



Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mid-Florida

Newsletter

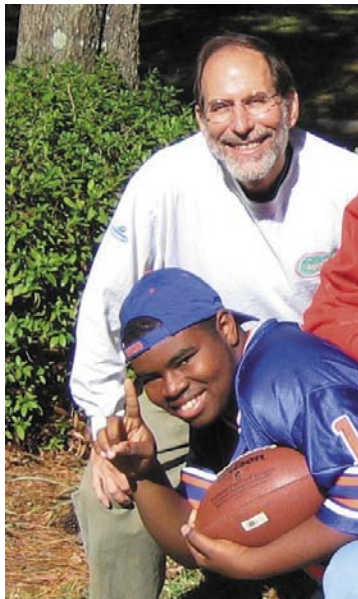


September/October 2011



CELEBRATING A DECADE OF FRIENDSHIP Congratulations ERIC & ROD!!!

Eric & Rod celebrate 10 years of friendship. To many of the youth we serve, 10 years is a lifetime. But to one match at Big Brothers Big Sisters, it is the beginning of a lifetime. It's been ten years since Eric and Rod met for the first time. Rod was seven years old when matched with his Big Brother Eric. Rod is now seventeen and his relationship with his Big is still going strong. Throughout the years Eric has witnessed Rod grow both physically and emotionally. From being shy around strangers and his answers being one word at most. Eric stated proudly that Rod has developed confidence, and a great speaking voice. Eric has helped him apply for jobs, has taught him how to drive, to cook and together they have attended UF football and



basketball games. Now, at 17, Eric says that Rod is bigger than him. "I like it that he doesn't hurt me when we play touch football and he's always willing to get together. He adds, "I really liked to see the energy and joy he exhibits when we do things that he has always wanted to do but was never able to do". Eric has been a part of many milestones in Rod's life and is always there to encourage him to stay in school, play sports, and think about the future. He is both wonderful and a blessing." Rod's mother, Linda has stated that she couldn't ask for a better Big Brother.

We are proud to celebrate Eric and Rod and all the matches celebrating their anniversary this month.

Volunteering just a few hours a month with a child can start something amazing. So why not apply to be a Big today. There are kids out there ready to get started. Are you?

Welcome Aboard



BBBS would like to welcome our
New Staff Members
Enrollment Specialist,
Radhika Jotshi
CBM Specialist,
Yasmin Khan
BISS Specialist,
Ashlyn Bickwermert
Lauren McCarthy
Brooklyn Milner

VOLUNTEER TRAINING Alachua County

Wednesday, October 19th, 4:00 pm

@BBBS Office,

1155 Nw 13th Street, Gainesville

sign-up for training at <http://tinyurl.com/3lztwks>

or call 352-375-2525 X10



To send donations, please visit www.bbbsmidflorida.org.
You may also contact Mr. John Bonacci, john@bbbsmidflorida.org,
or call us at (352) 375-2525.



Match Spotlight: Natalia & Zeimyra

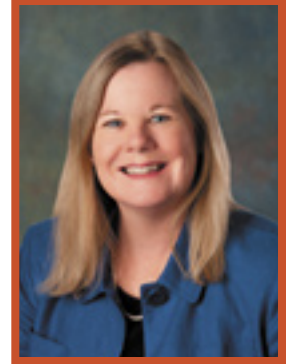


Natalia and Zeimyra have been matched with Big Brothers Big Sisters since August of 2010. For little over a year Natalia and Zeimyra have been spending time together, getting to know each other, and growing as people. Natalia had nothing but good things to say about her little, Zeimyra. "She's GREAT," Natalia exclaimed when asked about her little. One of Natalia's

favorite memories of spending time with her little was during her trip to a trail in Gainesville. Natalia had brought her camera and Zeimyra just had a blast taking pictures and posing. She also had great things to say about Zeimyra's mother who she described as "AMAZING," she is always there for her daughter. Zeimyra's mother, Yaravi, feels just as great about Natalia. "I love her to death," Yaravi stated. Natalia couldn't be happier about her match. Natalia initially joined Big Brothers Big Sisters with hopes of making an impact on someone's life and that's exactly what happened, except at times her little was not the only one who reaped the benefits of being a part of Big Brothers Big Sisters. "You get as much out of it as you give," says Natalia. This is something she wanted other Bigs to realize, Big Brothers Big Sisters is what you make of it. You learn so much about yourself as a Big. Having a Big Sister has had a major impact on Zeimyra as well. "Having a Big Sister is like having a best friend who is very helpful and always there," Zeimyra stated. "I played guitar in the school band and it met so much to me that my Big Sister was there," Zeimyra added. They also enjoy doing various activities with each other, including going to the movies, pottery, going to the springs and they also have cooked together. Yaravi can tell that her daughter truly enjoys being with Natalia. Yaravi says that Zeimyra loves Natalia and gets excited whenever Natalia calls or text her to make plans. Yaravi also adds that Natalia is a part of her family and that she loves her as if she was her daughter.

visit www.bbbsmidflorida.org to read Match Spotlight and Community Leader's entire interview

Community Leader: Jennifer Tragash



Jennifer Tragash is being recognized for her dedication to the Gainesville community. She has worked for over 30 years to promote positive outcomes for children and families in our community. Jennifer earned her Master's degree in Special Education from the University of Florida and holds a Florida teaching certificate in Specific Learning Disabilities K-12. Currently she serves as the Director of The Mentor Center.

Jennifer states, "The mission of The Mentor Center is to support local mentoring organizations, programs and initiatives in order to strengthen and expand mentoring opportunities for the citizens of Alachua County. Our vision is that every child, young adult, parent, and/or business entrepreneur in our community who needs and wants a mentor will be suitably matched with one." Prior to joining the Mentor Center, Jennifer was the United Way of North Central Florida Director of Impact and Initiatives where she worked with a broad array of non-profits in the education, health, and social service sector. Jennifer has served as a mentor and life coach for more than 20 children and young adults. Jennifer saw the importance of mentors early in life. "My first mentoring experience occurred when I was ten years old. I was asked by family friends to help their six-year old son who had Down's syndrome learn to read. I ultimately did teach this child to read, write, and calculate numbers. This experience shaped the course of my personal and professional conviction that one individual can make a positive difference in another individual's life," says Tragash. Growing up in Gainesville helped to shape her dedication to mentorship. Alachua County is an extremely diverse community; however, we are for the most part a tolerant community, open to collaborative problem-solving and learning. I have been extremely blessed by multiple opportunities over the years to learn from, work with, and be mentored by intelligent, compassionate, innovative individuals across all of these areas."

We need more people like Jennifer Tragash she is role model to us all and this is why she is our community leader.



When one heart reaches out - one hand reaches out
- that's when lives begin to change.

It starts with someone caring enough and believing in
a child's potential.



To send donations, please visit www.bbbsmidflorida.org.
You may also contact Mr. John Bonacci, john@bbbsmidflorida.org,
or call us at (352) 375-2525.



Congratulations Match Anniversaries

OCTOBER'S ANNIVERSARIES

10 years

Eric / Narada

5 years

Natalie / Caitlin

4 years

Patricia / Kallatta

2 years

Ashlee / Trinity

1 year

Emily / Glaudine

Radhika / Pierre

Rolana / Tata

Ana / Rosemarie

Rachel / Jeanese

Michelle / Monese

Caitlin / Tahlor

Molly / Mikeria

Dan / Elijah

Nirav / Miguel

Krsha / Sasha

Samuel / Devin

Amber / Shaniya

Alex / Kaleob

Michael / Kaige

Kristen / Shay

Nicholas / Gregory

Landon / Dre

Ellen / Alexandria

SEPTEMBER'S ANNIVERSARIES

4 years

Janna / Auriyunna

3 years

Erica / Draven

Laura / Jaziya

2 years

Josh / Demetrius

Whitney / Tomesha

Daleesa / Brea

Ryan / Jay

1 year

Danielle / Miranda

Tomeka / Shy'teria

Anthony / JaQuan

Jessica / Kiara

Stephen / Alexander

BIG thanks to our Sponsors

AEC TRUST

ARBY'S FOUNDATION

ALTRIA COMPANY

BEST BUY

GAINESVILLE COM FOUNDATION

GAINESVILLE HEALTH & FITNESS

GAINESVILLE TV NETWORK

JUST FOR CAMPUS

L.J. PERCUSSIONS

MACY'S

NATIONWIDE INSURANCE

PERSONAL ELF

PUBLIX SUPERMKTS CHARITIES

RT SCHAFFER MASONIC LODGE

SAFEID4FAMILIES INC.

STUDENTS FOR BBBS

THE NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

VANGUARD FOUNDATION

UPCOMING EVENTS

Halloween Party

Sunday, October 23 at 4:00pm - Splitz Bowling Center - 1301 NW 76th Blvd

Come out and join us for a night of spooky fun! We will have a haunted house, a costume contest, a pumpkin carving contest, and many more fun activities! The Halloween party is a free, safe, kid friendly environment, although we will be providing lots of candy and goodies! Anyone and everyone is welcome, just be sure to bring your Halloween spirit!

Roller Rebels Bout

Sunday, October 23 · 7:00pm - 9:00pm

Ever wanted to see a live roller derby bout? Come check out the Gainesville Roller Rebels in action. Join us after our Halloween Party in cheering the Rebels on, as our thank you for their support of our Little Rebels Skating Club. Kids under 18 get in free, presale tickets are available for \$8 for adults. Limited reserved seating on the bench with the team available. Experience one of Gainesville's truly unique activities.

Holiday Party

Friday, December 2 · 5:00pm - 8:00pm - R T Schafer Masonic Lodge No 350 F & AM
2505 NE 9th Street, Gainesville

It's that time of year again... the most wonderful time of the year!

Come out and join us for our best event of the year, our Holiday Party! There will be presents for the children, Santa, food, and a cheery holiday atmosphere! Family, friends, bigs, and littles are all invited to this festive celebration and the best part is that it is free!

New Matches

Jessica Hudgins/Mikayla Johnson
Melissa Daigneault/Charmaine Rice
Tondrea Haddy/Justice Mitchell
John Bacon/Anthony McGlocking
Jillian Flagler/Shellandrya "Patty" Ford



Whitney Hughes/Brea Williams
Michael Fleming/ Mark Snellings
Vonecia Carswell/Veronica Hicks
Seulki Kang/ Kaci O'Dell



To send donations, please visit www.bbbsmidflorida.org.
You may also contact Mr. John Bonacci, john@bbbsmidflorida.org,
or call us at (352) 375-2525.



New BISSness

Big's Inspiring Scholastic Success Update

Welcome back to the kickoff of another exciting year!

We are so grateful for your participation in the BISS program, formerly Bigs in Schools and Sites, which is now called Bigs Inspiring Scholastic Success! All of our Littles are looking forward to spending time with you again, and to all of the new opportunities you will make available to them.

We can't wait to hear about all the fun activities and accomplishments you and your little make together at your monthly Match Support! Thank you to all of our Bigs who respond in a timely manner each month, as these match support are required by the Department of Education and your promptness is necessary to help us meet their expectations.

For those Bigs returning from previous years, we have a new program available to you; we have added an enhanced school-based opportunity which will allow you greater flexibility in contacting and arranging activities with your Little outside of the school environment, and beyond the usual allowances of the BISS program. This opportunity will be available to Bigs who have demonstrated a positive history within the existing program and have been diligent in completing their Match Support on time. As always, please let us know if you have any question or concerns. Have a great year, enjoy yourselves, and make an impact!

Gainesville Community Teed Off its 5th Annual Fall Classic Golf Tournament

On Saturday, September 3rd, 2011 individual golfers and teams arrived at the Ironwood Golf Course at 7:30am to register for the 5th Annual Fall Classic Golf Tournament benefiting Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mid-Florida. Four person teams were eligible for course contest, challenges and a golfer "goody bag". Individual golfer's were paired with each other to make teams of four. Contest included longest drive, longest putt, closest to the pin, and closet to the fairway on each nine. Prizes included a cruise for four or a 2011 Cadillac SRX, a foursome of golf at Amelia Island Plantation Resort, a foursome of golf at Haile Plantation, and a foursome of golf at Ironwood Golf Course Thank you to all those that participated and showed up to support our programs. Once again thank you to our sponsors:

We would like to give a BIG "shout out" to all the participants, board members and staff who stepped up to the tee for the 5th Annual Fall Classic Golf Tournament presented by

**Macy's in association with Publix Supermarkets and Free & Accepted Masons of District 14
hosted by Ironwood Golf Course.**

None of this would have been possible without their commitment to BBBS .

BIG thanks to board member and Tournament Director Keith Westbrook, whose hard work, dedication and perseverance ensured that we had another successful Fall Classic Golf Tournament. We would also like to thank our Board Members listed below for working with us on the day of the event, the caterers who donated the food for the event and our Sponsors, whose continuous support of Big Brothers Big Sisters is deeply appreciated.

Board Members:

Keith Westbrook,
Paige Allison
Sarah Catalanotto
Dennis Franklin
Kipp Hayes
Larry Hartfield
Rebecca Lakkis
Leon Larson
Jeremy Staun

Supporters:

Av Med Health Plans
AXIS Training Studio
Capital City Bank
Dorn's Liquors & Wine
Warehouse
Free & Accepted Masons of
District 14
Gainesville Television Station
Grabado's Award & Trophy
Ichiiban Sushi
Ironwood Golf Course
Keith Westbrook Insurance

Supporters (cont'd):

LJ Percussion
Nationwide Insurance
Palm Gainesville Cadillac
PPI Sports
RBC Bank
University Pawn & Jewelry
Williams Innovations

Caterers:

Adam's Rib
Moe's Southwest Grill



Big Brothers Big Sisters of Mid-Florida

1155 NW 13th St. • Gainesville, FL 32601

www.bbbsmidflorida.org

P. 352-375-2525 • F. 352-375-0319

Come see our progress!
Join the Cotton Club Museum
for a
Fall Festival & Cookout



Saturday, October 22, 2011

11 AM – 5 PM

On the Grounds of the Cotton Club Museum

837 SE 7th Avenue

Gainesville, FL

Free Tours Available!

Non-Food Vendor Spaces Are Available.

Contact Karen Cole-Smith at 352-372-5111 (Leave a message).

