Big Sister Bulletin

BIG SISTER ASSOCIATION OF GREATER BOSTON

New Research: Why Gender Matters to Mentoring

PART ONE OF A THREE-PART STUDY FROM DR. JEAN RHODES AND DR. LEON LITCHFIELD

Does focusing on gender matter when it comes to successful youth mentoring relationships? Big Sister says it does, and so do **Dr. Jean Rhodes** and **Dr. Leon Litchfield** of the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Their forthcoming research, *The Role of Gender in Mentoring: A Three-Part Study*, examines gender in the context of Community-Based mentoring relationships, School-Based mentoring relationships, and relationships supported by co-ed versus single-sex mentoring agencies. This article is the first in a three-part series for the *Big Sister Bulletin* that will examine each part of this study to give you this ground-breaking perspective on why gender needs to be at the forefront of the youth mentoring conversation.

> "Although research has shown that mentoring can improve youth outcomes...these findings related to gender may help mentoring programs sharpen their matching abilities and more appropriately tailor the training of their mentors based on the gender of the mentees."

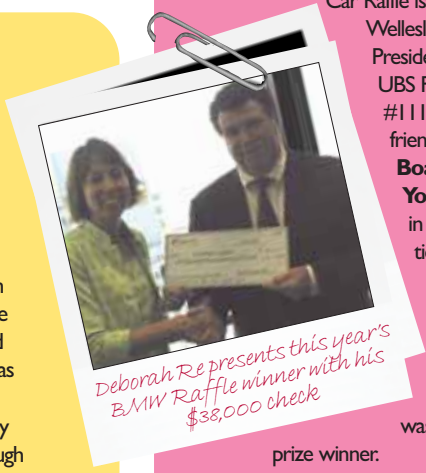
In this issue, we will examine the research that came out of the Community-Based Mentoring segment of the study. The basis of this section was the landmark youth mentoring study produced by Public/Private Ventures in 1998. According to Rhodes, "This study offers new information about gender-related differences among the youth who participate in community-based mentoring programs. Although research has shown that mentoring can improve youth outcomes, especially when offered through well-run programs, these findings related to gender may help mentoring programs sharpen their matching abilities and more appropriately tailor the training of their mentors based on the gender of the mentees." The following research was recently published in the Journal of Vocational Behavior (Rhodes, J., Lowe, S.R., Litchfield, L., & Walsh-Samp, K., 2008).

In the original study, Public/Private Ventures collected a database of 1,138 youth in Community-Based mentoring relationships (matches meet one-to-one on their own time and engage in activities of their own choosing) from eight Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies across the country. Rhodes and Litchfield returned to this database and disaggregated the findings by gender for the 959 youth who remained in the study for the full 18 months, when follow-up interviews were conducted.

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And the Winner is...

Who would win the brand new red BMW 328i convertible or $38,000 in cash? The crowd assembled near City Hall on July 18, held their collective breath as car czar himself, **Herb Chambers**, prepared to draw the winning ticket. And the winner of Big Sister's 20th Annual BMW Car Raffle is...**William Cotter** of Wellesley! Cotter, Senior Vice President of Investments at UBS Financial, bought ticket #1117 at the urging of his friend and **Big Sister Board Member, John Yozell.** He never thought in a million years that his ticket would be chosen!



Deborah Re presents this year's BMW Raffle winner with his $38,000 check

"I thought they were pulling my leg!" said Cotter of his reaction to the call that he was this year's grand prize winner.

After careful consideration Cotter decided to take the $38,000 in cash, but has not yet revealed how he will use it. He does know that he is happy with his decision to buy a raffle ticket because he feels it is important to give back to the community by supporting youth-serving organizations.

In total, this year's BMW Raffle raised nearly $90,000 to benefit Big Sister's mentoring programs for girls.

Big Sister would like to extend a BIG thank you to Herb Chambers, Marc Huaman of Foreign Motors West in Natick, Blue Cross Blue Shield for donation of their printing services, and of course, all those who purchased tickets this year, allowing us to provide quality mentoring relationships for Greater Boston's girls. Who knows, maybe next year will be *your* year!

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Big Sister Association of Greater Boston

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The data they analyzed consisted of:

- participants ranging in age from 9 to 16 (average = 12)
- 63% male, 37% female
- 43% white, 40% African American, 10% Hispanic, and 7% other racial/ethnic groups
- 90% single-parent households (predominantly mothers), 5% lived with a grandparent, and 5% with others

The interviews conducted with the participants consisted of measures about the functioning of youth in three areas:

Psychosocial–parental and peer relationships, feelings about self
Behavioral–drug and alcohol use, aggression, and delinquency
Educational–academic competence, attitudes toward school, grades

Rhodes and Litchfield then asked the following questions when revisiting the research with an eye for gender:

To what extent do girls experience greater difficulties in their parental relationships than boys?

Conclusion: Girls are more likely than boys to enter mentoring programs feeling less trusting and more alienated from their parents. This is especially important since the parent-child relationship has been shown to be an important mediator of change among youth in mentoring programs (Rhodes et al., 2000). It should also be noted that there was no difference between girls and boys with respect to communication with parents. Therefore, girls may continue to talk with their parents since these relationships may hold more importance in their lives than in the lives of their male counterparts.

What this tells us: Mentoring programs that recognize the fragility of the mother-daughter relationship of many female mentees may be more successful in having a positive impact on their lives by educating their mentors about these relationship issues.

Do girls stay in mentoring relationships longer than boys?

Conclusion: Girls stay in mentoring relationships longer than boys. The findings related to the length of mentoring relationships can also be used to better tailor mentoring programs to the needs of girls and boys in the programs. Although insecure relationships with parents might predict problems in other relationships (including those with mentors), this suggests that girls do not give up easily on these relationships.

What this tells us: This finding confirms the importance of providing enough supports to mentors and mentees so that mentoring relationships will have time to develop, and to recognize that this may take longer for girls than boys.

Are there differences between girls and boys with respect to the level of satisfaction with mentoring relationships over time?

Conclusion: Boys are more satisfied with their mentors than girls during the early stages, but the reverse is true for relationships lasting longer than a year. The final research question was related to the level of satisfaction with the mentoring relationships over time, and whether there were differences between boys and girls. Thus while a year may be long enough for boys to establish satisfying relationships, at least for a certain percentage of girls this may take longer.

What this tells us: This is further support for the importance of agencies encouraging and supporting longer term mentoring relationships, especially for girls who may take longer to develop trusting relationships with their mentors but who may also experience greater benefits in the long term.

While the findings in this study will inform our practices as we continue to update them to meet the changing needs of girls, they also tell us that our current practices account for the success of our Big and Little Sister matches. For girls, longer, stronger matches that are well-supported yield the greatest impact. Our Community-Based Big Sisters are not only carefully screened to gauge their willingness to commit to the mentoring relationship, they also undergo six hours of training prior to being matched. Because we focus solely on girls, our training is geared toward addressing girl-specific issues, such as the fragility of mother-daughter relationship that Rhodes and Litchfield cite in their research. Once the Big and Little Sister are matched, they are assigned to a match support social worker. This social worker performs regular check-ins with the Big Sister, Little Sister, and Little Sister's family. She is also available any time to provide support to the match for anything from activity ideas to guidance through a rough patch. This high-level of support is often attributed, by Big Sisters, to the success of the relationship.

According to a statement made by Rhodes earlier this year, "It is my hope that mentoring organizations across the country learn from what Big Sister is doing in Boston, because they are showing that by paying attention to gender, girls not only survive, they thrive."

Mark Your Calendar for Big in Boston!



Get ready for the most *dramatic* **Big in Boston** yet! This year our signature event will be held at the **Boston Opera House**, setting the stage for a truly exciting evening. For one night only, join us **Thursday, November 13, 2008 from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.**

The show will be produced by **Jack Connors** of The Connors Family Office, and **Karen Kaplan** of Hill Holliday. An all-star cast will include our Big and Little Sisters as well as surprise guests!

Don't miss the biggest night in Boston!
Tickets are available now through November 12, 2008 at www.bigsister.org or by calling 617.236.8060.

Comcast Creates Picture Perfect Day for Matches

Nearly 120 Big and Little Sisters enjoyed a delightful summer outing on Spectacle Island, Saturday, August 9, thanks to a generous donation from Comcast. In an effort to create diverse funding opportunities for supporting partners like Comcast, Big Sister has expanded its corporate engagement program to include sponsorship of mentoring activities. Comcast, which has supported Big Sister since 2005, was the exclusive sponsor of this summer's annual Community-Based Mentoring Picnic.


Having a good laugh...

"We are committed to supporting the local communities we serve, and we're excited to help grow this important mentoring program," said **Paul D'Arcangelo, Vice President of Comcast's Metro Boston Region**. "We're proud of our partnership with the Big Sister Association of Greater Boston, and we congratulate them for having the vision to positively impact the lives of so many young girls in the Greater Boston area."

> "We are committed to supporting the local communities we serve, and we're excited to help grow this important mentoring program."
>
> –Paul D'Arcangelo, Vice President of Comcast's Metro Boston Region

As a result of Comcast's support, the Big and Little Sister matches enjoyed a ride on the Harbor Island Express and a healthy buffet lunch once they arrived at Spectacle Island, along with board games, volleyball and bocce, craft activities, a guided hike around the island, and Comcast goodie bags to take home. For many of the Little Sisters, this was not only their first visit to the island, but also their first trip on a boat.


Hula hooping their hearts out...

"An integral part of the mentoring experience is the broadening of a Little Sister's horizons, giving her the opportunity to see and do things she might not otherwise be able to," said Deborah Re, Big Sister's Chief Executive Officer. "Comcast made that possible for many of our Little Sisters."

The outing also gave the Big and Little Sisters an opportunity to really connect with each other. **Big Sister Jessica Reardon** and **Little Sister Victoria** spent more than an hour intensely trawling the shores for beautiful shards of pottery and beach glass. "We're just having conversations, talking about our thoughts," said 10 year old Victoria. "I like having someone by my side who I can always count on."

Big Sister Clare Lundberg and her **Little Sister Shannon** have been matched for four years. The two have always had fun together and gotten along well, but Clare said she was looking for something that they could bond over: "Today, we found it," she said. When Clare, who loves photography, brought out her camera on the nature hike, Shannon immediately showed an interest and the two spent the rest of the day taking photos around the island.


...and searching for treasure!

Big thanks to Comcast and all those who volunteered at the picnic. We look forward to seeing all the Big and Little Sisters at next year's outing!

Big Sister Talks Tweens

More than ever before, a host of challenges are facing today's girls, including highly sexualized images in the media, low self-esteem, depression, and pressure to experiment with drugs and alcohol. That's why Big Sister led a workshop for parents entitled **"The Turbulent Tween Years: Communicating With Your 8-13 Year Old,"** on July 8, at Lesley University in Cambridge. The workshop was a first for Big Sister, and provided an opportunity for us to share our expertise on girls' issues. It also served as a forum for parents to hear from a licensed, experienced social worker about the challenges facing their tween daughters.

"The discussion was excellent and thought-provoking," said one attendee. "I learned a lot." Another participant commented, "The themes discussed were specific to issues facing my daughter."

The seminar, led by Big Sister's **Chief Program Officer, Diane Zipoli, LICSW**, focused on Zipoli's "Nuggets for Negotiating Tween Years," such as "keeping the focus off appearance" and "being a detective about your daughter's life…but not a sneaky one." Participants shared their experiences and concerns as they discovered new ways to support their maturing girls. Zipoli emphasized the importance of a mentor in every girl's life. She also educated attendees about Big Sister's specific mentoring programs for girls, letting them know that while our services help hundreds of girls coming from "at-risk" communities in and around Boston, any adolescent girl can benefit from the care and support of a positive female mentor. At the end of the 90-minute workshop, participants left with a folder of resources including relevant articles and a list of helpful books and websites.

"Our goal with this discussion was to share Big Sister's expertise on girls with a broader audience, providing assistance and guidance to parents during this challenging time," said Zipoli. "The event was a huge success, and we plan to have more in the future."

Where Are They Now?

This past June, 29 year old Tara Gannett's house caught on fire and was declared uninhabitable. She and her 9 year old son, Anthony, were left without shelter or a place to store their salvageable belongings. Tara knew there was one person she could immediately turn to for support at that trying time; it was the same person who had been there to support her through the ups and downs of the past 18 years: her former Big Sister Laura Kozel.



Big Sister Laura and Little Sister Tara when they were first matched in 1990

Laura and Tara were matched as Big and Little Sister when Tara was 11 years old. Tara was the oldest of her siblings. Trying to find a positive role model within her Chelsea community did not yield any luck for her. "Where I was living, and the people I was around, made it hard to stay on the right path," said Tara. In her mind, many of the people she saw on a daily basis lacked ambition to further their education, achieve their goals, or overcome their negative environment. Then she met Laura.

"Signing up Tara for a Big Sister was the best thing I ever did as a mom," said Tara's mother. "Laura was her escape."

With Laura, Tara began to see new places and new opportunities. The two went to the movies, the beach, and their favorite restaurant, The Olive Garden. They went to a Big Sister-sponsored sleepover at the Museum of Science and even attended an M.C. Hammer concert. They captured all their memories in a scrapbook, which remains so special to Tara that she has kept it safe and intact despite several moves and the recent fire in her home.

In 1996, Big Sister Laura's career, aerospace engineering for General Electric, required her to move to Chicago, sadly leaving behind a teenaged Tara with some big decisions to make. Tara began to fall victim to her environment and dropped out of high school. She and Laura fell out of touch for a period of time, but Laura's impact was too big for her to be out of Tara's life for long. The two were soon in contact again on a regular basis and Laura was given the opportunity to come back to Boston. "Part of the reason I wanted to come back was for Tara," said Laura.

Though Tara now had a young son to care for, Laura convinced her to study for her GED. She tutored her former Little Sister in preparation for the test and gave her all the support and encouragement she needed to pass it. After she earned her GED, Tara was inspired to further her education even more and go to school for her Medical Assistant Certificate. Again, Laura was there to cheer her on and offer help. Then tragedy struck. As Tara was studying for her certificate her son Anthony was diagnosed with a brain stem tumor. Tara was forced to put her studies on hold while Anthony underwent surgeries, chemotherapy, and speech and physical rehabilitation. Four months later he was on the mend and Tara was determined to resume her studies. She graduated with a 4.0 GPA and perfect attendance.

> "Laura impacted my life in a positive way that I needed, that I didn't have."

After receiving her certificate, Tara started searching for a job, and Big Sister Laura stepped in once again, helping Tara create a resume and prepare for interviews. Tara soon found a full-time position, and Laura could not have been more proud of her Little Sister.

"I realized how hard it was to get out of that situation she was in. She is an incredibly strong person," says Laura.

However, Tara attributes much of her success in life to Laura's friendship. "Through a lot of situations in my life, if Laura wasn't there, I don't know what would have happened. She was always there to catch me when I fell. No one else has been there like that," said Tara. "No one else would have told me to go to school, to get an education. I'm so proud to have someone like Laura in my life; someone who's smart and accomplished."

While Laura continues to serve as a role model and mentor to her former Little Sister, the two now share a genuine adult friendship. "Even now I really don't have anyone else like her in my life," said Tara of her former Big Sister. She adds that while she has seen many friends come and go, Laura has been there the longest. Though Tara has been living in Providence for several years, the two get together often–even going to holiday office parties as each other's "date"–and Tara is considering moving back to Boston to be closer to Laura.

At nearly 30 years old, the lessons Tara has learned from her Big Sister still resonate. When Tara recently heard two teenage girls in her neighborhood talking about how they dropped out of school and one of them already had a child, she immediately approached them and asked why they would waste their lives getting pregnant so young and not having an education. Tara has seen too many girls just like them and believes that having a mentor is the best way to prevent girls from going down the wrong path. Tara should know; she has been in their shoes and thanks to her friendship with Laura, has come out the other side a little wiser and stronger. "Laura impacted my life in a positive way that I needed, that I didn't have," said Tara.

It is clear that just as their memories have survived adversity, tucked neatly in that scrapbook that Tara still holds dear, their friendship will also continue to stand the test of time.



Big Sister Laura and Little Sister Tara today!

Focus On: Summertime Support

Summer may be a time for kicking back and relaxing with trips to the beach and backyard barbeques, but at Big Sister we were busy serving hundreds of Greater Boston's girls! Vacation gives girls the opportunity to make many decisions; our summer partnerships were all designed to help them make *healthy* decisions. From sailing on the Charles River to building teamwork skills on the field at Camp Harbor View, Big Sister served nearly 260 girls through the programs highlighted below.

Camp Harbor View

Perhaps our biggest accomplishment this summer was serving every girl at Camp Harbor View–nearly 100 girls in total. Camp Harbor View was founded in 2007 by **Mayor Thomas Menino** and **Jack Connors**, co-founder of Hill Holliday and philanthropic leader. The Mayor was concerned that violence among teenagers was a growing problem in many of the city's neighborhoods, particularly during the summer months when schools were not in session. He wanted to offer an alternative to these kids; a safe environment for outdoor activities they might not otherwise have. Jack Connors shared his concerns, and together they joined forces to create a supportive and structured environment for boys and girls from Boston's neighborhoods. It was then that Camp Harbor View was born.

It was natural that a camp dedicated to helping Boston's youth make healthy decisions would partner with Big Sister to better serve the camp's female population. Throughout July and August, we led our *Life Choices* Group Mentoring workshops for female campers and counselors-in-training. The workshops created a safe, supportive environment where girls learn through structured activities and discussions how to deal with the issues they are facing and make healthy decisions for themselves.

"I liked that we did activities to make us feel better about ourselves and we communicated about things, like if we were bottling anything up the activities helped get all the feelings out," said one of the group participants. "I really liked the games we played about relationships, they show you how to have a second chance at a good and healthy relationship with the person you're dating," added another. Many of the girls said they enjoyed merely having the opportunity to talk and feel listened to. They also got to know each other better and foster a feeling of sisterhood. "I learned that some people you think are different from you aren't that different at all," said one girl. Another girl enjoyed the workshop so much, she commented, "I had fun with the Big Sister people and I would like to have my own Big Sister someday!" One girl summed up the experience and what she learned in one simple sentiment: "Being a girl is awesome!"



The girls learn about themselves...and each other!



Celebrating sisterhood at Camp Harbor View

BCYF Groups

In addition to facilitating programs for girls at **Camp Harbor View**, Big Sister also continued to lead *Life Choices* groups at the **Dorchester Court Clinic**, **West End House Boys & Girls Club** and six **Boston Centers for Youth and Families** (BCYF) sites. The groups, which are designed for middle school-aged girls, met one to two times per week for five weeks and served a total of 88 girls. The girls were given the opportunity to learn about themselves and each other through discussions and activities dealing with body image, puberty, healthy relationships, and self-esteem. They also developed a strong sense of sisterhood. "I liked that the group brought the girls closer together and got all of us to learn from each other," said a girl from the **Paris Street** BCYF site, a girls-only center in East Boston. Others liked the feeling of being listened to. "I liked that the group leaders understood us," said a girl from the **Jackson-Mann** BCYF site in Allston. And still others appreciated having a safe space to express themselves. "I think this group is a very good place for me," said a girl from the **Tynan** BCYF site in South Boston.



It's going to take teamwork to untangle this mess!

Dare to Dream Summit

On August 16, the **Simmons Institute for Leadership and Change** and Boston Centers for Youth and Families presented their 3rd Annual Citywide Girls Summit, entitled Dare to Dream. The summit's purpose was to give girls access to information and resources focused on issues such as safety, self-esteem, career choices, and community service through interactive workshops, a round table discussion, entertainment, and a resource fair. Big Sister was asked to share our expertise at the summit and lead two *Life Choices* workshops for teen and pre-teen girls facilitated by our group workers and staff. Both groups participated in structured games and discussions, with the younger group focusing on puberty and the older group on healthy sexual decision-making. Nearly 40 girls participated in the two workshops. One girl from Dorchester said that the workshop would help her because "I can tell my friends about what I learned," while another girl from Roslindale, said the workshop "will help me to make better decisions in the future."

AdventureSail

Not all of our summer programs took place on dry land! After all, what better time than summer to get out on the water and learn a new skill–while learning about each other too. That's exactly what eight of our Big and Little Sister matches from Community-Based Mentoring did in June at our 12th annual AdventureSail day. AdventureSail is a program run by the **National Women's Sailing Association** (NWSA). It is a day of sailing activities for young girls coming from urban communities, which provide them with a positive, healthy environment to have fun and learn from other women. "It's not just about teaching these girls how to sail," said **Susan Epstein of NWSA**, who led the event. "It's an analogy for life, showing the girls that they can be the captain of their own boat!"

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2008 MATCH MAKER CLUB

The following individuals, corporations, and foundations made gifts or pledge payments of $100 or more to Big Sister's Annual Fund between June 4, 2008 and September 1, 2008. This list does not include those who purchased tickets in the BMW Raffle. Thank you to our generous supporters!

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

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thank You!!

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Charting a course for success at AdventureSail day

Matches took off from the Courageous Sailing Center in Charlestown and steered a course down the Charles. One Little Sister from Roxbury had never seen Boston Harbor or any of its "inhabitants" before. When she came across a jellyfish in the water, she was so fascinated that she wanted to take the sea creature home with her!

Once they were back on dry land, Big and Little Sisters had the opportunity to learn how to tie nautical knots from the AdventureSail volunteers. They were shown practical applications of the knots, such as tying your shoes, so they could see how the skills they learned that day could translate into their everyday lives. In the end, they tied together all the ropes and enjoyed jumping rope together. Susan Epstein hopes to see this partnership with Big Sister continue to grow and thrive. What she has learned from her years of involvement with NWSA and AdventureSail is that "girls need the guidance and leadership of other women."

> "It's not just about teaching these girls how to sail. It's an analogy for life, showing the girls that they can be the captain of their own boat!"

We have truly enjoyed sharing our expertise and serving more girls than ever before over the past couple of months. Although the days are getting shorter and the leaves will start changing colors before we know it, we are already looking forward to creating more dynamic mentoring opportunities for Greater Boston's girls!



Learning how to make healthy decisions at the Dare to Dream girls' summit

The following Big and Little Sisters have celebrated match anniversaries between July 1, 2008 and September 30, 2008. Congratulations to all on your lasting friendships!



11 YEARS
Regina Capozzi & Amanda
Kim Smith & Andrea

10 YEARS
Anne Billert & Allison
Marcia Hirshberg & Ricketta

9 YEARS
Shannon Jennings & Chaniqua
Dorothy Suput & Amoura

8 YEARS
Dolores Calaf & Arelys
April Cook & Staci
Cheryl Goss & Valerie

7 YEARS
Elizabeth Bruce & Katherine
Janet Lawrence & Ashley
Deanne Loonin & Madonna
Leanne Palmer & Cora
Meg Sullivan & Shampagne

6 YEARS
Holly Charron & Meghan
Jennifer Eveland & Ashlei
Rebecca Hartshorn & Jennifer
Laura Luo & Connie
Robyn Moriarty & Alisa
Sydney Moulaison & Nina
Amanda Song & Mercedes

5 YEARS
Allison Cirino & Brenda
Denise DeRoeck & Alina
Allison Kegley & Keona
Brenda Lavasta & Jazmin
Janet Levatin & Dorothy
Kerri Norris & Ashley
April Nugent & Minerva

4 YEARS
Julie Asfahl & Betty
Renee Corcoran & Samantha
Susan D'Antilio & Angela
Marcia Dobbs & Stephanie
Ellen Eagar & Kesor

Aimee Floyd & Keysha

Julie Howell & Ilyse

Renee Jolley & Jamilah

Molly Jordan & Sharece
Melinda Koenig & Jenny
Christine Lemerise & Wandaisha
Amy Lorenzo & Dominique
Dawn Lovato & Heather
Maureen McQuinn & Yvette
Melynn Nuite & Ashley
Eneida Roman & Migleila
Renee Sophocles & Yazmin

3 YEARS
Adrianne Appel & Krystal
Heather Bellwin & Iman
Jessica Corkery & Janelle
Michelle Cormier & Kyleigh
Kristina Crawford & Jaelene
Martha Curran & Shanica
Alice Daly & Jasmin
Janene Davis & Alannah
Leslie Eckholdt & Allison
Melissa Elmer & Lanelle
Donna Gavin & Brittany
Jane Hamel & Alycia
Mary Kate Hughto & Brittany
Skyler Joshi & Ivanna
Marleen Kelley & Patricia
Jill Kenney & Kendra
Dara Khan & Ashleigh
Neidine Lynch & Whitney
Melissa Medeiros & Chloe
Cary & O'Brien & Carla
Deirdre O'Shea & Yashira
Missy Pappas & Kalieyah
Ashlee-Morgan Piper & Anna
Connie Ramelli & Tatianna
Sheila Richards & Latisha
Amy Rose & Molly
Marcy Ruda & Kelly
Danielle Stein & Kashayla
Kara Sweeney & Kelina

2 YEARS
Marie Abdella & Dariquel
Roberta Allison & Belinda
Nurys Camargo & Tyianne
Katherine Chum & Jasmine
Pamela Ciampi & Amanda
Katie Congdon & Margaret
Stephanie Davis & Rehema
Beth Deveney & Jennifer
Cynthia Diminture & Joslyn
Tanya Ducharme & Amy
Bridget Dullea & Morgan
Lindsay Gadzik & Yolandi
Lucia Galvan & Cindy
Sarah Gutelius & Shirley
Mary Hargraves & Dayanna
Karla Hurtley & Haronid
Annette Jacobs & Victoria
Maya Kumar & Chardanney
Mekkin Lynch & Asalia
Kerry Metelski & Kayla
Michele Mitsumori & Kieara
Erin Murphy & T'Lani
Mary O'Connor & Shanice
Emily Pappas & Elizabeth
Jessica Reardon & Victoria
Paula Shebest & Briana
Jacqueline Soroko & Eva
Erika Soto Lamb & Allison
Karen Tauro & Emily
Bejay Ugale & Karalynn
Kate VanZele & Veronica
Carolyn Vicari & Delicia
Jennifer Waldner & Angelica
Courtney Watts & Kelsey
Kristin Williams & Jalyse

1 YEAR
Angela Amadeo & Julie
Sarah Augliera & Briana
Jacqueline Bateman & Jetta
Isabel Bernal & Jennifer
Sarah Berson & Karina
Candace Bon & Dyanna
Sarah Bourgeois & Shakeyma
MaryCat Boyett & Tiana
Susan Brady & Rickiema
Kristi Brooks & Kezya
Pam Burns & Carrie
Julie Byrne & Sara
Kathee Carr & Taleha
Nicole Caruso & Britney
Stephanie Chang & Sequoia
Sally Chen & Meng Ling
Christina Clancy & Takiia
Sarah Coen & Cassandra
Charity Collier & Jada
Lisa Conley & Deidre
Jennifer Danyluk & Elaine
Brittany Doran & Sihara
Erin Fitzgerald & Ashley
Melvena Green & Cierah
Arlene Greene & Alani Alexsa
Brandy Grondine & Melissa
Maria Hayes & Pedrounna
Lauren Hayes & Shelby
Nicole Hill & Joanna
Andrea Horvitz & Mercedes
Katy Keiley & Rachel
Nicole Kowalski & Giselle
Kirsten Losee & Dakaja
Jen Maitland & Shelkilya
Rebecca Manoli & Makela
Karla Mauro & Jasmine
Alexis Medina & Gwenhwyfar
Maria Meehan & Janell
Nikko Mendoza & Carol
Jennifer Mitchum & Shavonia
Tori Murphy & Brianna
Keneisha R. Murphy & Milan
Johanna Nino & Marciana
Sarah O'Brien & Tanekia
Rebecca Osburne-Rothstein & Nazely
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Njoki Wamiti & Jalissa
Karen Margaret Watson & Asia

A Little Beachy, a Little City... a LOT of Fun!

On August 14, it was as if Mother Nature knew there was a beach party in the works. The rain ceased and the skies cleared just in time for Big Sister's second annual Urban Beach Party, hosted by our Young Professional Board. With a gorgeous sunset for a backdrop, and a sizzling summer soundtrack spun by Rebel the Ambassador, it was a summer evening not to be forgotten. Perhaps the most memorable part was that this year's Urban Beach Party raised more than $12,000 to support our mentoring programs for Greater Boston's girls.

More than 140 guests at the Exchange Conference Center on Boston's Waterfront spent the night sipping the evening's signature mojitos, feasting on tasty treats provided by Legal Sea Foods, and socializing with other young professionals. Many of the women in attendance also signed up to become Big Sisters! Competition was fierce for silent auction items, including Red Sox and Bruins tickets, trips to Nepal and Cancun, and dinner and hotel packages to some of Boston's most upscale locations. As the evening heated up, people hit the dance the floor and grooved the night away.


The festivities heated up after the sun went down at Urban Beach Party

Big thanks are in order for the evening's sponsors: **Legal Sea Foods Catering, Harpoon Brewery, Barefoot Wine and Bubbly, Winston Flowers, IMG,** and **Lawrence-Carlin Insurance.**

Match Highlight

BIG SISTER MARION HALL & LITTLE SISTER SOHKA

At age 11, Little Sister Sokha was already familiar with instability. She had been placed in the foster care system and would continue to spend the next several years in and out of five foster homes. She was painfully shy, often not speaking at all, and lacked confidence in herself. She became accustomed to transience and trusted no one.

Then she met Marion Hall.

Big Sister Marion, a painter who lives in Manchester, MA, was matched with Little Sister Sokha in October 2000. Sokha's friendship with Marion created opportunities for her that she would not have otherwise had. The two explored their sporty sides with golf, tennis, and basketball. They enjoyed cultural activities such as the theater, watching dance performances, and even going to the circus. They joined other Big and Little Sisters in agency-sponsored match activities such as the annual AdventureSail sailing day and the Wachusett Mountain ski trip; activities that not only broadened Sokha's horizons, but improved her confidence as well. It soon became clear that Marion represented the one thing Sokha had not known in her life: stability.

"I would not be where I am today without Marion," said Sokha. To show her Big Sister just how important she is, Sokha has included Marion in some of the most significant moments in her life. When her friends invited their families to photograph them before their prom, Sokha invited Marion. When Sokha walked across the stage to receive her high school diploma this past June, Marion sat proudly in the audience. Over the summer, Sokha moved into her own apartment, and Marion was there with extra furniture and a helping hand. As Sokha prepares to balance her first year at Northern Essex Community College and a part-time job to pay for school, Marion will be there to support her every step of the way.

The eight years Sokha has been matched with Marion are longer than she has spent with any adult. In that time, Marion's consistent presence has done nothing short of changing Sokha's life. Marion has witnessed a transformation in her Little Sister from a young girl constantly questioning herself to a young woman, poised and dignified despite the adversity she has overcome. As their friendship grows and thrives, so does Sokha, who discovered in her Big Sister something else that had been missing from her life: trust. "I grew up not trusting anyone, but I know I can trust Marion," said Sokha, now 19. "Marion is like the mom I never had."



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