



The BIG Alumni Newsletter

Spring 2007 Volume 1, Issue 1

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Alumni stories spotlight: Ellen and Delfina



When Ellen first met Delfina in the fall of 1995, she saw a young lady heading for trouble. Delfina's parents, immigrants from Mexico, had dropped out of school after the second grade. Her four sisters had all dropped out of school to have babies. But the day Delfina was matched with her Big Sister Ellen, Delfina's path changed forever.

Ellen and Delfina met at Bear Stearns through BBBS NYC's Workplace Mentoring Program. The program runs during the academic school year with youth and employee volunteers meeting for two hours twice a month in a structured and supervised program setting at the volunteers' workplaces.

"Bear Stearns symbolized life on the other side," Delfina says. "There were professional people working, talking, laughing... I learned there were options for me. At the time, my father was a

dishwasher and my mother worked in a factory. I thought, 'I don't want to iron shirts. This is what I want.'"

After meeting for two years in the Workplace Mentoring Program, Ellen and Delfina decided to continue their match as part of the BBBS NYC Traditional Mentoring Program so they could get together on weekends and do activities on their own. "Sometimes we had sleepovers. We made brownies, barbequed, had corn on the cob. We stayed up all night talking and laughing, crying - just girl stuff - and we learned a lot about each other," Delfina says.

Ellen emphasized the importance of an education to Delfina, encouraging her to study harder. When Delfina enrolled at Brooklyn College, she turned to Ellen for support and guidance.

"It was a difficult time but Ellen was there for me" Delfina says. "Ellen suggested that I do what makes me happy - something I was interested in. I ended up majoring in accounting." Delfina became the first in her family to graduate from college, with a major in accounting and a 3.0 GPA. Today, she works at Deloitte and Touche.

Now, more than a decade after they first met, Ellen and Delfina still talk regularly, discussing everything from work to Delfina's marriage and her plans to buy a home.

"One of the greatest things about our match is that we are not only friends, we're family," Ellen says.

New alumni web page helps former Bigs and Littles stay in touch

The official BigsNYC.org website has recently been redeveloped with an updated look and new features, including a new page for BBBS NYC Alumni.

Alumni can now register with BBBS NYC to receive updates about agency programs and events. Former Bigs and Littles can also submit updates on news, like job opportunities, announcements, and share their stories about their matches.

The agency's main web page, BigsNYC.org has also been updated to streamline the volunteer application process. The site now allows new potential volunteers to participate in online orientations, download volunteer applications and submit necessary materials, online.

Visit www.BigsNYC.org/v-alumni.htm to see for yourself!



Littles learn basketball tips during a clinic held recently at St. John's University.

News Briefs

Safe Mentoring Act

After four years of effort led by BBBS NYC, the Safe Mentoring Act went into effect this April. This gives mentoring programs access to state background information on potential mentors, and requires agencies to inform parents what kind of background checks they run.

A coalition of 140 mentoring organizations, coordinated by BBBS NYC, backed the legislation. The coalition is now pushing for a Quality Mentoring Act to certify mentoring program supervisors.

Wilderness Weekend

Bigs and Littles spent the weekend of April 21-22 climbing trails, camping out, and bonding during the Wilderness Weekend at Great Hollow Wilderness Camp.

The annual agency-sponsored trip offers matches an opportunity to spend quality time enjoying nature while building friendships.

Big Night Out

The BBBS NYC Young Professionals Committee recently celebrated in style at

the Annual Big Night Out gala, held at Cipriani 23rd Street. Over 900 attendees helped raise more than \$200,000 to benefit BBBS NYC.

The YPC is a diverse group of dedicated men and women, ages 21-35, who volunteer their time, talents and energy to plan fundraising events and recruitment activities for the agency.

For more information about the YPC, please contact Special Events Manager Jessica Moreira at 212-997-7701 or jmoreira@bigsnyc.org.



Save the Date: Third Annual Race for the Kids to be held Sat., Sept. 29

On Saturday, Sept. 29, 2007, BBBS NYC will hold its third annual Race for the Kids in Riverside Park at 72nd street in Manhattan.

Last year, over 3,000 Bigs, Littles, family and community members came out to enjoy the 5k run/walk. Following the race, all participants attended a picnic with food and entertainment including music, face painting, basketball, and other games for the entire family. The event raised over \$400,000 for agency programs.

For more information about joining us for this event, log into www.raceforthekids.org or call Special Events Coordinator Lisha McCormick at 212-997-7741.

Letter from the Director

Dear Alumni,

At Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City, our most valuable resource has always been people – including you. The caring men and women who volunteer their time and the young people who open themselves up for friendship have been the foundation of our agency for over 100 years.

We hope that you will continue your relationship with us and continue to be a member of the BBBS NYC family. Please, write or call and let us know what issues you care about, and share news about yourself or your Big or Little. Please tell other Bigs and Littles to get on our mailing list if they aren't now. We also hope you will reconnect with us, attend agency events, and share in the fun and excitement we feel here.

I hope that you enjoy the first edition of our Alumni Newsletter. Please write us back with any news, ideas, comments or questions. You can call or stop by the office at any time.

On behalf of BBBS NYC, I thank you for your dedication to this organization, and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Allan Luks
Executive Director

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Programs

- Community Mentoring Program
- FDNY Partnership Program
- Incredible Kids
- New American Partnership
- 9/11 Program
- Young Mothers Program
- School-Based Mentoring
- Workplace Mentoring
- Building Futures Program
- Juvenile Justice Intervention
- Children of Incarcerated Parents
- Siblings Prevention Program
- East New York Family Care
- Center for Training

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