

### BBBS OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA, FORT MYERS, FL

BBBS of Southwest Florida's Parent-Mentor Program helps parents extend their child's mentoring to the home and community and gives other parents the opportunity to do the same. With about 50 parents at each program, this is an informal peer-to-peer initiative, in which parents get information about topics such as literacy and child development. They're also encouraged to share the information with other parents. The result: parents are better equipped to help their children meet match plan goals and take a more active role in their child's education and development.

### BBBS OF THE BRIDGE, WILKES BARRE, PA

BBBS of the Bridge develops its capacity to support families by cultivating extensive community contacts in partnerships with organizations like Catholic Social Services. Staff members participate in monthly training sessions on a variety of social work issues beyond the scope of BBBS of America trainings, such as behavioral, parenting, disability and immigration issues. In addition, the leadership of three full-time licensed social workers in the roles of executive director, program director and case work supervisor create a pool of expertise on family issues for volunteers and staff.

### BBBS OF THE CAPITAL REGION, ALBANY, NY

Parents are deeply involved in shaping this agency's offerings, from their children's activities and special events like the annual Back to School picnic, to program policy and procedures. Summer camp and support during holidays are popular options that have boosted family participation. BBBS of the Capital Region trains staff to maintain regular contact with parents and troubleshoot family issues such as child safety and relationship development. With a parental advisory group and representation on the Board of Directors, parents help determine which programs and services will be most valuable to achieving the goals of all families in the agency.

### FAMILIES COUNT FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

Through a joint venture of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, the FAMILIES COUNT Family Strengthening Awards recognize outstanding Big Brothers Big Sisters programs that work to give children what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families. Responding to the varied needs of the families they serve, these organizations improve the economic prospects of working men and women and create the services and networks of support that all families need to realize their aspirations for themselves and their children.



## BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS:

CAMARILLO, CA • LARAMIE, WY • ARLINGTON, TX • SHOW LOW, AZ

BLOOMINGTON, IN • COLUMBIA, MO • MIAMI, FL

FORT MYERS, FL • WILKES BARRE, PA • ALBANY, NY

CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES  
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN  
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

### BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF AMERICA

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The Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) agencies featured here have been honored to receive Family Strengthening Awards, a joint venture of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America and the Annie E. Casey Foundation. While all 10 agencies share a commitment to excellence, each one uses different strategies to take the next step in our historic commitment to families. Through staff and volunteers, these agencies work with parents and children to understand and help realize their aspirations for their families.

Our organization serves diverse populations throughout the country. Specific practices and resources are constantly evolving—scholarships, activities, workshops, technology and information, to name but a few. What doesn't change is our goal of reaching out to parents as partners. That's how we make a lasting impact on the entire family.

When our staff and volunteers take the extra initiative to support parents in achieving their goals, the results are clear: longer matches, higher quality relationships, children with brighter futures. These award-winning strategies reflect that ideal.

—Joyce Corlett, Director of Program Development, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

### BBBS OF VENTURA COUNTY, CAMARILLO, CA

From the first phone call, BBBS of Ventura County engages parents by emphasizing their importance in the match relationship. The agency underscores the fact that parents can't be all things to their children. Enlisting the services of BBBS ensures their children get additional role models to help guide them through the turbulent times of childhood and adolescence to become happy, productive adults. When parents feel like part of the team, the agency elicits other ways to support their individual situations and links them through referrals to community resources and other agencies.

### BBBS OF GREATER WYOMING, LARAMIE, WY

BBBS of Greater Wyoming created the "family enrollment specialist" position to improve the delivery of services to families. From enrollment throughout the relationship, the specialist identifies family strengths and needs, and makes recommendations and referrals to community organizations that can strengthen the family. The specialist also stays

current on community resources in order to quickly respond to parents' needs and requests for information. In the process, the specialist becomes an integral part of the family support system.

### BBBS OF NORTH TEXAS, ARLINGTON, TX

Parents who stay involved in their children's matches improve the quality and duration of the relationship. BBBS of North Texas highlights this important information at all of its regional Volunteer Appreciation events. Parents nominate volunteers for the "Bigs of the Year" awards and express their gratitude during the ceremony. The agency also makes awards for "Parents of the Year" to formally recognize the parents' role in safe, long-lasting match relationships and to celebrate the accomplishments of the entire family.

### BBBS OF NORTHEASTERN ARIZONA, SHOW LOW, AZ

As its community-based program grew more successful, BBBS of NEAZ used similar family-strengthening strategies in its school-based program—with excellent results. Cultivating direct communication between parents and volunteers is key for both programs. The agency encourages parents to spend time with the volunteers when they bring their children to activities. These relationships typically grow beyond program activities. As parents and volunteers bond, the connection opens the door to other agency services available to support the family, such as referrals to community resources.

### BBBS OF SOUTH CENTRAL INDIANA, BLOOMINGTON, IN

All of BBBS of South Central Indiana's practices, from volunteer training to setting goals for each match, are linked to family involvement. Parents identify up to 15 positive assets they think their children display, drawn from Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets. By working with volunteers, the parents learn ways they can help augment those strengths. Progress is evaluated at annual match meetings. Upon entering the program, only 10 percent of the children take part in activities outside of school. But after one year of being matched, the number of assets parents can identify in their child generally surpass 20, and 90 percent of children are involved in extracurricular activities.

### BBBS OF CENTRAL MISSOURI, COLUMBIA, MO

BBBS of Central Missouri recognizes that the weekly time a child has with a volunteer isn't enough if the child returns to a home in crisis. "We support our children by finding resources for their families, while helping the families strengthen themselves," is the agency's motto. Beyond the relationships between volunteer and child, the agency promotes relationships between volunteers and families by encouraging parents' participation in activities and regular feedback. As a result, in recent evaluations 63 percent of families said their family relations have become stronger since their child has been matched.

### BBBS OF GREATER MIAMI, MIAMI, FL

At every phase of BBBS of Greater Miami's process, families receive attention and support focused on helping them build better lives. To reflect the needs of its community, the agency has intensified its outreach to Hispanic families through bilingual information, staff and volunteers. Parents are asked to approve every match activity, communicate with volunteers and regularly discuss the match with their child, the volunteer and agency staff. The staff also connects families with community resources to address needs uncovered in orientation and family interview sessions, such as child safety issues.



WHEN OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS TAKE THE EXTRA INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT PARENTS IN ACHIEVING THEIR GOALS, THE RESULTS ARE CLEAR: LONGER MATCHES, HIGHER QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS, CHILDREN WITH BRIGHTER FUTURES.

—Joyce Corlett, Director of Program Development, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America