



FALL NEWS FALL

 **Big Brothers Big Sisters.**
OF ORANGE COUNTY & THE INLAND EMPIRE

PARENT NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2023

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A MESSAGE FROM THE BBBS TEAM



We are thrilled to welcome you to the most wonderful time of the year with open hearts and endless support. The Big Brothers Big Sisters family is all about joy and togetherness, and there's no better time to celebrate these values than during this season of reflection and gratitude.

In this issue of our Parent Newsletter, we have gathered some of the special moments we have shared with you all this past quarter, exciting holiday possibilities, and important information for your family's well-being. As the year comes to a close, we wish that you take a moment to reflect on all the growth and accomplishments we've experienced together

Thank you for being part of our BBBS family. Wishing you a season filled with love, happiness, and cherished memories. May the new year bring even more opportunities for growth and togetherness.

The Big Brothers
Big Sisters Team



**Big Brothers
Big Sisters®**

OF ORANGE COUNTY
& THE INLAND EMPIRE

We want to hear from you!

Have a question, suggestion or feedback
for Big Brothers Big Sisters?

[CLICK HERE TO CONTACT US](#)

or call 714.544.7773

To stay up on the latest news and updates for parents and guardians, visit ocbigs.org/parent-news

UPCOMING BBBS EVENTS



Cyber Safety: Protecting Our Youth Online

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Saturday, November 18, 2023 | 10 AM - 11:30 AM | BBBS Office

1801 E Edinger Ave, Santa Ana, CA 92705

FOR BBBS PARENTS & GUARDIANS

Join us as our partners from Laura's House address the present dangers of the online world and share tools you can implement to protect your kids. Topics we will cover include:

- How to utilize privacy settings to promote child personal safety online
- Social media and how it impacts the way we perceive the world
- Recognizing predatory behaviors like grooming and catfishing



FOR BBBS FAMILIES ONLY

Annual Holiday Gift Drive

[CLICK HERE TO NOMINATE A CHILD](#)

As the holiday season draws near, we are excited to spread some warmth and cheer! Children who are currently enrolled in a BBBS program—and their immediate siblings (18 years and younger) living in the same household—are invited to be a part of our annual Big Brothers Big Sisters Holiday Gift Drive. We believe every child deserves to experience the magic of the holidays, and this is our way of making it happen!

Our gift drive is made possible by the generosity of community members who care deeply about the children in our program. **Please note that we have limited spots available**, and gift sponsors are not guaranteed*. Act quickly to secure a spot for your child!

** Although we aim to have every child sponsored, the people who donate are regular individuals, and we unfortunately cannot guarantee every child will be matched with a sponsor.*

BBBS EVENT SPOTLIGHT

FIRST-EVER BBBS MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT WAS A SUCCESS!

Thank you to the 120 Bigs, Littles and family members who attended the Big Brothers Big Sisters Mental Health Summit in September centered around our theme: *Coming Together & Moving Forward*.

During our breakout sessions, parents, mentors and youth all received the information and tools to empower them to become strong advocates for mental health. We also hosted a resource fair where attendees explored various community and mental health services provided by BBBS partners, such as CalOptima, Be Well OC, DiDi Hirsch Mental Health Services and more. Lastly, everyone was entered into a raffle, and a few lucky families claimed some amazing prizes, such as movie tickets, bicycles, toys, and even tickets to Knotts and Disneyland!



OF THOSE IN ATTENDANCE:

- 78% of youth felt improvement in understanding their stress levels after the summit
- 97% of families feel better prepared after the summit to discuss mental health topics with their children
- 94% of families plan to continue talking to their children about mental health and well-being

"My daughters enjoyed their sessions as well. I was told they didn't want to go, but afterwards they told me thank you for making them go. My oldest daughter asked me to read the packet with her that was provided to her from her class. The both of us read through that at home." — Amber, mother of BBBS Little

"I learned that it's important to have an open mind about mental health. It's not not always like you can just get rid of depression or anxiety that quickly. It's good to have resources to lean on." — Little Brother Diego (16)

We dreamt up this united, educational opportunity for parents, mentors and mentees in huge part due to suggestions from parents like you. **Thank you** for helping make our first Mental Health Summit a resounding success, and we are already looking forward to hosting another full day of mental health education and resources for our BBBS family in early 2025!

In the meantime, our Family Engagement Department will be hosting quarterly training sessions every year to share important information with parents and guardians in all our programs. Trainings will be announced in the Parent Newsletter and text messages—so keep reading! If you have questions about educational opportunities for BBBS families, please contact Jessica González at (714) 619-7008.

FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAM PARENTS

MEET OUR NEW MATCH SUPPORT SPECIALISTS

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We appreciate your support and understanding as we welcomed *three* new and incredibly eager Match Support Specialists this quarter. If you have not had the pleasure already, I am so excited for you all to meet Esperanza, Bianca and Jonathan. To get to know them better, we thought it would be fun to do a little Q&A!

These three passionate individuals—along with the entire Match Support team—stand ready to collaborate with your child's mentoring match and provide guidance and support to your family.

Katie Esparza

Match Engagement & Enrichment Manager

kesparza@ocbig.org



Q&A WITH ESPERANZA, BIANCA AND JONATHAN



(Left to right) Welcome Esperanza, Bianca and Jonathan to the Match Support team!

What is your favorite holiday memory?

Esperanza: My favorite holiday memories are being with my family and gathering together for dinner.

Bianca: My favorite holiday memory is from when I was 9 years old. That year I got more presents than my grandma and she was not happy about it. It became an ongoing joke every year after.

Jonathan: When I spent Christmas in Mexico City one year and got to partake in all the local traditions.

What do you enjoy most about your job, and how do you show up to work with our families?

Esperanza: I would describe my approach as friendly. I really enjoy connecting with our families and Bigs and hearing about their experiences together. I like to find what I have in common with someone and reassure them that we're in this together.

Bianca: I approach working with BBBS families with humility and an open mind, and I enjoy getting to hear about the growing connection and trust the matches and their families have for one another.

Jonathan: It is nice to see two individuals from different walks of life connecting and sharing perspectives and different worldviews. I would say that I approach everyone with openness and understanding.

FOR HIGH SCHOOL BIGS PARENTS

A MESSAGE FROM THE BBBS HIGH SCHOOL BIGS TEAM

High School Bigs is a peer-to-peer mentoring program that connects your child with a high school student (Big) who serves as their friend and role model. Your child and their Big will meet once a week after school at the elementary school. During this session, facilitated by a Big Brothers Big Sisters Program Specialist, matches will spend time working on academics, building social and personal skills, and developing a friendship.

Our Program Specialists kicked off the school year by contacting all our High School Big parents to share more details about the program, your child's Big, and your site's session schedule. Throughout the year, we highly encourage our parents to stay engaged by asking your student about their experience in the High School Bigs program. Your involvement plays a significant role in the success of this mentorship journey.

On behalf of Big Brothers Big Sisters, thank you for your trust in allowing us to be a part of your child's personal and academic journey. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out to your Program Specialist!



PERSONAL SAFETY RULES

At BBBS, safety is our number one priority. Here are some of the site rules your child must follow:

- **Respectful Behavior:** Students are expected to show respect to their Bigs, peers, Program Specialist, and the material at all times.
- **No Exchange of Contact Info:** For the safety of all participants, students are strictly prohibited from exchanging personal contact info with their Big, such as phone numbers or social media profiles.
- Additionally, **meeting outside of the supervised mentoring sessions is NOT permitted.**

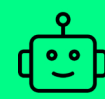


PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Throughout the year, your child and their Big will work on a Youth Outcome Development Plan (YODP) to help achieve their goals.

Our proven curriculum includes activities that focus on:

- Increasing confidence
- Building social skills
- Learning self-regulation
- Future planning and exploration
- Creating stronger relationships



ACTIVITIES

Each week, your child and their Big will work on academics and participate in SEL activities, such as:

- **Trembler Maker:** Led by Dreams for Schools, students will create a moving box using motors and circuits to learn about electrical engineering
- **College Quest Game:** Students will explore different colleges and careers through a fun board game
- **Outdoor Play:** Matches will spend 1:1 time playing sports and games
- **Tree of Gratitude:** Students will work collaboratively to create a thankful tree

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHTS

College Bigs and Workplace Mentoring—at the heart of these programs is the belief that mentorship has the power to transform lives, unlock potential, and shape future leaders. This dynamic trio of programs for young adults focuses on college, career and leadership development. During monthly group sessions facilitated by Big Brothers Big Sisters, adult mentors provide guidance and support to high school and college students to set them on a path towards success and empowerment.



COLLEGE BIGS

- » **Mentor (Big):** College student
- » **Mentee (Little):** High school student
- » **Benefits:** College Bigs is all about opening doors and fostering growth. By connecting with a peer mentor from a similar background, mentees not only enhance their social capital, but also strengthen their college and career readiness to help bridge the gap between high school and college.

CONTACT US

Learn more at ocbigs.org/collegebigs



WORKPLACE MENTORING

- » **Mentor (Big):** Corporate employee
- » **Mentee (Little):** High school student
- » **Benefits:** Students gain real-life exposure to major corporations and 1:1 time with corporate mentors. This program is an excellent opportunity to explore career possibilities, identify academic pathways, and build social capital with accomplished professionals from OC's top businesses.

CONTACT US

Learn more at ocbigs.org/workplace



POSTSECONDARY WORKPLACE MENTORING

- » **Mentor (Big):** Corporate employee
- » **Mentee (Little):** College student
- » **Benefits:** College students are given the tools, guidance, and the mentor they need to excel in their career exploration and journey. During group mentoring sessions, students are able to cultivate vital connections with esteemed professionals who help them prepare to enter the workforce.

CONTACT US

Learn more at ocbigs.org/postsecondarywpm

COMMUNITY RESOURCES



Full-Scope Medi-Cal begins January 2024

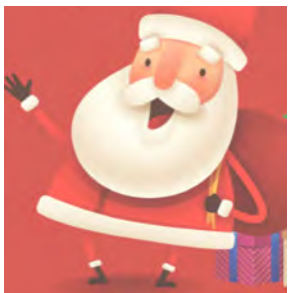
California recognizes that undocumented people work hard and deserve health care. That's why starting in January, full-scope Medi-Cal will be available to ALL Californians with low income, regardless of age or immigration status. Medi-Cal offers preventive health care, annual check-ups, dental and vision care, specialist referrals, prescription drugs, mental health care, substance abuse services, emergency transportation and care, long-term care, hearing aids and more! To get connected to local agencies with real-time updates about this new initiative, please contact BBBS Family Resource Specialist Cassandra Chavira at (714) 426-5620.



Thanksgiving Food Drive

Presented by Families Forward

Each year, Families Forward holds a Thanksgiving-themed grocery distribution for OC families in need. The weekend before Thanksgiving, families come to their program center to receive all of the traditional Thanksgiving fixings to cook a warm, delicious holiday meal. Due to limited availability, families will be entered into a lottery system. To enter, please contact Families Forward at (949) 552-2727 Mon-Thu 9 AM to 5 PM, Fri 9 AM to 1 PM.



Christmas Together Festival and Toy Giveaway

Presented by Families Together of Orange County

Christmas Together is a festive celebration featuring carnival rides, games, raffles, entertainment, photos with Santa, holiday meals, and complimentary food for all! To ensure your spot at this year's festivities, we recommend early registration, as quantities are limited. Participants must be Orange County residents (bring proof of address on the event day!)

Date & Time: Sunday, December 10

Location: Anaheim Convention Center, 800 W Katella Ave, Anaheim, CA 92802

[Click here to RSVP](#)



SHOP THE CLEMENTINE MOBILE FOOD TROLLEY AT BBBS

Get your fresh fruits and vegetables at Clementine, the mobile food trolley! Set up in the Big Brothers Big Sisters parking lot, free groceries and supplies for eligible OC families* as available. Advanced sign up is required.

November 8

[SIGN UP AT OCBIGS.ORG/FOOD-TROLLEY](https://ocbigs.org/food-trolley)

* Must be a resident of Orange County with school-aged child(ren) in the home



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