

From the CEO

The Year of Potential

Dear Friends,

As we ushered in 2016, I was reminded of this quote from local, Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Ellen Goodman: "We spend January 1st walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives...not looking for flaws, but for potential." Recognizing potential in all girls, drawing it out, and sustaining it through the critical developmental stage of adolescence has been the core of what we do at Big Sister Boston for the past 65 years.

On a Saturday in January, I participated in our training for women who are in the process of becoming Big Sisters. I've attended the training many times in my 10 years as Chief Executive Officer of our organization, and each time, I am both energized and humbled by the experience; by the commitment these women are making and by their potential to effect real change in our community, one relationship at a time. That Saturday was no different. I joined a diverse group of 23 women who came to learn and to share their own backgrounds, experiences, and opinions. During the training, we watched a video clip from the documentary Miss Representation. In it, a woman cites a study where an equal number of seven year-old boys and girls say that they want to be President of the United States when they grow up. By the time they are 15, there is a notable decline in the number of girls who maintain this career aspiration. During those critical intervening years, girls are actually losing sight of their potential. This is discouraging.

However, I remain encouraged. I am encouraged by the potential I see in each of our Little Sisters: girls like Natalia and D'Vine, whom you will read about in this newsletter.



Little Sister Lillian reveals the molecule she created during an activity at Biogen.

I am encouraged by the guidance, care, and attention that Big Sisters like Luz, Anouska, Gernell, and Karen—whom you will also read about—have given their Little Sisters. I am encouraged by the 23 extraordinary women with whom I shared a day of Big Sister training and the impact they will have as effective mentors.

Most of all, I am encouraged by the support we receive from partners like you who increase the depth and breadth of the services we provide and let girls know they matter. Thank you for helping girls reach their full potential in 2016 and beyond.

With gratitude,





Former Big Sister and current donor, Karen Graves, with Little Sister Brianna.

Donor Spotlight

Behind the Scenes with Karen Graves

In 2004, Wellesley resident Karen Graves was matched with seven year-old Little Sister Brianna who lived in Stoughton. After attending one of our activities on bullying with her Little Sister in 2006, Karen made her first financial contribution to our organization. When Karen and her husband moved out of state three years later, she continued to support Big Sister Boston.

You came to our organization as a Big Sister more than a decade ago, what inspired you to volunteer with us?

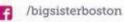
I realized that there are a lot of children who don't get enough attention and guidance and that can limit their ability to grow confidence and self-esteem. I enjoy doing things and teaching others and I wanted more play in my life. Having fun with my Little Sister Brianna while helping her grow was a perfect match for me.

As a Big Sister for five years, what did you learn from the experience?

The gift is to give your time, energy, love, and attention to someone you care about. What I learned is that my time with my Little Sister was a gift to me as well. There were many moments when time didn't exist and we were just having fun, both learning, both just being who we really are. It was really great being a Big Sister;

Continued on page 5

Join the Conversation!





/bigsisterboston





Share your thoughts with us! Email mjuliano@bigsister.org.

Fundraising in Focus

Behind the Scenes at Big in Boston

n Saturday, November 7, nearly 500 Big Sister Boston community members gathered at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston for our annual Big in Boston gala. We took them behind the scenes to discover the many different ways Big Sister Boston is supporting more than 2,700 girls annually through mentoring and enrichment programs.

We celebrated our 2015 Believe in Girls (B.I.G.) honoree, former President & CEO of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, Paul Guzzi, for his contributions to elevating women in Boston's business community. Paul received a surprise live tribute from Martha Acworth, James Rooney, Big Sister Jill Beaudry and her Little Sister Angie, and his own daughter, Diana Guzzi.

Hosted by event chairs James Gallagher, Karen Kaplan, and Regina Pisa, with emcee Lisa Hughes of CBS Boston's WBZ, this year's Big in Boston raised more than \$1 million in support of our mentoring and enrichment programs for girls.

The impact of our work came alive when **Hope**, the mother of Little Sister D'Vine, D'Vine's Big Sister Anouska Bhattacharyya, and Little Sister D'Vine herself spoke. Each woman illustrated the ways in which Big Sister Anouska has bolstered D'Vine's confidence and reinforced her future aspirations for college and a career during the fours years they have been matched: "Anouska makes me feel like I'm amazing, incredible, and one of the most important people in the world. I really feel like I am who I am because of her."

At the end of the program, guests were treated to another surprise: Little Sister Leila, who has been matched with Big Sister Talia Doucette for more than three years, wowed the crowd with her rendition of Rachel Platten's "Fight Song," accompanied by Northeastern University's allfemale a cappella group Pitch, Please.













Go behind the scenes at Big in Boston, thanks to our partners at FleishmanHillard! Visit http://bit.ly/1nxfhYM

View more Big in Boston photos at facebook.com/BigSisterBoston.

Thank you, Big in Boston Sponsors!

















Michele & Howard Kessler

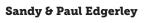
















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PHOTOS: (1) MA State Representatives Russell Holmes, Jeffrey Sanchez, and Smitty Pignatelli showed their belief in Greater Boston's girls with Big Sister Boston CEO, Deborah Re, while (2) Believe In Girls honoree, Paul Guzzi, joined forces with his successor, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce President & CEO James Rooney. (3) Board members Jane Deery (left), Lisa Hughes (who also emceed the event), and David Bruce kicked off the evening in style with Michael Garrity and Holly Bruce. (4) Little Sisters Omariya, Iyana, and Jah Nayah attended the gala with their Big Sisters and became fast friends. (5) Little Sister D'Vine inspired guests along with her mother Hope and her Big Sister Anouska Battacharyya. (6) Event chairs Karen Kaplan, James Gallagher, and Regina Pisa helped raise more than \$1 million in support of our mission. (7) Boston's up and coming philanthropists kicked off our Young Professional Board's After Party, while (8) Young Professional Board member and Assistant to Mayor Walsh, Sam Chambers, was the 'picture' of support with his guest, Tiffany Chan.

Giving Gets Creative

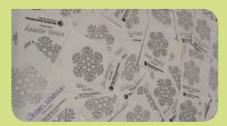
Holiday Helpers

This past holiday season saw no shortage of generosity from the Big Sister Boston community. Our charitable partners gave back in creative ways that all directly benefited our mission of igniting girls' passion and power to succeed. Our annual appeal yielded nearly 200 gifts—each one represented by a paper snowflake (top right)—that culminated in a "blizzard" of support for the girls we serve.

The girls aren't the only ones we serve; family support is also a top priority in our work. Partners like **State Street Corporation's** Quincy office employees (middle), **Biogen**, and **Communispace** "adopted" families again in

2015 to provide holiday cheer in the form of donated, wrapped presents. Through the generosity of several companies, organizations, and individuals we were able to assist 65 families!

Wrapping up the holiday season, nearly 30 members of our community stepped up to give the gift of warmth to more than 70 girls, like Little Sister Aaliyah (bottom), who are waiting to be matched with a Big Sister. Through our annual winter coat drive, these girls not only receive a new winter coat, they also experience the joy of knowing they are already a part of the Big Sister Boston community of care.







Thank you, Winter Coat Donors!

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Celebrating the Season of Sisterhood













(1) Little Sister Navaeh got some help from her Big Sister Avana McCov when they lit up the Prudential Tower purple in honor of Big Sister Boston during our Flip the Switch festivities on December 5. (2) Former Little Sisters, and Alumnae Association members, Tahtyana Ernest and Ashley Fullard got in on the fun at Flip the Switch, too, and enjoyed the (3) Big and Little Sister flash mob dance led by our staff. (4) Big Sister Tara Antonucci and Little Sister Lillian got silly for a selfie at our annual Winter Wonderland celebration at Faneuil Hall on December 6, while (5) Big Sister Veronica Casseus and Little Sister Olivia learned some cool new coding skills compliments of the MIT Media Lab. Meanwhile, our friends from Microsoft hosted an electronic dance off where (6) Little Sisters Kianna, Laila, and Whitney showed off their moves.

Fun Fact:

Gernell's former
Big Sister, Mahawa
Sidibay, is on our
staff as the Highland
Street Americorps
Ambassador of
Mentoring.

Where Are They Now?

Making Mentoring Elementary

In 2007, Dorchester's Trotter Elementary School wanted Big Sisters to mentor their girls. The Trotter's Grove Hall location presented a challenge to women who could not easily get to and from the school. However, Boston Latin Academy (BLA), located a stone's throw from the Trotter, created an opportunity: young women in grades 9-12, enrolled at BLA, could volunteer as Big Sister mentors to the Little Sisters at the Trotter. That year, our High School Mentoring Academy (HSMA) launched to great success.

Two years later, the HSMA had doubled in size and scope. We were supporting 28 Big and Little Sister matches, including Little Sister Gernell. Gernell was a third grader

who generally enjoyed school, but her teacher recognized that she might benefit from the added attention and guidance of an older girl.

Today, we are supporting 52 Big and Little Sister matches through the HSMA, and among them is Gernell, now a Big Sister herself! Gernell is currently in ninth grade at BLA, and was matched at the beginning of the school year with Little Sister Laila. During their time together, Gernell often reflects on her own experience as a Little Sister, a Trotter alumna, and a fellow Dorchester resident. "I feel like I'm helping a girl who can relate to me," said Gernell. The two even discovered that Laila has some of the same teachers who taught Gernell when *she* was a student at the Trotter.

As a Big Sister in the HSMA, Gernell also participates in our Girls' Leadership Project. In this program, employees from Comcast volunteer as mentors to the high school Big Sisters. Comcast staff give Gernell and her fellow Big Sisters support and guidance on college applications, building leadership skills, and setting goals. In five years, Gernell sees herself in college (she's eyeing New York City), preparing for a career, and voting! For now, she is focused on her academic success and supporting Little Sister Laila's success through a positive mentoring relationship.

Sister Spotlight

Mirror Image





Left: Little Sister Natalia and Big Sister Luz marched with Big Sister Boston in the Dorchester Day Parade to raise awareness and redcruit more Dorchester women to become Big Sisters. Right: Little Sister Natalia and Big Sister Luz donned their matching "Big" and "Little" hoodies at our Winter Wonderland celebration.

said Big Sister Luz Villar. Luz, 24, and Natalia, 16, say they are often mistaken for biological sisters. They share similarities such as living in Dorchester, identifying as both Puerto Rican and Dominican, and a penchant for dressing alike, especially when attending Big Sister Boston-sponsored events like our annual Appreciation Breakfast. But, their connection goes far deeper than the matching outfits they relish combing the racks for at Goodwill.

Like her Little Sister, Luz grew up in a household led by a single mother. Luz was the eldest child and her family moved around the Boston area often, making it difficult for Luz to consistently attend any one school. In high school, Luz enrolled in a vocational school, knowing that she could remain there even if her family moved again.

She excelled academically and went on to attend architectural college. When financial challenges forced her to leave college, she found a job at State Street Corporation. She then enrolled in Cambridge College where she will earn her bachelor's degree in Business Management this spring. Luz still felt there was something missing, and it was at an information session hosted by State Street that she first heard about Big Sister Boston and knew she wanted to get involved. "I wanted to do something meaningful with my free time," said Luz.

After interviewing Luz, our enrollment and matching team knew that she would be a great fit with Little Sister Natalia. In February of 2014, the two were matched. Natalia admitted she kept to herself at first, but Luz's efforts to get to know Natalia at her own pace paid off. Natalia soon became

comfortable with her new Big Sister and began share more of her thoughts and feelings. A few months later, the two were chatting about what they would wear to their first Big Sister Appreciation Breakfast, and Little Sister Natalia stated firmly: "We should 'twin it." It was then that a tradition was born and the Sisters soon became known for their matching outfits at our events. During the breakfast they met other Big and Little Sister matches who had been together for five and ten years and they both knew then that they wanted that kind of longevity, too.

Luz and Natalia's conversations range from the silly to the serious. "If I'm bringing myself down, Luz will bring me back up,' said Natalia. "When I hang with my friends, we don't talk like I talk with Luz. My mom and I are close, but when I talk with Luz it's different. I'm a like a grown woman with her." Over a plate of homemade french fries they have concocted together (their favorite food), Luz and Natalia might joke around, plan their next adventure, or talk about their big plans for the future. Before being matched with Luz, Natalia had no plans to go to college. "I didn't think I needed it," she said. "Luz opened my eyes to the world." After graduating from middle school—where Luz cheered loudly for her Little Sister – Natalia was accepted to Snowden International School, an academically rigorous school in the Boston Public School system. Now in her sophomore year, Natalia is determined to go to college and wants to become a counselor for teenagers. She draws the inspiration to achieve her goals from her Big Sister. Despite challenges along the way, Luz will graduate from college in a few months and Natalia will be there to cheer loudly when Luz receives her diploma. "I see Luz, and that's my future," said Natalia.

Behind the Scenes with Karen Graves CONTINUED FROM COVER

it was challenging sometimes, but we both grew through it all.

You have also been a donor to our organization for 10 years, what motivated you to give financially?

Our first financial donation to Big Sister Boston was inspired by an afternoon program the organization facilitated for Big and Little Sisters. It was about dangerous situations and bullying: how to recognize it and how to tell adults about it. Not long after attending, my Little Sister told me about a bullying situation that happened at school, and how she and another student talked to

the playground monitor about it. That workshop helped her to replace her fear of speaking up with appropriate action. This was an excellent example of how Big Sister Boston's programs really work and I wanted to provide support for continuing programs for other girls.

You continue to support our work even though you are no longer in the Boston area. Why do you feel it is important?

It comes back to the gift. My experience as a Big Sister was possible because someone before me made a gift to the organization in support of mentoring relationships. I would love for many more girls to have a Big Sister. And I would love formany more women to experience the gift of being a Big Sister.

If you could give one piece of advice to your adolescent self, what would it be?

The good news is that with a little care, you can keep growing throughout your life (and you don't have to do it all now!). The best lessons come from failure sometimes, so just try to figure out what the lesson is. You'll be alright.

What do you most want people to know about Big Sister Boston?

Big Sister Boston is an amazingly well run organization that is growing and thriving, just like the girls it serves.

The following individuals, corporations, and foundations made gifts Match Maker Club of \$100 or more to Big Sister Association of Greater Boston between July 1, 2015-December 31, 2015. Thank you for your generous support!

Corporations, Foundations, & Organizations

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The following Big and Little Sisters celebrated anniversaries between July 1, 2015 – December 31, 2015. Congratulations to all on your lasting friendships!

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4 Years

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Meredith Johnson & Tahanee Katie Johnston & Joaniris Sharon Jones & Shadaimey Nancy Mahoney & Mary Hilary Matthews & Lexi-Skye Katie McDonough & Leilah Emily Medford & Leanne Tess Miller & Lesley Angelia Tan & Asheyla Erin Taylor & Nyesha

Valerie Tracy & Briana

Camille Vasquez & Wendi-Lynn Caitlin Very & Weedlyn Kaela Vronsky & Leilani Rachel Weidenfeld & Garshae Stacy-Ann Wint & Nia

Megan Barry & Jazzmyn

Lindsay Barton & Joanna

3 Years Lillian Marie Albin & Gleyris

Tiffany Benjamin & Javoni Ilana Bergelson & Janelyn Mary Bogan & Emely Morgan Bradford & Ny'Aija Niyati Butala & Yojannalis Christelle Celestin & Nychele Amelia Childs & Jerika Deirdre Collins & Sophia Amber Connors & Jailyn Faith Cummings & Katrina Sarah Dailey & Kellyanne Katelyn David & Amelia Jenna Donovan & Leslye Hazel Egan & Alexis Kristen Elwell & Makayla Kristine Encio & Rishay Kaitlyn Fallon & Tyler Becca Fishkin & Thao Claire Fitzgerald & Destani Caryn Fitzpatrick & Cheyenne Perla Garcia & Beyonce Lauren Hall & Courtney Erin Harris & Ximaya Virginia Heinen & Idalise Stephanie Hu & Vicky Margo Hudson & Fiordaliza Alena Johnson & Makavla Erica Johnson & Hannah Alexis Jungdahl & Anaisha Lisa Karcich & Jedilis Leslie Keebler & Jennifer Marjorie Keyser & Arijeta Emily Leopold & Jennifer Alexandra Lundsted & Shakia Mary MacDonald & Jaelyn ah Magid & Kame Abigail Miller & Mykayla Robin Mirollo & Tiana Erica Motyl & Taylor Keneisha Murphy & Mariliz Emma Nowicki & Carmen Lydia Orr & Camilla Sorbarikor Piawah & Valeria Emily Powers & Jaylaine Linda Rockett & Tasia Arlene Rosenberg & Tajhe Christine Sample & Carlee Mary Sullivan & Danielle Elaine Tocci & Sary Marisa Tucker & Niamya Jessica Turner & Vivian Laura Tyrrell & Hannah Jimena Vallejo & Yulissa

Erica Warner & Justice Britney Wilson & Kendra Katie Wong & Sara Christine Zoldos & Leana

2 Years Lyzz Almeida & Ashley Meaghan Annett & Kela Maria Battaglia & Joanna Jillian Beaudry & Ángelina Deanne Benevento & Anayia Amanda Beusse & Adamaris Natasha Blazer & Fiameta Ashley Braga & Mandy Ceantel Brathwaite & Anastasia Sarah Brueno & Amurah Brooke Burke & Alyssa Lisa Burzdak & Juliana Darian Butcher & Nayeli Andrea Caldwell Foley & Lidiany Caitlin Callaway & Shaunice Sherry Catlin & Neilysmarie Mariam Chahine & Ashley Sianay Chase & Kaylah Marie Meredith Cooney & Takaii Jacqueline Corcoran & Alison Kathi Crow & Amaia Melissa Dagher & Jasmine Lise Courtney D'Amico & Coralie JoAnne Drake & Roselenny Marcia Eisner & Jahniah Michela Fahey & Loyalty Barbara Goodman & Tianna Rachel Gover & Tylah Maura Greene & Ayanah Nikki Gregorio & Brooklynn Caroline Guilfoyle & Zahyira Patricia Hao & Seyra Ashley Hasling & Jazmine Caleigh Holden & Allyssa Beth Irungu & Jahdai Katie Jerdee & Kayla Jill Kaehler & Caitlin Amy Kaye & Sarina Caroline Keeler & Montana Amy Kennicutt & Stephany Manika Kosaraju & Kowsar Jessica Lack & Selena Jessica Lack & Selena Katrina Langer & Areana Ellen Lau & Keyomi Arreanna Lerner & Sylvia Erin Lordan & Maram Amanda Louie & Lyzza Mackenzie Loy, & Leiosha Thanh Luc & Khiara Jean MacFarland & Mia Hannah MacKay & Amiya Rebecca MacLean & Eleanor Vidya Mantrala & Jamyah Kate Marienthal & Dayanara

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1 Year

Margie Zohn & Sophia

Rakia Achab & Dorlie

Theresa Adams & Stacy Itunu Adegboye & Desiree Zulfiya Akbarova & Jadrianis Maria Albano & Janell Katrina Allen & Thalisha Lindsay Allen & Jahnae Lindsay Allen & Kadian Robyn Allison & Brayla Kene Aniagboso & Ahsyra Emilie Artru & Suyen Teresa Atkinson & Miranda Charlotte Baillieul & Nicole Brooke Bartlett & Yazmeen Leann Beard & Nia Jessica Becker & Jayliss Kireina Bell & Ysmell Danielle Bellantonio & Amara Amanda Bernardo & Anais

Kelsey Bishop & Daphney

Tara Bjorklund & Chanaya

Rachael Bonawitz & Miyah

Jill Bongiorni & Kadie Rosalind Boucher-James & Zaniah Heather Brack & Kyara Natalie Brady & Mercedes Jesse Brennan & Melanie Shana Burstyn & Shadyah Kiara Cabreja & Jazmin Eileen Cain & Lilu Michele Canero-Conklin & Violet Bryanna Caron & Amarreona Ashley Castillo & Mariela Toby Chaiken & Heather Kecia Chambers & Johana Helen Chan & Leer Kelly Cocco & Camilla Grace Cohen-Pratt & Chanel Alana Cooper & Victoria Emily Corwin & Pamela Shawna Costello & Nayelys Alexa Coulombe & Carrie Anastasia Coutlis & Nisrine Caitlin Crawford & Hillary Meghan Curran & Anessa Josie Cutts & Heidy Amy Czarnecki & Omar<u>i</u>ya Lana Daniels & Yessenia Mary Darby & Jaelyn Ashley Daugherty & Francesca Morgan Daugherty & Matilda Gabriela DeLeon & Madelyn Isabella DeMelo & Dazayia Diana Deming & Tirhas Erika DeRoche & Zariyah Bindiya Devi Singh & Naomi Nevin Dizdari & Sa'Riyah Helen Doyle & Kaitlyn Danielle Drayton & Brianna Jose Drouillard & Heaven Lariah Edwards & Shayna Mary Estes & Jaylinecce Dana Etra & Jerica Lindsay Flood & Faith Audrey Frederick & Khira Madison Friedman & Audrey Megan Gaffney & Lizbeth April Garcia & Jah'nye Bethany Gill & Olivia

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Be a trendsetter by supporting girls!

Thursday, March 10, 2016 6:00 - 9:00 pm

State Room, 60 State Street, 33rd Floor, Boston

For event details and ticket sales visit www.bigsister.org or call 617.236.5304.

Sip and sovor cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, snap up fabulous packages in the silent and live auctions, get a sneak peek at the latest designer fashions from the shops at The Street and evening wear from Michael DePaulo, and do it all in support of Big Sister Boston's mentoring and enrichment programs for girls.



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