, is concerned, this is exactly what she had hoped for her daughter. As a girl growing up in Cambridge, Malisha was matched with a Big Sister through our Community-Based Mentoring program for five years. She credits her Big Sister with having a positive impact on her life and teaching her "how to stand up as a woman." Knowing that having a strong female mentor would help to keep her daughter on the right path and expand her horizons, Malisha signed up Caprice for a Big Sister of her own.

> "I see how many things Susan does and it seems like I can do them too."

"Caprice is growing up with different opportunities," says Malisha of the impact that Big Sister Susan has had on her daughter in the four years that they have been matched. "She has learned a lot from Susan, like how to hold her own." Malisha also recognizes that Susan has inspired Little Sister Caprice to want more. "I see how many things Susan does and it seems like I can do them too," Caprice asserts. Caprice admires Susan's ability to make time for work and play. She hopes that someday, when she is attending either Boston University or Harvard and then becoming a lawyer or a writer, she will be able to have the same balance in her life by following Susan's example.

Another aspect Malisha appreciates about the friendship between Caprice and her Big Sister Susan is that it creates a space just for Caprice. With two younger children at home, Caprice's parents must find ways to divide their time and attention, but Caprice's time with Susan is completely one-on-one. Not only is Susan someone Caprice can look to for guidance and support in addition to her family, but she is able to experience new activities with Susan as well. The two have enjoyed everything from bowling, rollerskating, and hiking in the Fells to baking, making pottery, and an annual trip to the Hot Dog Safari at Suffolk Downs. They have gone on cruises in Boston Harbor, toured Fenway Park, taken road trips to New Hampshire and visited almost every museum in Boston–the Museum of Science being Caprice's favorite.

However, one of Susan and Caprice's favorite activities is simply going to local bookstores to indulge in their shared love of reading. They spend the afternoon browsing the aisles, and then heading to the nearest café for tea or hot cocoa and just to talk. Whether Caprice wants to share her feelings about the loss of her aunt last year or discuss her latest homework assignment, she knows that Susan is there to lend an ear. What's more, Malisha knows it too, and can only describe the friendship between Big and Little Sister as "the perfect match."

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