



## **NEWS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Adrianna Killip  
Marino  
212-402-3524  
[AKillip@marinopr.com](mailto:AKillip@marinopr.com)

### **Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC Celebrates Mentoring at 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidewalks of New York Dinner**

*“Bigs” and “Littles” presented awards to 2019 honorees:*

*Greg Braca, President & CEO of TD Bank; Leslie Godridge, Vice Chairman & Co-head, Corporate & Commercial Banking at U.S. Bancorp; and Curtis Martin, NFL Hall of Fame*

*Gala raised \$2.2 million for youth mentoring programs*

**NEW YORK — April 23, 2019** — More than 600 New Yorkers came together to celebrate the impact of mentoring in New York City at Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC’s (BBBS of NYC) 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Sidewalks of New York Dinner. This year’s event raised \$2.2 million, which will enable the organization to expand its specialized mentoring programs and help hundreds more young people achieve their full potential.

This year’s gala – held at the New York Hilton – recognized individuals and corporations who embody the values of BBBS of NYC and are committed to inspiring positive change in their communities. BBBS of NYC honored **Greg Braca**, President and CEO of TD Bank; **Leslie Godridge**, Vice Chairman and Co-head, Corporate and Commercial banking, U.S. Bancorp; and **Curtis Martin**, NFL Hall of Fame and former NFL running back for the New England Patriots and New York Jets.

Critically acclaimed journalist and Emmy Award winner **Soledad O’Brien** hosted the event. **Laura Parsons**, licensed psychologist and BBBS of NYC board chairman, and **Jon Bram**, founding partner of Global Infrastructure Partners and BBBS of NYC trustee, served as dinner chairs.

“We are so proud to celebrate 40 years of this spectacular event that has helped build upon the Big Brothers Big Sisters legacy and inspire positive social change across New York City,” said Jon May, trustee and interim executive director of BBBS of NYC. “As we work to cultivate our City’s next generation of leaders, the funds raised during this year’s event are critical to expanding key initiatives and ensure all youth have opportunities to succeed. I’d like to thank our honorees, donors, supporters and partners for believing in our mission and investing in young people’s futures.”

Attendees gathered to watch four BBBS of NYC matches (a match is a “Little” brother or sister mentee and his or her “Big” brother or sister mentor) introduce this year’s guests of honor. Prior to the event, each match had the opportunity to meet with the individuals they were introducing and learn about their background. The matches spent several weeks preparing their heartfelt speeches for the ceremony, which they delivered to reflect the impact BBBS of NYC has had on their lives.

Big Brother Derrick Ma and Little Brother Lawrence introduced Dinner Chairs Laura Parsons and Jon Bram. Derrick and Lawrence were matched through the New American Program, and in their seven years together, they’ve become more than just mentor and mentee – they consider each other family. Derrick has helped Lawrence gain new perspectives in life, and he motivates him to chase his dreams. With the support of his Big, Lawrence was accepted to several leading universities – including Princeton University, Notre Dame and Yale, among others – and plans to study pre-med in college in the fall.

Big Sister Stacey Gayle and Little Sister Jennises presented Leslie Godridge with the *Public Service Award*. Stacey motivates Jennises to work hard and aim for the stars, and as a result, Jennises has excelled in school and is on a path to pursue her dreams of one day becoming a veterinarian. In addition to serving as a volunteer mentor, Stacey is co-director of the Bigs United affinity group, which works to recruit more African-American volunteers.

Big Brother Matthew Singh and Little Brother Jonathan presented Greg Braca with the *Corporate Award*. After having a Big Brother of his own, Matthew was inspired to serve as a mentor to a young person through the Workplace Mentoring program at TD Bank. He was matched with high school junior Jonathan, and Matthew empowers Jonathan to remain on track and have a positive outlook on life.

Big Sister Lindsay Caine and Little Sister Destinee presented Curtis Martin with the *Sports Award*. Through the Workplace Mentoring program at the NFL, Lindsay has helped Destinee explore various opportunities for her future and learn about college. During their time together, she also encourages Destinee to be persistent and stay focused on her goals of pursuing a career in the sports industry.

Past Sidewalks honorees have included Adebayo Ogunlesi, Anita-Agnes O. Hassel, Brandon Marshall, Cam Newton, Carmelo Anthony, Charles E. Phillips, Joe Torre, Lisa Sherman and PwC.

BBBS of NYC currently serves more than 5,500 young people across the five boroughs each year through a variety of specialized mentoring programs. BBBS of NYC's programs provide young people with the resources they need to excel in their academics and lead successful lives: 98% of the Littles BBBS of NYC serves are promoted to the next grade, 98% of high school seniors graduate from high school, and 92% of Littles who graduate from high school are accepted into college.

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, please visit: <http://www.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, children of incarcerated parents and those in foster care – as well as the Workplace Mentoring Program, 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 mentor-based 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. All contributions enable BBBS of NYC to continue to foster current match relationships and also provide more New York City children with life-changing mentors. Approximately \$3,500 funds the establishment of a new one-on-one match relationship for one year. To learn more, become a mentor, donate and/or offer support, please visit [www.bigsnyc.org](http://www.bigsnyc.org).

###