

April 2009

The Big Picture

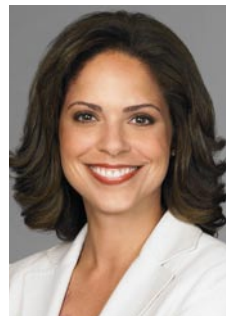


**Big Brothers Big Sisters
of New York City**

THE POWER TO CHANGE LIVES™



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Cultural Bonds, Commitment and Careers

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of Workplace Mentoring Program companies, Athelera LLC. A small international financial advisory firm, their mentoring program boasts some unique "firsts." [Read more.](#)



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Save these Dates!

Join us at our exciting [upcoming events.](#)

- **Sidewalks of New York Annual Awards Dinner** — Tuesday, April 28th, Grand Ballroom, Waldorf=Astoria
- **13th Annual Accountants & Bankers Reception** — Wednesday, May 13th, The Harmonie Club

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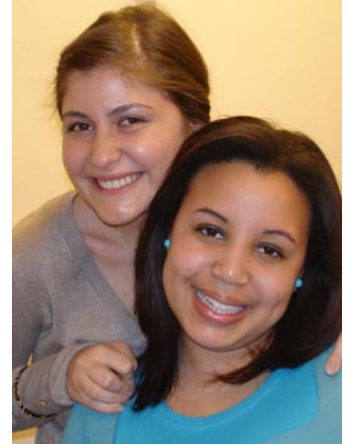
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But it was no surprise to their BBBS of NYC Program Manager, Robin Vittore. 18-year-old Carolina, a bright student with an outgoing personality, is school president, founder of the math club, and has applied for a special BBBS of NYC college scholarship in the hopes of attending NYU, Gina's alma mater.

Gina is a smart, friendly and energetic 23-year-old human resources professional at McGraw Hill. They have been matched in the [Workplace Mentoring Program](#) for 1½ years. So close in age that people often can't tell who's the Big and who's the Little, these two "Bronx girls" bonded instantly over a shared love of ice cream, and eating pizza — backwards. But they'll be no ice cream and pizza at the Waldorf=Astoria. And, the thought of presenting an award to Soledad O'Brien there, on stage and in front of a large audience, made them very nervous.

Previously, while comfortable talking to small groups, Carolina had stuttered and froze when speaking to big crowds. But with her participation in the Workplace Mentoring Program and Gina's support, Carolina rehearsed and greatly improved her confidence and abilities. A great team, Gina reminded her of this as they began their research together, reviewed pictures of last year's event, learned more about Soledad, and practiced.

As award presenters, Gina and Carolina made the commitment to meet weekly in the late afternoon for 8 weeks to practice their speeches at BBBS of NYC. They viewed this time as a welcome chance to see each other more often. On rehearsal days, Carolina leaves her school as soon as classes end and Gina leaves work early. With each rehearsal, they grow more excited. "As I read her bio, I felt proud," says Carolina. "Soledad is a successful woman, she's a Latina like me, and a role model. I am excited to present the award to her. I know that a lot of people want to meet her."

In preparation for the big night on Tuesday, April 28th, Gina and Carolina will have a special meeting with Soledad in her office at CNN. They are anxious to ask her questions and discover what they have in common so they can add it to their speech. "Our speech will be about the story of 3 fabulous women," they said with a smile.

In the Grand Ballroom that April evening as Gina and Carolina present the award, BBBS of NYC will celebrate the power of mentoring and shine the spotlight on its children and volunteers as well as the honorees. Many mentoring relationships are formed on the sidewalks of New York, but each is as unique, beautiful and lasting as the Waldorf=Astoria.

Experience the power...contact [Sharon Kessler](#), Director of Development, at 212-994-7739 for more event information.

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Cultural Bonds, Commitment and Careers



This year, BBBS of NYC welcomed a special new partner to its family of Workplace Mentoring Program companies, Athelera LLC. A small international financial advisory firm, their mentoring program boasts some unique “firsts.”

Athelera’s participation marks the first time every employee at a company is enrolled in the program. It’s also the first time that every person in the program, both Bigs and Littles, is originally from outside the US and speaks fluent Spanish. Their international backgrounds include: Spain, Columbia, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Dominican Republic, and El Salvador.

Athelera’s company-wide program model is specifically tailored for small companies with employees who frequently travel abroad for business. It allows all the Littles to have mentors even if some Bigs are out of town on business.

Just as Athelera has made a 3-year commitment to the program, BBBS of NYC sought a school and group of students willing to make the same commitment and based on the company profile, selected 10th graders from Manhattan International High School. They will partner with the Athelera Bigs for the rest of their high school careers.

Athelera integrates Hispanic culture into the program whenever possible. Every [Workplace Mentoring Program](#) company provides snacks for the Littles. While most order in food, the Athelera staff prepares traditional ethnic food in their kitchen. For their first meeting, they made empanadas. At another meeting, they all enjoyed ham and Spanish cookies that one of the Bigs had brought back from his trip to Spain. The Bigs and Littles enjoy learning about American culture together, including fun recreational activities like Mad Libs™, and customary professional etiquette like proper handshakes. This program also provides a safe, supportive environment for the Littles to practice and improve their English while developing important business skills.

“Athelera partnered with Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City because we all felt that we had vital information and experience to share with disadvantaged children in our city. We wanted to offer our friendship, and provide them with support and guidance to help them grow and succeed,” says Javier Macaya, CEO.

A wonderfully unique international experience for these immigrant students, this program gives them the opportunity to see adults from similar backgrounds not only succeeding in business but giving back. Like their Bigs, the Littles will embrace their multiculturalism and apply the knowledge and many skills they’ve gained to their future careers, considering the many possibilities both in the US and abroad.

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In its 3rd year, this successful community partnership event provided a fun and educational environment for the Littles to learn about Japanese people, geography, music, dance, language, customs and food.

The Littles were excited to visit the various stations where they learned to write Japanese characters, prepare and eat onigiri (a traditional Japanese snack of rice, spices and seaweed that is as common in Japan as hot dogs are in America), and make origami. They tested their skills in the “Chopstick Challenge,” a race to pick up objects of different sizes and textures using only chopsticks, and learned some basic Judo self-defense moves. Bigs and Littles also had the opportunity to have their pictures taken as they tried on colorful kimonos.

In the current economic climate, BBBS of NYC would not have been able to host this event without the support of its nonprofit community partners who donated all the supplies and volunteered their time and talents.

The Japanese Consulate donated the special origami paper as well as gifts for the Littles, including Japanese fans and flags, folders depicting a Japanese landscape, and decorative pencils. The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme Alumni Association of New York, a group of active young professionals in NYC who wish to promote Japanese culture and understanding, brought the Japanese kimonos, food



and games and worked with the Littles at the stations. The members of NY de Volunteer, a volunteer organization for young Japanese, enjoyed interacting with the matches. The group, 10 Tecu, entertained the crowd with beautiful Japanese dances.

Before the event, Japanese cultural traditions were completely unfamiliar to the Littles; a new, different, and exciting experience for them to enthusiastically explore. One Little took a picture of the spices used in the onigiri rice snacks because he wanted to show his mother so she could buy them and make the snack at home. Another Little said that he wants to go to Japan.

After attending Japan-a-Mania, BBBS of NYC hopes that the Littles will continue their cultural learning on their own, with their parents and Bigs. The Bigs have noted what types of activities most interested their Littles and will pursue more experiences together during their future match outings.

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