



Big Brothers Big Sisters  
of New York City

THE POWER TO CHANGE LIVES™

www.bigsnyc.org

Summer 2008

# The BIG Picture

PUBLISHED BY BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF NEW YORK CITY

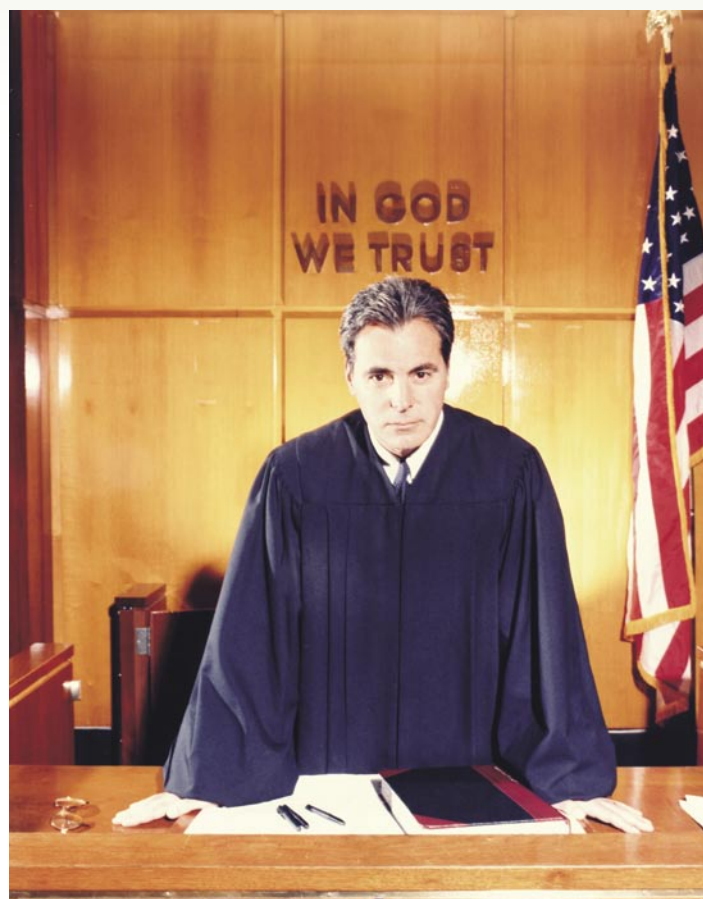
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## Change of Leadership at BBBS of NYC

BBBS of NYC welcomes the  
Honorable Michael A. Corriero  
as its new Executive Director

## Judge Michael Corriero Takes the Reins



understands the issues, our programs and the needs," comments Kitty Linder, President of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC Board of Trustees.

### A Choice that Shows Good Judgment

Judge Corriero most recently served at the request of the New York State Chief Judge, Judith Kaye, on two state-wide commissions concerned with the development of public policy: The New York State Permanent

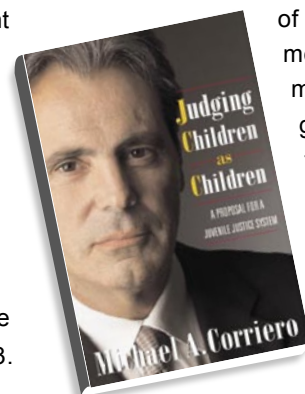
Commission on Justice for Children and the Probation Commission Task Force. Since 1992, he has presided over Manhattan's Youth Part, a court set aside within the adult court system to deal exclusively with the cases of 13-, 14-, and 15-year-olds who are charged with the most serious and violent crimes. He has been a judge since 1980, first appointed to the Criminal Court of the City of New York then to the Court of Claims of the State of New York in 1990 and assigned to the Criminal Term of the Supreme Court since 1983.

His work off the bench has reached far beyond New York. He is the author of a book entitled "Judging

*Children as Children: A Proposal for a Juvenile Justice System.*" He has participated in numerous missions to other countries consulting and lecturing on juvenile justice issues.



In April 2002, Judge Corriero traveled to Sierra Leone, Africa on a mission to assist the Sierra Leone Bar Association in rebuilding its capacity to effectively function after a ten-year civil war. One of the significant issues confronting the Association and the Sierra Leone government was the reintegration into society of the numerous child soldiers who fought in the war. He has also traveled to Israel on several occasions at the request of ELEM, an American/Israeli organization, to consult on juvenile justice projects.



"Under Mr. Luks' direction, BBBS of NYC has become a role model for others as the leading mentoring organization with the greatest range of programs in the nation and a superb track record of strong leadership," comments Judge Corriero. "I look forward to this new challenge, helping BBBS of NYC to continue to grow and help the city's youth population, since I have seen the positive affect of mentoring on court-affiliated youth first-hand," he added.

After decades of helping kids in the criminal and juvenile justice system, Judge Michael A. Corriero took on a new role as Executive Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City on July 1st. Judge Corriero is recognized nationally and internationally for his work with juveniles accused of serious crimes. As a BBBS of NYC Trustee for ten years, he brings an enormous understanding of the issues facing the organization. Allan Luks, the past Executive Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC, stepped down after 18 years at its helm, and is confident that he is leaving the organization in excellent hands (see story on Allan Luks on page five).

"It is wonderful to find a successor to Allan Luks right from our very own board of trustees—someone who inherently

## Workplace Mentoring Program Honors Those Who Make It All Happen

Celebrating 13 Additional Corporate Participants and Honoring Ruth Rathblott's Tenure as Program Director

In early June, the Workplace Mentoring Center (WMC) held its annual "Power of Giving" recognition event at BBBS of NYC's Manhattan headquarters. The event celebrates and acknowledges the hard work and dedication of the corporate, school and bus coordinators who made the 2007-2008 program year a tremendous success. In addition, the dynamic team of 17 BBBS of NYC program managers who supervise over 80 site-based programs were acknowledged.

### New Corporations and Schools Added in 2008

One of the highlights of the year as noted at the event was the addition of 13 new corporate sponsors to the Workplace Mentoring Program this year, bringing the total of participating corporations up to 50. Nine new school partnerships were also added this year, bringing the program to a total of more than one thousand matches served this year with 45 participating NYC schools.

### Giving "Littles" the Inside Scoop

Through their relationships with their corporate partners, "Littles" are exposed to unique program activities that provide an insider look at the companies they attend during the school year. Examples included a private concert by popular 18-year-old rap artist Sean Kingston for Littles in the Sony Corporation of America Workplace program; an opportunity for Littles in the American Eagle program to make their own t-shirts; a chance for Step4ward Littles to work with JWT ad executives to create a Bubblicious gum print ad; a meeting with US Southern District Attorney Mike Garcia for Littles in the U.S. Attorney's Office program; and a private meet and greet with R&B artist Cheri Dennis at the Apple store in Soho followed by an in-store concert for all Workplace Mentoring Program youth.

### Speakers Highlight the Benefits of their Workplace Experience

Not surprisingly, the speakers at the event, who are also participants in the program, gave moving presentations.



Rebecca (Becky) Morel had, herself, been a Little Sister in the Workplace program at Oppenheimer when she was in junior

high school. Eventually, Becky became a gym teacher at Progress High School in Brooklyn and felt that her students would benefit from the Workplace program, just as she had. She brought the Workplace program to her school in 2005 with a partnership at Citigroup. In the first year, Becky had to coax students to participate, and only had ten students at the start. However after the first few Workplace visits and word spread about the program, many students approached her to join.

Today there are three different programs from her school (working with Verizon, RRDonnelley, and Citigroup). The initial group of Citigroup students remained in the program for three years and all are graduating this June and going on to college thanks to the guidance of their "Bigs." In addition, three students in that program had summer internships at Citigroup through the BBBS of NYC Workplace Mentoring Center Summer Internship program.



Will Morel, a "Big" at the Morgan Stanley program, spoke about his meaningful match relationship with his Little Brother, Mohammed, a 10th grader, and how much he personally benefits from the program. Will explained that despite the fact that he works many hours, he believes that the Workplace

Mentoring Program enables him to take a break, connect with NYC youth and feels less burnt out. Even in a nervous economy where people are apprehensive about their jobs and leaving their desks, Will stated that the Workplace program makes it so easy to participate since it is held at his office during work hours.

### Workplace Program Supports Race for the Kids

Volunteers and other employees at participating WMC corporations have played an important part in the success of the annual Race for the Kids, creating teams and helping to raise crucial funds. At the event, the Workplace Mentoring Program's 2008 Race for the Kids fundraising goal was announced at \$250,000. The funds raised will enable the Workplace program to expand into new industries and organizations where funding is not available (see 2008 Race for the Kids event article on page four).

### Recognizing Ruth Rathblott's Achievements as Director



Capping off the event, Ruth Rathblott was honored for her tenure as the director of the WMC, where she was responsible for the department's significant growth. This year Ruth was promoted to associate executive director for BBBS of NYC, and Shawna Boggie and Melissa Motroni were promoted to Co-Directors of the Workplace Mentoring Center.

# Education Initiatives Support Youth for Long-Term Academic Success

New and Existing Programs Focus on Academic Success for City's Youth

**With high dropout rates among students in the city's under-served schools, BBBS of NYC created a program to help youth and their families navigate the education system and boost academic achievement among Littles.**

Launched at the beginning of the year, the new Education Initiative was created to help students participating in various mentoring programs to improve their academic success through an evaluation process designed to find areas they need the most support.

With the help of three funding initiators, the Hummingbird Foundation, the Altman Foundation and HSBC USA Bank, BBBS of NYC was able to hire education specialists for a two-year pilot program aiming to serve 120 youth from the agency's Community and Special Priorities departments. An additional educational support program for youth who have been arrested is being funded by the Robinhood Foundation.



## Helping Youth Achieve Academic Success Through a Personalized Plan

At intake, students discuss the areas in which they need help, and parents

communicate their degree of involvement with their child's school and teachers. "Bigs" are also invited to attend the intake session to learn if there are areas in which they can support their "Littles." After a complete evaluation of the student's school performance, motivation and the parent's support, the education specialist designs a service plan incorporating the Little, Big and parent. The plan can include setting goals for attendance, strategies for the parent or Big to help the student with academic areas of concern, as well as providing information on outside agencies that offer support such as tutoring, SAT Prep, etc.

## Workshops for Students and Parents Increase Success Rates

In addition to one-on-one sessions with the education specialist, which continues on a quarterly basis, the Education Initiative incorporates ongoing weekend workshops geared toward parents, students and Bigs on a variety of topics. These include, among many others, helping to improve a child's literacy (geared toward parents) as well as picking a high school (geared



towards students and parents). A series of seminars entitled "Pathways to Higher Learning" are also available to BBBS of NYC youth and their Bigs, focusing on topics such as applying to college, obtaining scholarships, interview skills, resume writing and more.

## Focus on Education Across All Programs

Efforts focusing on the importance of education have become increasingly important throughout BBBS of NYC and a strong part of the mission for helping the city's youth in need. Academic support, scholarships, tutoring and more have been integrated into many of the organization's programs.

For example, an emphasis on college education has become a significant part of the Workplace Mentoring Program. During their time together, matches work on college applications and essays and employee mentors discuss the importance of education on their own career success. These efforts have paid off, as this year all the students from the first Citibank Workplace Mentoring program which started three years ago, have all graduated from high school and are all going on to college in the fall.

# Race For The Kids: September 27th at Riverside Park

**The 4th Annual Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC Race for the Kids, sponsored by RBC— part of Nickelodeon's Worldwide Day of Play, will take place on Saturday, September 27th in Riverside Park at 72nd Street. The 4K Run/Walk and 2K Fun Walk event celebrates the power of mentoring and emphasizes the importance of health, exercise and play.**

## Save The Date!

Participation is open to the public, and includes "Bigs," "Littles," BBBS of NYC supporters and volunteers, and teams from many of the city's corporations. Following the race all participants are invited to a picnic

with food, games and entertainment for the entire family in the park.

BBBS of NYC is very pleased to have RBC return as the title sponsor of the event. In addition, the organization welcomes The Alliance for a Healthier Generation as a new event partner. Other event sponsors currently include: Verizon, Willis, Zurich, AIG, UnitedHealthcare, Vitamin Water along with media sponsors WNBC, Telemundo and The Daily News.



More than 3,500 participated in last year's event, raising nearly \$600,000. WNBC, Telemundo, and Fox5 covered the event on TV. Last year's event featured a Big/Little match who read a proclamation issued by Mayor Bloomberg commemorating the day's festivities. This year's event is expected to exceed both last year's participation numbers and amount of funds raised.

To learn more about participating as a team or individual, or for additional information about corporate sponsorships and donations, go to [www.raceforthekids.org](http://www.raceforthekids.org) or call 212-994-7741. Join us and experience the power to change lives!

# Allan Luks Honored at Reception for 18 Years of Dedication to the City's Youth in Need



**After almost two decades of hard work and dedication, Allan Luks gave up his post as Executive Director of BBBS of NYC at the end of June and will remain as a Senior Advisor for the agency during the transition period to help Judge Michael Corriero take over the position as executive director.**

## Honoring Allan's Achievements and Legacy

On June 16th, more than 200 people affiliated with Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City gathered at the Harmonie Club to honor Allan Luks. The event provided an opportunity to openly acknowledge Allan's tremendous commitment to improving the lives of youth in need in New York City and his remarkable contribution to the agency's success since taking the position in 1990.

The event began with a moving tribute to Allan, delivered by BBBS of NYC President Kitty Linder. She ended by saying "We are

so fortunate that Allan, who has transformed BBBS of NYC into America's leading mentoring agency, will remain on as senior advisor for a transition period."

Big Sister Betsy Klemmer, who was named New York State's Big Sister of the Year, along with her Little Sister, Stacey, spoke about the effect of their relationship on both of their lives as an example of Allan's vision (see match profile on Betsy and Stacey on page six).

After several tributes, Allan noted that his mission when starting out was to make the agency great and to grow it. From a budget of \$700,00 to over \$10 million dollars today, and having served over 80,000 kids, his legacy will continue under the new leadership of Judge Michael Corriero.

There was a performance by the BBBS of NYC chorus, comprised of "Bigs," "Littles" and staff, under the leadership of Big Brother Danny Madden. Kitty Linder presented a tribute book, comprised of letters of appreciation, photos, anecdotes and other mementos from Allan's tenure at the organization.



Photo credit: Frank Rocco

These programs confronted the complex challenges today's youth face, from foster care, teenage pregnancy, incarcerated parents to recent immigration and the impact of loss or trauma on September 11.



Allan successfully lobbied the New York State legislature to pass "The Safe Mentoring Act," the first state law in the country that sets standards for

mentoring. Additionally, in 1998, Allan created the Center for Training and Professional Development and the Mentoring Supervisor Certificate Program (MSCP), developed in conjunction with Fordham University's Graduate School of Social Service. It is the country's first and only training program for mentoring organizations, which has trained over 600 agencies to help them develop their own mentoring programs using the BBBS of NYC model.



He is the author of four books, the most recent being the "Healing Power of Doing Good" where he created the term "helper's high," the positive feeling volunteers experience in one-to-one helping.

This term has become part of the nation's volunteer literature.

## Programs Created by Allan Luks

While at the helm at Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC, Allan developed a wide range of new mentoring programs that reflect the diversity of backgrounds, needs and experiences of New York City youth.

## Helping Future Generations of Philanthropists

Allan plans to continue to work for the future of the city's youth, using the knowledge he has obtained over three decades of experience to meet philanthropy's defining challenge: how to keep donors and volunteers engaged when a declining economy leaves them less inclined to give their time and money to charitable causes. "Americans need to realize that the way to feel good in a stressful time is not to retreat into oneself, but to connect with others. I want to be a part of making this happen," Allan summed up.

## Betsy & Stacey: A Decade of Friendship and Growth

When Elizabeth (Betsy) Klemmer met eight-year-old Stacey nearly ten years ago, she made a promise: to be consistent in this shy little girl's life. Stacey was residing in a one-bedroom apartment with her mother, stepfather, and two younger siblings in an unsafe neighborhood in Jamaica, Queens.

The girl's mother was concerned that Stacey was struggling academically, lacking friends, and unable to open up and share her feelings.

Although being matched with a child with a different background without anything obvious in common might have been daunting for some volunteers, Betsy was not fazed. Her father had been a BBBS of NYC board member for many years and she knew the value of the organization's mission and the challenges faced by volunteers. She had also volunteered as a "Big" in Connecticut, where she had previously resided.

### One Word Leads to Many

During the first six months of their relationship Stacey answered all of Betsy's questions with one-syllable

### New York State Big Sister of the Year

Earlier this year, Betsy and Stacey's relationship was honored in a most fitting way: Betsy was named "New York State Big Sister of the Year. As part of the application process, Betsy and Stacey's social worker, Faith Sone, was asked to summarize the key reasons for the match's success and longevity. She wrote "Betsy's sensitivity, compassion, intelligence, excellent communication skills, level of insight, leadership ability, and flexible approach are characteristics that have made her an influential force in Stacey's life. Her effectiveness as a volunteer also included a masterful bridging of the inherent cultural and racial differences between Stacey and herself. Betsy genuinely earned Stacey's confidence, respect, and love."



after-school center, working all year round. She aspires to become a teacher and hopes to offer youth the same life lessons she has been given.

responses. Over time, Stacey began to open up and developed a trusting relationship. As Stacey let her guard down, Stacey's mom and Betsy noticed gradual changes taking place. Stacey began to smile more, make more friends, and her schoolwork improved.

The teen years were challenging, as Stacey focused more on her social life than academics, and was doing poorly in school. "It would have been easy to lapse into thinking that I was not having much of an impact at this point, but our visits and talks reminded me of how tough and confusing the teen years are," explains Betsy. "I realized that she trusted me enough to tell me what she could tell no one else. At a time when you start to let a young woman explore the world around her, it became all the more important to keep my initial promise to remain a constant in her life."

### Hanging in During Tough Times Pays Off

In her final years of high school, Stacey held down a job as a counselor-in-training at her local YMCA, and ran the arts and crafts program at the

Betsy also helped Stacey through the college application process over the last year (her senior year of high school), and Stacey will be attending college in the Fall.

"Betsy has been a very supportive person in my life and I honestly don't know what I would do without her," Stacey admits. Although the two officially leave the mentoring program as Stacey turns 18, the relationship will remain strong. "We will always be sisters and keep in contact. This is just a new chapter of our relationship. I can't wait to see what the next ten years has in store for us," adds Stacey.

And what did Betsy gain over the ten years as Stacey's Big Sister? "It definitely kept me grounded, providing a balance to a very charmed life. Stacey has taught me to cool my jets—stop, look, and listen. We don't always have to do everything in order and get from point A to point B in the fastest way possible. Reflecting on the mentoring experience, she adds, "Knowing that I helped one child see what's possible and dream really big and doing everything I could to help her live out those dreams is an accomplishment I will always cherish."

## Donor Opportunities: Services for Youth in Foster Care and Violent Neighborhoods

Thanks to external funding, BBBS of NYC is able to craft mentoring programs to meet the needs of special populations. Among the most effective current programs are "Building Futures" which offers mentoring and supportive services to youth in foster care and "Mentoring in Medicine" which matches doctors in hospitals with local youth in neighborhoods with heavy gun violence. The agency is looking for additional funds to move the programs forward.

### Building Futures: Marking Five Years of Helping Youth in Foster Care

Since it was initiated with a grant from New York State, Building Futures has found mentors for nearly 160 youth between the ages of 8 and 18 living in foster care. Children in the program show a marked improvement in behavior at home and at school, including improvement in school attendance. Because of the program's success, there is an extensive waiting list of youth who could be matched with mentors if additional philanthropic support is secured. The goal of the program is to help youth transition out of foster care and into independent adult lives.

A study by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that only one in six teens that had recently

left foster care was completely self-supporting. Studies have shown that a disproportionate number of homeless persons had spent time in foster care during childhood. With approximately half of the young people who left foster care at age 18 unemployed 12 to 18 months later, and one third receiving public assistance, BBBS of NYC decided in 2003 to create a program that addressed the specific needs of youth in the city's foster care system to help them on their journey to independent living.

Referrals to BBBS of NYC come in from 25 city foster care agencies. "Biggs," specially trained in this program, spend individualized time with their matches, and often become involved with advocating, on behalf of their "Littles," who frequently have issues that are overlooked by overwhelmed foster care guardians and city agency staff.



For example, Michael, abandoned by his parents, lived in foster care since the age of two in several different placements due to behavior problems. At the age of five he was placed with

an 85-year-old handicapped foster care guardian. Michael, diagnosed with ADHD, led an extremely sheltered life due to the age of his guardian. He was having trouble in school and spent weekends at home sitting in front of the TV.

Big Brother Geoffrey was matched with Little Brother Michael, then eight years old, in the spring of 2007. Upon spending time with his Little, Geoffrey felt that Michael's behavior problems stemmed from boredom and untapped intelligence. Together with the case manager and guardian, Geoffrey helped Michael obtain a proper evaluation, which eventually eliminated his medications. Without his mentor, Michael would still be the unmotivated child that spent his days isolated and alone. Today the two have a strong bond and Michael has a chance at a normal and more balanced life. He now has a resource to explore new things and tap into his talents and interests, which will eventually assist him in building his self-esteem and interpersonal relationships.

### Mentoring Through Medicine: Matching Teens with Doctors

Another highly successful program, created last year with a one-time \$12,400 grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the volunteer leadership of Dr. Mary Baldauf, a

*Continued on back page*

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## Upcoming Events

### JULY

Wednesday, July 9, 2008

#### Casino Jazz Night Real Estate Dinner

At Cipriani 42nd St.--showcasing members of New York's real estate community for their contributions to BBBS of NYC. Honorees are James M. Orphanides, Chairman Emeritus, First American Title Insurance Company of NY and MaryAnne Gilmartin, Executive VP, Forest City Ratner Companies. Event includes cocktails, dinner, a full casino with prizes, and live jazz.

Monday, July 14, 2008

#### 10th Annual Golf Tournament

For the first time, the BBBS of NYC's annual Golf Tournament will be held at Hudson National Golf Club, a spectacular course located in Croton-on-Hudson. We have 25 foursomes that participate in the event.

### SEPTEMBER

Saturday, September 27, 2008

#### Race for the Kids

Come out to Riverside Park to participate in a 4K run/walk. Following the run/walk, all participants are invited to a celebratory picnic featuring field day games, food and entertainment. Check out [www.raceforthekids.org](http://www.raceforthekids.org).

### NOVEMBER

Saturday, November 22, 2008

#### Gridiron Games At Giants Stadium

Over 100 inner-city children participate in a magical morning at Giants Stadium at the Meadowlands. Featuring child-friendly drills, instruction and football games on the stadium field, tours of the Jets and Giants locker rooms, and a luncheon catered in the press box. NYC's top law firms pit against each other in a fun-filled afternoon of five-on-five touch football.

For more information on all upcoming events, contact: Sharon Kessler at (212) 686-2042

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## Donor Opportunities

pediatrician at Brookdale Hospital in East New York. Working in the Emergency Department, Dr. Baldauf saw unnecessary death every day, often as the result of youth gun violence in a neighborhood where 67% of children live in poor families. She contacted BBBS of NYC to create a mentoring program between local youth and doctors at the hospital, to have the youngsters see first-hand the impact of gun violence on people and to help the doctors connect with the population they treat.

The pilot program began with 22 physicians matched with high school students from three East New York high schools. They met regularly every other week at the hospital, allowing time for the doctors to check in with their matches about school and family life, as well as to teach them about the work they do and the cases they see at the hospital, with a focus on the incidences of gun violence. Monthly parent meetings focused on health workshops, further encouraging the children to succeed in their future goals.

### Changing Lives Inside and Outside the Hospital

Within weeks, the response from the Littles, Bigs and parents was significant, with the students showing increased determination to succeed in school and move on to work in the medical field. The doctors, too, found their participation rewarding. As one doctor commented, "This responsibility is not a



burden. Rather, it is an endeavor that has given a whole new meaning to my life."

Today, two more city hospitals are interested in starting their own "Mentoring Through Medicine" programs, and all participants at Brookdale wish to continue with their match relationships. BBBS of NYC is actively seeking additional financial support to grow the program.

### Please Donate Now

For information about supporting Building Futures, Mentoring Through Medicine, or other programs, please contact Renee Greene, Senior Director of Development, at 212-994-7740 or send e-mail to [rgreene@bigsnyc.org](mailto:rgreene@bigsnyc.org).

### The BIG Picture

Published by Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City. Comments invited and address changes welcome.

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