



**Big Brothers  
Big Sisters**  
OF NEW YORK CITY

From the Office of the CEO,  
Alicia D. Guevara

Dear BBBS of NYC Community,

As a Black woman, a daughter of Black parents, a sister of a Black man, wife of a Black man, and mother of Black children, I continue to navigate racist and oppressive institutions. I am progressing in spite of them rather than because of them. Even with the position that I hold and the leadership privileges that I enjoy, I recognize that all of that does not protect me from the reality of being Black in America.

It is clear that our City and our nation still do not see all Black people as worthy or equal. This reality operates not just as a belief that people hold but rather as a justification for suppression, violence and assault on the Black community.

I am angry, hurt, devastated, horrified at the senseless killings of Ahmaud Arbery, George Floyd, Tony McDade, Breonna Taylor, Sean Bell, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Atatiana Jefferson, Amadou Diallo and countless others. Their lives were violently taken before they could realize their biggest possible futures. Their lives matter and their legacies are inspiring action to rebuild a world that unequivocally believes that Black Lives Matter.

At BBBS of NYC, we believe firmly in the power of mentoring and the transformational impact a caring, adult mentor can have on the trajectory of a young person's life. We also believe that solely relying on the interpersonal to resolve the systemic allows racism to continue to snuff out potential. Our connections to one another are integral to inspiring meaningful change that then must be channeled into action.

Our youth cannot be expected to have their "dreams deferred" on the basis of race or be expected to succeed when our systems are designed for them to fail, in both the most subtle and most fatal of ways. The next generations of leaders – our Littles, our youth, my children – do not need us to chart their path forward, but rather pave a new one.

Racial violence and systemic oppression do not just impact our Littles and their families but also our Bigs, our Affinity Group members and our staff. We stand with you against hate, violence and injustice. It is incumbent upon us to put the full weight and strength of our organization behind undoing racism, anti-blackness and oppression in our City and our county.

As an organization, Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC is taking actions to:

- Convene Spaces for Dialogue & Action for Bigs, Littles and their families
- Elevate Youth Voices in our City by cultivating relationships with elected officials
- Build Bias Awareness Training for Bigs to be rolled out in Fall 2020
- Evaluate Internal Policies by working with our Staff to continue advancing our diversity, equity and inclusion practices

Our youth cannot inherit the current state of affairs. The future we envision, one where all youth can achieve their full potential, requires each of us to recognize that the change we need is long overdue, and the time to actualize it is now. It has been advocated and protested for, written about and spoken on for the duration of our nation's history. We must make this moment different.

Now is the time. We cannot delay. Black Lives Matter too much and cannot wait.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alicia D. Guevara'.

Alicia D. Guevara