



FINE LINE

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

PARENT NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2024

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A MESSAGE FROM THE BBBS TEAM

As the new school year approaches, it brings with it new beginnings and fresh opportunities for growth. At Big Brothers Big Sisters, we're here to support you through these changes, ensuring that your child is set up for success both in and out of the classroom. We're not just focused on supporting your child's mentoring relationship—we're dedicated to nurturing every aspect of their growth and your family's well-being.

Life happens, and we understand that circumstances can change unexpectedly. Whether it's securing mental health services, managing financial difficulties, or navigating changes in family dynamics, our team is here to stand by you. You don't have to face these challenges alone.

If your family needs a little extra support to get you through one of life's unexpected seasons, give us a call at (714) 544-7773 or reach out to your assigned program staff member; they can connect you with the best specialist and resources for your individual needs.

In our Parent Newsletter, you'll find important information about the services we offer, along with success stories that highlight the impact of our wraparound support. We encourage you to reach out, share your thoughts, and work with us as we continue to build a strong foundation for your child's future.



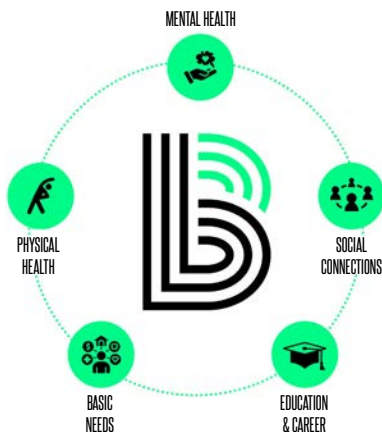
Jessica González

Director of Youth & Family Impact

jgonzalez@ocbigs.org

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

WRAPAROUND SUPPORT SERVICES BY THE NUMBERS: ASKING FOR HELP IS A SIGN OF STRENGTH



1,550

youth served by our BBBS Support Services team in the past 3 years

496

families connected to community partners through BBBS referrals

66%

of support requests come from families in urgent crisis

When families ask for help, they receive the essential support they need. We encourage you to reach out whenever challenges arise—we're here to ensure that your child has the resources they need to thrive.



A MESSAGE FROM THE BBBS TEAM

FAMILY RESOURCE TEAM

Navigating the abundance of community resources and services in Orange County can be overwhelming for families—especially in times of urgent need. As part of our BBBS family, you have access to our **Family Resource Team** who streamlines this process by serving as a direct link to community partners and resources.

Our Family Resource Specialists work in tandem with your Match Support Specialist to help families with:

- Mental health concerns
- Accessing food assistance programs
- Managing financial challenges
- Seeking parenting resources
- Finding opportunities for extracurricular activities
- and so much more!

COLLEGE & CAREER RESOURCE TEAM

Our BBBS **College and Career Resource Specialist** provides individualized support for high school and college students in our mentoring programs.

- 1:1 appointments
- Scholarship research and college application support
- Career exploration and planning
- Resume and interview coaching
- College prep workshops and career planning events
- and so much more!



When Amy's family faced financial and emotional stress due to a sudden change to their family structure, she turned to our BBBS Family Resource Team.

After connecting her to no-cost resources to address her child's developmental concerns, we were able to provide Amy's family with urgent food and legal assistance through our partnerships with ProjectFoodBox and the Melinda Hoag Smith Center's Public Law Center.

With this wraparound support, Amy was able to quickly stabilize their situation—allowing her and her children to confidently move forward into this new chapter of their lives.



When Julia, a high school senior, needed to step up to help support her family while also pursuing her education, she turned to our BBBS College and Career Specialist, Christina. With Christina's help in resume coaching and interview prep, Julia secured her first job! Now, she's heading to Santa Ana College full-time, working part-time, and pursuing her dream of a career in physical therapy.



YOU CAN COUNT ON US!

Give us a call at (714) 544-7773 to get connected to any of our wraparound services

UPCOMING BBBS EVENTS



FOR BBBS YOUTH



Strengthening Our Ties

How to support yourself, or a loved one, and reduce the risk of suicide

In partnership with MECCA, this empowering workshop will equip your child with practical tools to:

- Understand mental health stigma and break the silence around suicide
- Recognize warning signs and risk factors
- Learn life-saving skills to support peers in crisis
- Discover local resources and helplines

[CLICK HERE TO RSVP FOR YOUR CHILD](#)

NOTE: Registration for a complementary training session for parents on how to identify and support someone struggling with suicidal ideation will be available in September. Please keep an eye out for a text message or further communication from your Program Team with more details!

FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAM PARENTS

MEET KENNY | MENTOR SUCCESS MANAGER



If your child has ever come home from a BBBS match event smiling from ear to ear, you have Kenny Torres to thank!

In the 16 years she has worked here at BBBS, Kenny has supported Bigs and Littles in a variety of roles, from volunteer enrollment to match support. Today, she is thriving as our Mentor Success Manager focused on organizing match events, coordinating Bigs trainings and appreciation initiatives, and securing community partnerships.

This role is especially important to Kenny as she is a former Big Sister herself and is extremely passionate about our mission.

"My goal is to ensure our mentors feel supported and valued, enhancing their experience and, ultimately, their Littles' success in our program!" — Kenny Torres

Check out the recap below to read about a recent match event Kenny hosted for more than 120 grateful Bigs and Littles.

BOOMERS MATCH EVENT

On July 13, we hosted our biggest match event in more than four years at Boomers Irvine. More than 60 matches spent the afternoon together enjoying bumper boats, go karts, mini golf, laser tag and pizza!



"I'd like to thank the BBBS program for providing various additional activities to its members this year. Elizabeth and I had a lot of fun at Boomers!"
— Big Sister Cristina



"My favorite was laser tag. Even though my team lost, it was so much fun to play with my Big Brother."
— Little Brother Jacob (8)

"My favorite ride was the roller coaster! I was nervous, but another Little got on with me, and I had a lot of fun. Thanks BBBS, I'm excited for next year!"
— Little Brother Emiliano (8)



"Thank you for a wonderful event at Boomers! My Little, Paris, and I had a great time. She loved the Flamethrower and I loved laser tag! We appreciate all the time and energy your team took to put together a great event! It was also nice to see Jonathan, my Match Specialist, there too!"
— Big Sister Cathy

FOR HIGH SCHOOL BIGS PARENTS

Dear Parents and Guardians,

I hope you've had a wonderful and safe summer! We're excited to kick off our High School Bigs Program this fall and continue fostering positive relationships through mentorship and providing valuable experiences for our Bigs and Littles.

Your Program Specialist will be reaching out to you soon to provide program updates and to share your child's official start date. As we prepare for the upcoming site sessions, here are a few important reminders to ensure a successful and impactful year:

- **Attendance:** Consistent, weekly attendance is key to your child getting the most out of their mentorship experience.
- **Communication:** Stay in regular contact with your Program Specialist, especially if your child will be absent or needs additional support. Write down or save their name/number in your phone for easy access.
- **Support:** We care about your family's well-being. If you need essential support resources or assistance (See page 2) please don't hesitate to reach out to your Program Specialist, who can connect you with our Family Resource Team.

Thank you for trusting us to support your child's growth. We remain committed to their safety, development, and wellness. Please reach out with any questions—we look forward to another great year!



Nadia Sanchez

Site-Based Program Manager

nsanchez@ocbigs.org

EVENT SPOTLIGHT | HIGH SCHOOL BIGS SUMMER CELEBRATION

On July 12, we spent a fantastic day at the Santa Ana Zoo filled with fun and laughter for more than 430 Bigs and Littles! We were delighted to see matches reconnect after two months apart to create new memories together. ABC 7 News even showed up to shine a spotlight on this inspiring day of mentorship!

WATCH US ON ABC 7 NEWS

Thank you to all the families who made it possible for their children to join us for this special event over summer break.



FOR WORKPLACE MENTORING PARENTS

Welcome Back, Students, Parents and Guardians!

Your Workplace Mentoring team at Big Brothers Big Sisters is excited to kick off another incredible year of workforce development programs! This year, we are proud to celebrate Year Three of our collaboration with Banc of California and Tustin High School, and Year Two of our growing partnership with Visit Anaheim and Katella High School. These programs have empowered students to gain invaluable real-world experiences, build confidence, and develop skills essential for their future success. We can't wait to see these positive results continue to unfold.

We've also strengthened our Postsecondary Workplace Mentoring Program to deepen their impact even further. By extending our program duration to seven months, our college students will now have more time to forge meaningful relationships with their corporate mentors and hone the critical skills needed for workforce readiness. We're also introducing a group mentoring format to several of our cohorts, helping students expand their networks and gain broader perspectives.

We are energized and ready for another amazing year of empowering the next generation of leaders. Thank you for being part of this exciting journey—we can't wait to see what your mentee will achieve!

-Your Workplace Mentoring Team

EVENT SPOTLIGHT | BRIGHT FUTURES GRADUATION

In June, we hosted our annual Bright Futures Brunch at the Disneyland Hotel to celebrate our Class of 2024 mentees and the village of support that empowers their potential. The event was extra magical as for the first time, we invited a Workplace Mentoring cohort to celebrate alongside our Community Program matches.

For the last three years, Disneyland Resort cast members have served as mentors to Katella High School students, providing support for their academic, professional, and personal development while forging lifelong connections. Congrats to the Class of 2024!

[WATCH EVENT VIDEO](#)



COMMUNITY RESOURCES



Fiestas Patrias

This vibrant event honors the independence of various Latin American countries while celebrating the diverse cultures within our community. The festival is free, family-friendly, and open to all. Festivities include a street fair and local vendors, live music and entertainment, delicious food, carnival rides, cultural exhibitors and more!

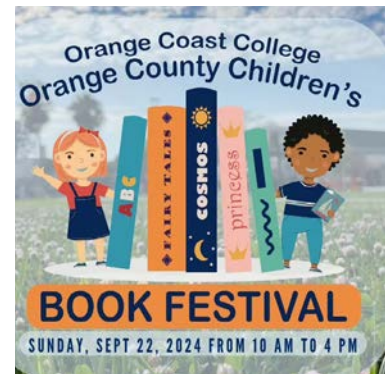
Date & Time: September 14 & September 15 beginning at 12 PM
Location: Downtown Santa Ana

To learn more, visit santa-ana.org/fiestas-patrias.

OC Children's Book Festival

Don't miss out on this fantastic day of fun and learning with your family! This free festival draws over 30,000 visitors and offers a day of entertainment and delight, featuring: authors and illustrators, booksellers and storytellers, animals and costumed characters, train rides and crafts, food, entertainment, and much more! Parking is free.

Date & Time: September 22 | 10 AM - 4 PM
Location: Orange Coast College (2701 Fairview Rd, Costa Mesa, CA 92626)



To learn more, visit kidsbookfestival.com.



Anaheim Fall Festival & Halloween Parade

Join one of the most iconic events in Anaheim! Since 1923, the Anaheim Fall Festival and Halloween Parade has been a cherished tradition, featuring parades, costumes, and vintage floats that bring the spirit of Halloween to life. This family-friendly event is a celebration of community and history you won't want to miss.

Date & Time: Saturday, October 26 | 11 AM - 5 PM (Festival); 7 PM (Parade)
Location: Downtown Anaheim along Center Street

To learn more, visit visitanaheimfallfestival.org.



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.

September 11

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

Registration form opens September 4

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



Big Brothers Big Sisters®

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& THE INLAND EMPIRE



1801 E. Edinger, Suite 101 · Santa Ana, CA 92705



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