

Big News!



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Central Minnesota



Little Moments. Big Magic. Huge Impact.



The Franzen Family and Nick---It's All About Family!

Submitted by Rebecca Hillman, School Based Coordinator

Last month Kirstin Franzen *officially* became Nick's Big Sister. Nick was matched with Tony (Kirstin's husband) in February 2005. After being his "unofficial" Big Sister for over 4 years now, Kirstin decided she would go through the enrollment process as a way of saying, "I'm here and committed to [Nick], as Tony has been." Kirstin didn't become an official part of the match at first because she thought Nick just needed that extra male in his life; but as the relationship progressed, she saw that she played a special role in the match too. Nick's mom appreciates that he gets to see the Franzen family interacting. She says that they include him and make him feel like he's family.

When debating whether or not to go through the agency's enrollment process, Kirstin asked Nick if he wanted her to be his Big Sister and he said "yes" with a smile! He thinks BOTH Tony and Kirstin are fun to hang out with and he loves them like family. Kirstin explained that, through this experience, they have learned how to grow to love someone in a mentoring relationship. It has broadened their family's heart to a new level of caring and they now think of Nick just as if he was family. Recently, for a work presentation, Tony had to tell a group about his life and family. He naturally found himself including his great relationship with Nick. The Franzens are considered a Big Family because they have a daughter, Lynne. Kirstin and Tony have seen Nick become a great "big brother" to their daughter. Lynne, who is usually shy, loves being around him!

Since they were matched, Nick has given Tony and Kirstin a different (now teenage) perspective on the world, and has gotten them out doing things they wouldn't have done otherwise. Nick explained how the Franzens taught him "a lot of cool stuff" that he never knew before and he is thankful that Tony "gave him hockey." Now they both enjoy watching and playing together. The Franzens share many family activities and mealtimes with Nick and have learned to always be stocked up on ketchup, Nick's favorite. After dinner they often end up playing a game of Uno, where Nick usually wins!

When Tony was first matched, he and Kirstin had hoped it would be with a kid they could stick with through the years. They got just what they were hoping for. As time continues to fly by, they can't imagine life without Nick. The Franzens will be there for Nick as long as he wants them to be...and Nick is happy to keep them around!



Big Family Tony (Top Left), Lynne (Top Middle), & Kirstin (Top Right) Franzen with their Little Brother Nick

The Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship Informational Meeting

On Monday, September 28th at 6:00 pm at the Big Brothers Big Sisters office there will be an informational meeting regarding the Annexstad Family Foundation Scholarship. This is a four-year, renewable scholarship that provides support for deserving young men and women who have matured as "Littles" through the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. By combining resources from the Annexstad Family Foundation and the specific college or university, the program's goal is to assure funds for tuition, fees, room, board, and books. Any former or current "Little" who is in 10th grade or above is encouraged to attend along with his/her parent/guardian. To sign up, please contact Ann Matvick at (320) 253-1616 or email her at amatvick@bbbscentralmn.org. If you are unable to attend, please let Ann know and she will make arrangements to meet with you at a different time.

BBBS Welcomes New Staff



Louis Biondo

Hello Big Brothers Big Sisters community! My name is Louis Biondo, and I am the new Match Support Coordinator on staff. I have the privilege of working with community-based matches, as well as helping to plan activities and events. I am looking forward to getting to know my matches better and supporting the friendships that have been formed. I can't wait to hear about the adventures you have all shared and continue to experience!

I have lived all over the country starting in Utah, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and finally ending up in Forest Lake, Minnesota, where I graduated high school. I attended college at St. Cloud State University, and graduated in May of 2009 with a Bachelor's Degree in Community Psychology. Prior to my graduation I was an intern with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Minnesota. I learned a lot about the agency during this time. I also assisted the Bel Clare Coordinator at the Bel Clare Clubhouse, where I had the opportunity to get to know the youth of the community there. I have a lot of great memories from my internship, and I am looking forward to the many great memories yet to come through my new position with BBBS.

I am pleased to be a part of the terrific staff at Big Brothers Big Sisters, and look forward to meeting everyone who is involved with the program.

Angela Fischer



Hi! I'm Angela Fischer and I joined the team in August as an Enrollment Coordinator as well as one of the School-Based Coordinators in Foley with Ann Matvick, Program Director. I have lived in St. Cloud my entire life. I truly enjoy the area and the wonderful things it has to offer. I graduated from St. Cloud State University with a Bachelor's degree in Social Work. I've had the opportunity to gain experience with kids in multiple environments, most recently working in the area of children's mental health. In my free time I enjoy traveling, biking, spending time with friends and family, going to movies and doing anything creative! I've been a Big Sister for 3 ½ years and am excited to now be a part of creating that magic for future Bigs and Littles!



Amber Horton

Hello I am Amber Horton, and I am one of the new Match Support Coordinators for Big Brothers Big Sisters. I will be working with community-based matches by supporting each match to ensure child safety, positive impacts for youth, and making sure the match relationship between volunteer and child is successful. I am from Circle Pines, MN and graduated in 2004 from Centennial High School. After high school, I went to the College of Saint Catherine where I received a Bachelor of Science degree in Social Work. Before accepting the position with BBBS, I worked as a residential counselor for Avanti Center for Girls, which specializes in long term Dialectical Behavior Therapy Treatment and also short term stabilization in the shelter and evaluation program. I worked there for about a year and a half; I learned a lot from each resident that I will take with me for the rest of my life. I am very excited to start this new position and look forward to meeting the matches.

John Holaway – AmeriCorps VISTA

Hello Central Minnesota! My name is John Holaway, and I am the new AmeriCorps VISTA serving with Big Brothers Big Sisters. I will be working toward capacity building/fund development for the organization as well as with the teen/youth advisory council at our site-based program at Bel Clare Estates.



I was born and raised in Illinois and received my undergraduate degree in political science from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. I enjoy a wide range of activities, including reading and writing, going to movies and the theatre, poetry, good conversation, most anything outdoors, most any sport, meeting new people, dining out, going out with friends and taking in new experiences. Life is short, so I try to never lose my "holy curiosity" or settle for complacency.

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A Message from the Executive Director



Irv Cross

“The Future is Now!”

One of the biggest challenges Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies are faced with in the current economic environment is to provide increased mentoring services for the growing base of families and children who want and need them. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Minnesota has recognized that need and has made a commitment to reach out to as many families as possible. We have recently hired three new case managers to enable us to expand our number of matches in all of our programs. We have expanded our four-county coverage of Morrison, Stearns, Benton, and Sherburne to include the northern tier of Wright County. We recently partnered with St. Cloud State University’s Division of General Studies to match college students in the DGS program as Bigs in our school & site-based programs.

Why are we expanding our services during a time of economic decline? For me the answer is simple.

BBBS operates under three basic guiding principles:

1. We will stay true to our mission to help children reach their potential through professionally supported, one- to- one relationships with meaningful impact.
2. Our vision consists of successful mentoring relationships for all children who need and want them; contributing to better schools, brighter futures, and stronger communities for all.
3. We promise to foster a culture of commitment to diversity and inclusion, partnership and collaboration, continuous learning, people development and high performance.

Our agency relies on support from volunteers and a broad base of donors to operate. We do not charge fees for our services. It costs about \$1,000 per match per year. Our 100 years of history and data has clearly shown that a match that remains in place for a minimum of one year will positively change a child’s life.

Thanks to the generosity of The Federated Challenge, Traut Wells, ING Direct, Leighton Broadcasting, Coborn’s, Cold Spring Brewing Company, and other corporate donors, along with a great number of individual donors, we are able to take on an aggressive strategy to expand our number of matches. We need all of Central Minnesota and beyond to help us provide the needed mentoring services for the families and children who want and need us. Help us help Central Minnesota. It is during the “tough” times that we need to be strongest.

More families and children need us today than ever.

We have long-standing independent research from Public Private Ventures that shows kids in our program are more likely than peers not involved in Big Brothers Big Sisters to: have good school attendance and achievement; avoid negative/illegal behaviors; and have positive relationships with their families and others. A breakthrough study conducted by Harris Interactive® on behalf of Big Brothers Big Sisters finds adults mentored as children through Big Brothers Big Sisters are more likely than peers with similar backgrounds but were not involved in the program to have a four-year college degree and incomes of \$75,000 or more. They also report strong relationships with their spouses, children and friends.

If you want to secure Central Minnesota’s future, support a match for one year.

Donate cash, volunteer as a Big, provide personal or in-kind services.... You will be able to forecast our communities’ future by the number of matches made today. Thanks for all you do. Together we will make central Minnesota a stronger and better community.

“The Future is NOW!”



Andrew Van Bruggen & Chris's New Friendship



BS Becky Stein and LS Torie at the beginning of their friendship



BB Tony Schleicher & LB Ryan, Friends from the start



Announcements

Pheasant Hunt

Pheasants Forever will host another hunt for our Littles on Saturday, September 26, at Fischer's Hunt Club, near Albany. A carpool will meet at Fleet Farm (near the carwash) in Waite Park at 7:15 a.m. and will plan to return around 1:30 p.m. Littles will be matched with an experienced hunter for the day. They will get to target shoot before going out in the field. Lunch will be provided. All Littles must have gone through Gun Safety and must bring their Gun Safety Certificate with them. Littles do not need to be accompanied by an adult as they will be paired with a hunting mentor; but parents or Bigs can tag along for the experience. There is no charge for the activity. Space is limited to 15 Littles. Please contact Rebecca at 320-258-4513 or rhillman@bbbscentralmn.org as soon as possible if you are interested. She can answer questions and will also ask a few registration-related questions.

Join Us for this Month's Big Social!



Join us at **The Red Carpet Martini Lounge from 4:30-6 p.m. on Tuesday, September 8!**

This is a great opportunity to relax, meet other Bigs in the program, and bring friends you think would make great Bigs and with the purchase of any two drinks of your choice you can have all you can eat of their amazing appetizer bar!

Those under 21 are also welcome to join us but must RSVP to Amanda Toppe at 320-258-4538 or atoppe@bbbscentralmn.org.

This is a monthly event happening on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, so mark it on your calendars! It will be a great time and we hope to see you all there!

Celebrating Self Expression

Be sure to sign up for this fun activity being offered to Littles, Bigs, and parents/guardians of Littles on Saturday, September 12, from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

The activity is titled "Celebrating Self Expression". It is being hosted by Paige LaDue Henry, owner of Northern Brights, a downtown boutique shop that creates handbags, accessories, etc.



This entertaining activity is for boys and girls, as well as adults.

- Participants will have an opportunity to create a journal cover (under direction of Paige LaDue Henry), using materials from the boutique shop.
- Marybeth Lorbiecki, an award-winning author of over 25 books for children, will be sharing tips on writing and journaling (and some personal experiences as a young author).

Cost is \$6 per journal cover (includes a notebook).

Snacks will be provided.

Space is limited, so sign up now to ensure a spot. To reserve a spot, please contact your case manager or Shari at swahlin@bbbscentralmn.org or 320-258-4511.

BowlForKids'Sake®

SIGN UP NOW

October 23, 24, and 25 at Granite Bowl South in St. Cloud.

BFKS is one of our major fund-raising events, which we rely on heavily to help fund our programs. The theme for this year's Bowl For Kids' Sake is "Going Green".

Anyone may participate. Interested bowlers may bowl individually or form a team of up to five friends, co-workers, family members, or neighbors, and get pledges for bowling or pledge themselves. Bowlers enjoy free bowling, shoes, and fun while raising money for at-risk kids.

The minimum pledge per bowler is \$25, but we encourage participants to get as many pledges as possible. Bowlers enjoy free bowling, shoes and fun while raising money for our program.

Be a part of the magic! Plan to join us for this fun and rewarding experience. If you are a Big, ask your Little to bowl with you. You can also participate by donating a prize or prizes to be awarded during the event.

For more information, contact Shari at swahlin@bbbscentralmn.org or (320) 258-4511.

Anniversaries

9 Years:

Richard Wright & Taylor

8 Years:

Kelly & Shelly Davidson & Terrence

7 Years:

Steve Nohner & Justin

5 Years:

Amanda Schreiner & Arianna

3 Years:

Katherine Ewens & Abby
Amanda Faulkner & Lexie

2 Years:

Shannon & Devin Westgard & Andrew
Dave Faust & Tyler
Stephanie Kollar & Paige

BB Steve Connelly and LB Evan at Bendix Elementary in Annandale

1 year:

Ashlie Zemien & Raelin
Bart Kilgo & Jonh
Jackie Voigt & Elizabeth
Tracie Gunderson & Kaliyah
John & Marie Kahlert & Troy
Phil, Michelle, Marissa, & Evan
Morrison & Tim
Sheena Funk & Tonya
Anthony Lotzer & Mathias
Andrew Humbert & Sam
Michael S. & Josh
Brittany M. & Kathryn
Megan J. & Cassie
Shawnte Kehn & Dezirae
Brianna B. & Megan



BS Heather Grinsteiner and LS Briana at their match in Groener Park in Clear Lake

New Community Matches

Andrew VanBruggen & Chris
Wendi Binsfeld & Gabby
Tony Schleicher & Ryan
Heather Grinsteiner & Briana
Steve Connelly & Evan
Miriam Baer & Taylor
Becky Stein & Torie
Brenda Sickler & Katashae'
Chelsie Binsfeld & Kennethia
Elaine Hermanson & Erika
Emily Hansen & Alexis
Lisa Studniski & Nautisha
Dean Wolfekunle & Alex
Miriam Baer & Taylor
Rebecca Stein & Torie
Sharon Brumbaugh & Shayla
Daniel Heinzen & Niles
Melissa Boroughs & Ixayana



St. John's University Football Passes

Thanks to the St. John's University Athletic Department, we have regular season, single-game passes available. All games are at Collegeville at 1 p.m. (September 19, October 17 & 24, and November 14) Passes are available to Big, Littles, and families involved in the program. Please contact your case manager or 320-253-1616 if you are interested in receiving passes.

(Continued from page 2)

My journey to Minnesota began in January of this year when I quit my position as a newspaper columnist/reporter and moved to Minnesota without a plan, but seeking a purpose. I left my family, friends and possessions behind and hit the road for a destination completely unknown to me. I was looking for a new direction to shake things up a bit and chart a new path for my life. I believe the experience has not only made me stronger but also renewed my desire to serve others in an effort to build a better community for all.

Big Brothers Big Sisters offers me a unique opportunity to bring my ideals to fruition as I get to be a part of strengthening lives and building better communities through its long-running, well-established mentoring organization. I believe in the program and have seen first-hand the positive difference it can make in one's life. I am extremely impressed by the caring volunteers and dedicated staff who work together nurturing and helping children realize their potential by providing positive life experiences that they will take with them forever. I look forward to my service as part of the Big Brothers Big Sisters team and hope that it is a rewarding, enriching experience for everyone involved.

What is AmeriCorps VISTA?

AmeriCorps VISTA is the national service program designed specifically to fight poverty. Founded as "Volunteers in Service to America" in 1965 and incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs in 1993, VISTA has been on the front lines in the fight against poverty in America for more than 40 years.

VISTA members commit to serve full-time for a year at nonprofit organizations or local government agencies, working to fight illiteracy, improve health services, create businesses, strengthen community groups, and much more.

The services of a VISTA member were made available (via an application process) through the Initiative Foundation (the sponsoring organization) and the Corporation for National and Community Service. The staff at Big Brothers Big Sisters welcomes John and embraces his commitment to community service.

Child Safety Seats - Give 'em a Boost!

As of July 1, 2009 the MN Child Passenger Restraint Law has been in effect. Commonly called the Booster Seat Law, new regulations now state that **children must be in a booster or child safety seat until they reach either a height of 4 feet 9 inches or 8 years of age.** Best safety practices recommend going by the child's height rather than age; this way the seatbelt will properly fit and be the most effective. Safety seats and boosters should be correctly installed and used according to manufacturer's instructions. (Instructions can often be found online if lost or misplaced). Here are some useful tips to remember when buckling your child into their booster seat:



- Boosters should be used in back seats only. (Airbags can cause serious injury to young children so kids less than 13 years of age should stay out of the front seat.)
- Always use **both** the shoulder strap and the lap belt.
- The lap belt should lie low and snug across the child's upper thighs.
- The shoulder belt crosses the middle of the child's chest and shoulder. (Often the booster seat will be equipped with a plastic clip to ensure correct placement of this strap.)

Proper use of your child's booster seat will not only help to keep them safe and comfortable on the road, but it can also save you from a citation of \$50 to \$100! For further information about the Child Passenger Restraint Law visit www.buckleupkids.state.mn.us/ or www.carseatsmadesimple.org

Remember to practice safe driving habits with your kids at every age: always buckle-up and never leave children in a vehicle alone.

(Information obtained from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.)

CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY – 2009

Child Passenger Safety Checkpoints:

St. Cloud Area Clinics: Sept. 15, 3-6 pm, Oct. 21, 3-6 p.m., Nov 17, 3-6 p.m. Call (320) 229-5139 for appointment.

Please call to make appointments for the following community checkpoints:

Waite Park Police Department: Alicia Mages (320) 251-7393

Community Behavioral Health Hospital – Cold Spring: Bonnie Hansen (320) 685-1003

Car Seat Distribution Programs

Counties listed below also have car seat distribution programs for U-Care / Medica participants:

Morrison County Public Health: (320) 632-6664 (Car seat distribution for U-Care)

Sherburne Co. Public Health: (763) 241-2750 or 1-800-433-5237 (Seat distribution for Sherburne County residents, U-Care/Medica)

Wright County Public Health: (763) 682-7400, or 1-800-362-3667, Ext. 7468 (Seat distribution for U-Care)

Benton County Public Health (320) 968-5087 or (320) 968-5172 (Seat distribution and car seat checks for Benton County residents, U-Care/Medica)

OTHER RESOURCES:

St. Cloud Hospital: Sharon Dunham (320) 229-5139

Gold Cross Ambulance: Tom Jansky (320) 251-2302

Stearns County Human Services: Jodi Eickhoff (320) 656-6100

www.nhtsa.dot.gov (Then go under Child Passenger Safety), or 1-800-424-9393

www.buckleupkids.state.mn.us

www.carseat.org

www.carseatsmadesimple.org

SAVE THE DATE – Oktoberfest - Saturday, October 3

Join us at this Upcoming Fundraising Event!

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Minnesota will be participating in a fund-raising event hosted by Cold Spring Brewing Company to help raise money for BBBS.

BBBS has been invited to have a food/refreshment/information booth at Oktoberfest on October 3 from 2:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at the Cold Spring Brewing Company production facility. We are tentatively planning to sell brats, pulled-pork sandwiches, and hot-link sausages in partnership with Famous Dave's.

Entertainment will be provided by the Elk River German Band and the Whiskey Plate Duo.

Plan to stop out and enjoy some food and refreshments - while supporting BBBS and the children of Central Minnesota.



Bowl For Kids' Sake

Team Registration

Team Name: _____ Team Captain's Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ ZIP: _____

Day Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____ Email: _____

Bowler #2 Name: _____ Bowler #4 Name: _____

Bowler #3 Name: _____ Bowler #5 Name: _____

Please indicate a bowling time preference from those listed below.

October 23rd

5:30 - 7:00

7:30 - 9:00

October 24th

12:00-1:30

2:00 - 3:30

4:00 - 5:30

October 25th

12:00-1:30

2:00 - 3:30

Time slots will be reserved on
a first come-first serve basis.

Please return the completed form via mail, fax, or email prior to October 1, 2009

Or you may register on-line at <http://www.firstgiving.com/BBBS-CM>

Address: Big Brothers Big Sisters
15 Sixth Ave. N.
St. Cloud, MN 56303

Phone: (320) 253-1616
Fax: (320) 253-1702
Email: swahlin@bbbscentralmn.org

Sponsorships

Interested in being a sponsor? Your corporate name and/or logo will be prominently displayed on materials based on your sponsorship level.

Mentoring Sponsor \$2,500.00

Recognition:

- All imprinted apparel.
- All print marketing including banners, posters, table tents, etc.
- All participant correspondence and event materials (pledge sheets, etc.).
- Agency newsletter and Annual Report.
- BBBS On-line giving site

Match Sponsor \$1,000.00

Recognition:

- All print marketing including banners, posters, table tents, etc.
- All participant correspondence and event materials (pledge sheets, etc.)
- Agency newsletter and Annual Report.
- BBBS On-line giving site

BBBS Friend \$500.00

Recognition:

- All print marketing including banners, posters, table tents, pledge sheets.
- Agency newsletter and Annual Report.
- BBBS On-line giving site

Current Resident or

To contact us or to remove
your address:

www.bbbscentralmn.org

320-253-1616

Toll-free: 1-888-600-1616

S.A.F.E. (Seeking A Fun Experience) Night Was a Blast!

MANY THANKS to everyone who helped to make this fun event at the Sartell Police and Fire Department such a success! A very special THANKS to Big Sister Jill Luehmann who did such an incredible job organizing this event! We'd also like to thank the volunteer fire fighters who were there that evening, including Chief Heim, Assistant Chief Dingman and Randy Giles, along with the entire crew who allowed kids (young and old) to sit in their truck, tour the station, and try out the fire hose! Thanks to Gold Cross staff Elie Deeb and Dan Dazle who answered our questions and allowed us to check out their ambulance. A special thank you to Sgt. Bukowski and his canine partner, Storm, for performing an attack demonstration for us. Thanks to Dawn Solarz who let us all push buttons in her St. Cloud squad car, and take turns being locked in the back seat! A huge thank you to the Sartell Police Department for hosting and offering fingerprinting, tours, and so much more. You all were so kind and generous! Many thanks to Chief Jim Hughes, Todd Ackerman, Todd Phillipe and again Jill Luehmann!



*Left: BS Wendi
Binsfeld & LS Gabby*

*Right: BS & Sartell
Police Officer, Jill
Luehmann with her
LS Tina*



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