

NEWS

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QUEENS CELEBRATES NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH WITH NATION'S FIRST MENTORING ORGANIZATION

Elected officials joined Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC for grand opening of office in Queens; Honored 'Queens Big of the Year' for remarkable service

NEW YORK, January 28, 2016 – Elected officials today joined Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City (BBBS of NYC) for a special ribbon cutting ceremony as part of National Mentoring Month, commemorating the organization's new office space in Queens and honoring the 2015 'Queens Big of the Year' for his extraordinary commitment to his "Little."

For BBBS of NYC, this year's National Mentoring Month marks the launch of its 2016 citywide mentor recruiting campaign, and the expansion of its office in Queens will allow the organization to more effectively recruit volunteer mentors in the borough.

Following the ribbon cutting, Queens Borough Director at the Office of the Mayor, Nick Gulotta, and representatives from the offices of Congressman Joseph Crowley, Assemblymember Francisco P. Moya, Senator Jose Peralta, and Councilmember Karen Koslowitz joined BBBS of NYC to honor Big Brother Mark Zustovich, a resident of Jackson Heights, for going above and beyond as a mentor to his Little Brother, Spencer.

Mark introduced Spencer – a 14-year-old from Jamaica – to photography as a hobby, and the two now share a special annual tradition of creating a photobook with memories from each year. During their four years together as a match, Mark has played a tremendous role in boosting Spencer's confidence through offering guidance and support, and he continuously works to ensure that his Little Brother is on a path toward success.

"The diverse, passionate spirit that characterizes Queens is a reflection of our organization as well," said Hector Batista, chief executive officer of BBBS of NYC. "Our new office in Queens will allow us to more effectively reach deeply into the communities that make up this incredible borough and identify hundreds of caring adult mentors like Mark. And with the amazing support of the Queens community, I am confident we will be able to take our organization's services in this borough to new heights."

Throughout the month, BBBS of NYC held a series of ceremonies with public officials, community organizations and current Big Brothers and Sisters in Brooklyn and Staten Island, celebrating the organization's continued expansion in the boroughs. During each ceremony, BBBS of NYC honored 'Borough Bigs of the Year,' recognizing mentors for their unwavering commitment to their Littles.

A highlight of National Mentoring Month was the highly anticipated Tournament of Champions Pong on Thursday, January 14th at Grand Central Terminal's Vanderbilt Hall. Now in its eighth year, the annual table tennis tournament helped raise funds to benefit BBBS of NYC's youth mentoring programs.

By the end of 2016, BBBS of NYC hopes to have paired hundreds more children that are currently awaiting a match with caring adult role models, or "Bigs." The nation's first and New York's largest youth

mentoring organization, Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC currently serves more than 5,000 young people each year through a variety of specialized mentoring programs.

Mentoring is open to adults 21 or older who reside in the five boroughs, and it is free to volunteer. To become a volunteer mentor, donate, or learn more about Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC and National Mentoring Month, please visit <http://www.bigsnyc.org/>.

Businesses interested in joining the more than 45 corporations that already have Workplace Mentoring Programs can also email wmc@bigsnyc.org.

About Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City

Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC (BBBS of NYC), the nation's first and NYC's largest youth mentoring organization, has served the changing needs of New York City's most at-risk youth since 1904. The volunteer- and donor-based organization offers a variety of specialized mentoring programs to help children facing more complex challenges – including immigrant youth, teen mothers and children of incarcerated parents – as well as the Workplace Mentoring Center, which helps businesses throughout New York City positively impact the lives of young people and build a foundation for professional success. Additionally, since 1992 BBBS of NYC has worked through its Center for Training and Professional Development to equip non-profit professionals throughout New York City to develop and enhance their own mentoring and youth-development programs and organizations.

Through the support of individuals, foundations and corporations, this not-for-profit agency has been able to change the lives of the city's most disadvantaged children, matching them with caring adult role models – dependable friends who can help to expand their horizons, realize their potential and enrich their futures. To learn more, become a mentor and/or offer support, please visit www.bigsnyc.org.

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