

# Igniting Potential



**Big Brothers  
Big Sisters®**  
OF CONNECTICUT

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

**T'Naeh**  
Little Sister, Age 8



Serving children  
throughout all of  
**Connecticut!**

**Ellie**

Little Sister, Age 11





# Who We Are

**We're celebrating our 59th year serving Connecticut children!** For many of those years, as Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters, we served three quarters of the state. A 2022 merger with BBBS of Southwestern CT transformed us into Big Brothers Big Sisters of CT, serving the entire state.

Our team creates and supports high quality mentoring relationships between at-risk youth and professionally screened and supervised adult volunteers. Our mission is to improve the lives of children who can benefit from added adult support and empower them to achieve their life goals.

We accomplish this through four core programs: Community-Based Mentoring, School-Based Mentoring, Big Futures and the Foster Grandparent Program. All of these help children to garner the skills and assets they need to reach their highest potential.

# Why We Are Unique

With over 120 years of national Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring success – and six decades of success in Connecticut – to build upon, **we invest in enduring, life-changing experiences for volunteers and the children they mentor.**

We create each match through a process that includes in-depth interviews and reference checks. Once we've matched a child with a volunteer, our trained professionals monitor, support, and evaluate each match to ensure positive outcomes and relationship longevity. It's this on-going support that's made Big Brothers Big Sisters of Connecticut the state's premier youth mentoring organization.

For the more than

# 100,000

# kids

we've served since our founding, we've ignited great potential.

94

percent of youth report enjoying a strong mentoring relationship

93

percent consider their "Bigs" to be Very Important Adults in their lives

86

percent reduction in anti-social behavior

82

percent reduction in school discipline

81

percent increase in college aspirations

69

percent reduction in substance use

21

percent increase in emotional self-regulation

16

percent increase in school engagement

## From July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

- Our Community-Based Program served 502 children.
- Our Site/School-Based Program operated at 20 sites and served 377 children.
- Our Foster Grandparent Program operated at 40 sites and served 272 children.
- Our Big Futures Program served 108 teens and young adults.
- Our staff spent over 42,000 hours creating and supporting life-changing matches between children in need and caring Big Brothers and Big Sisters.
- Our volunteers devoted more than 42,283 hours to inspiring, teaching and mentoring their Littles.
- The time our Bigs spent with Littles this past year was worth over \$1.42 million – a huge value that your support made possible.



Ajae

Little Sister, Age 20

When **Bernie Fields & Arthur Director** founded Big Brothers Big Sisters in Connecticut in 1966,

the agency served just Middletown. Now, as Big Brothers Big Sisters of Connecticut celebrates its 59th year of helping children facing adversity to succeed, we've grown to serve children in every city and town across Connecticut.

## Our Impact

Our mentoring programs create healthier families, brighter futures, and stronger communities. Among children we serve, graduation rates increase, use of drugs and alcohol drops, and 86% achieve higher grades. Long-term, our mentees experience lifetime income gains of 15 to 20%, meaning \$260,000-\$347,000 more earnings for each \$2,500 invested in mentoring Connecticut children. Each time we pair a child with a Big, we establish a one-to-one relationship that can blossom into a future of unlimited potential.



# Christiana

Little Sister, Age 9 with Big Sister Jenna

# Igniting Potential

Jenna Levenson from Hartford, an Actuarial Intern at Doctor's Company Specialty Underwriters, has mentored Little Sister Christiana for the past 2 years and is **helping to ignite her potential.**

Christiana's mom **helped to ignite her potential** by enrolling her in our program and supporting her and her Big Sister every step of the way.

Because generous individuals and organizations like **Anholt Services (USA)** and its Managing Director and our former Board member, **Joe Massoud**, continue to support our program, **Little Sister Christiana is igniting her potential.**

Joe Massoud





# Alejandro

Little Brother, age 16  
with Big Brother Paul



# Igniting Potential

Paul Philpott from West Hartford, an aerospace engineer at Collins Aerospace, has mentored Little Brother Alejandro for 6 1/2 years and is **helping to ignite his potential.**

Alejandro's mom **ignited his potential** by enrolling him in our program and supporting him and Paul.

Because generous individuals and organizations like **Tecton Architects** and its Associate Director of Business Development, **Melissa Roy**, generously support our program, **Alejandro is igniting his potential.**

Melissa Roy





# Olivia

Little Sister, age 10  
with Big Sister Courtney



# Igniting Potential

Courtney Harkins-Latimer lives in Wolcott and is a nurse at Midstate Medical Center, Meriden. She has mentored Olivia for more than a year and is **helping to ignite her potential.**

Olivia's grandmother **ignited her potential** by enrolling her in our program and continuing to support her and Courtney.

Michael Espada, of Windsor, is a Senior Business Control Specialist at Bank of America. He has mentored Little Brother Parker for about 1 ½ years, **helping to ignite his potential.**

Parker's grandmother has **ignited his potential** by enrolling him in our program and continuing to support him and Michael as a mentoring match.



## Parker

Little Brother, age 12  
With Big Brother Michael



# Desai

Little Brother, age 9  
with Big Brother Laurence

# Igniting Potential

Laurence Burnsed from West Hartford, Director of Health & Human Services for the Town of East Hartford, became a Big Brother to Desai a year ago and is **helping to ignite his potential.**

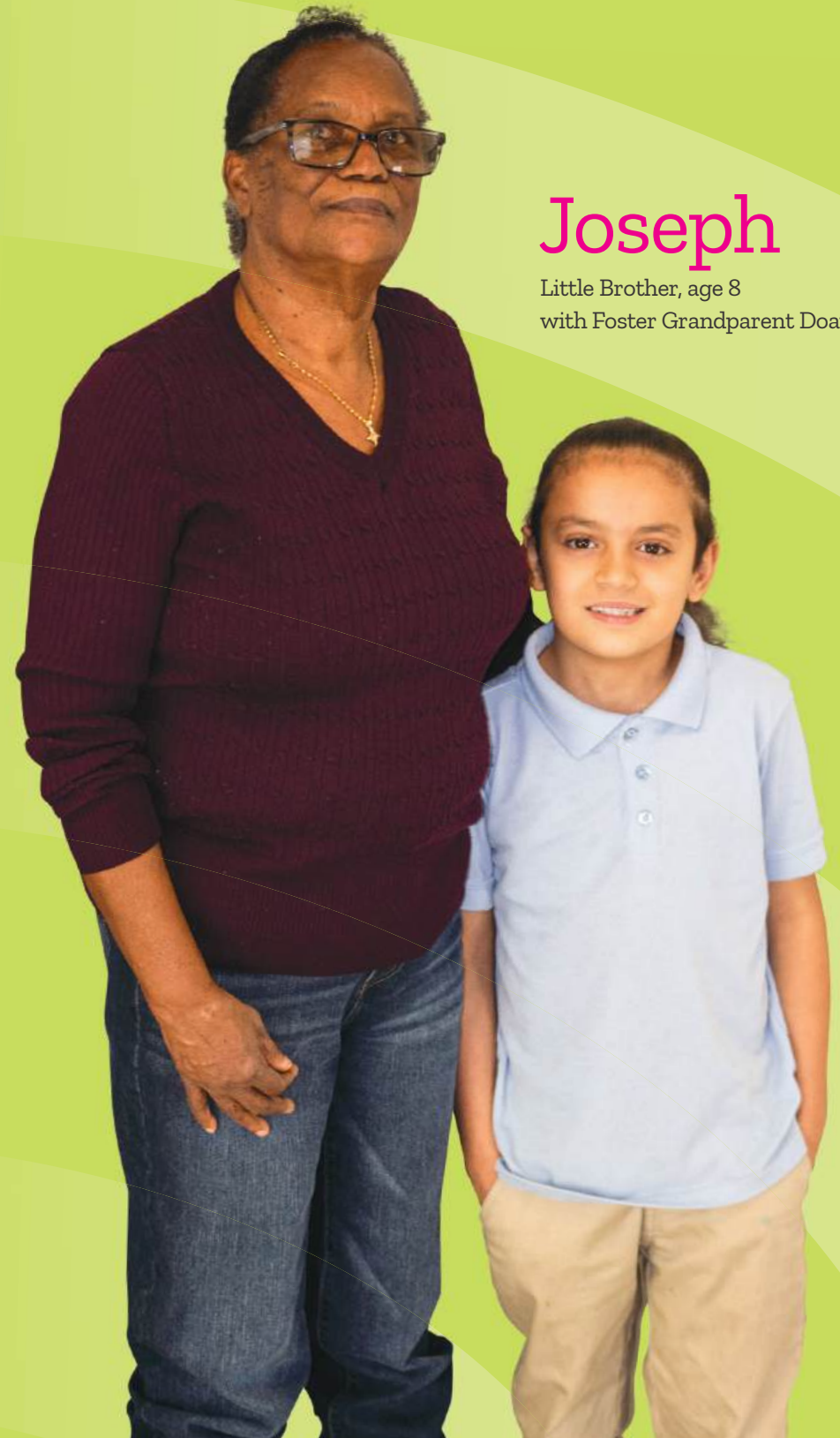
Desai's mom **ignited his potential** by enrolling him in our program and supporting him and Laurence spending quality time together.

Doan Christian is from Avon and has volunteered with our Foster Grandparent Program for the past five years. Doan is a Foster Grandparent – a senior mentor – at M.D. Fox Elementary School in Hartford, where she **helps ignite the potential of third grade students.**

Administrators at M.D. Fox Elementary School **ignited the potential** of their students when they decided to partner with our Foster Grandparent Program and place senior volunteers in numerous classrooms.

## Joseph

Little Brother, age 8  
with Foster Grandparent Doan





## Bella

Little Sister, age 19  
with Big Futures  
Program Director  
Lorriane Gallant

# Igniting Potential

## Johan

Little Brother, age 8, with  
his mother Natasha

### **We've ignited potential for Bella**

because Big Futures Program Director Lorriane Gallant (left), drawing on 10+ years of experience in mentoring, maintains ongoing contact with Bella (left), her father Daniel, and her Big Sister Sarah to make sure the match is progressing smoothly and adhering to the guidelines of our program model.

### **We will ignite potential for Johan**

because caregivers, like mom Natasha (right), are committed to supporting life-changing mentoring for their children. Johan (right) is 8 years old and is currently on our waiting list. He and his mother, who enrolled him in our program, are hoping he'll soon be matched with a caring, inspirational mentor. Big Brothers Big Sisters' enrollment team will pair Johan with someone who shares similar interests, and they'll pursue activities and adventures that broaden their horizons and expand their potential.





# T'Naeh

Little Sister, age 8  
with Big Sister Shauna-Kaye



# Igniting Potential

## BIG FUTURES PROGRAM

Ajae

Little Sister, Age 20  
with Big Sister Ginny

When mentees – like Little Sister Ajae on the right – approach the end of high school and start planning for what’s next, we have them covered. Our **Big Futures Program** supports young adults from high school through their mid-20’s – helping them develop clear post- secondary plans and reach their goals – in terms of education, training, career and life.

Ginny Kim from Glastonbury, Deputy General Counsel for the Office of the State Treasurer, has mentored Ajae for the past 4 1/2 years and is **helping to ignite her potential**.

Shauna-Kaye Williams (left) lives in Hartford and is an automotive logistical specialist for an aviation unit in the Army National Guard. She’s mentored Little Sister T’Naeh for 1 1/2 years.

T’Naeh’s parents **ignited her potential** by enrolling her in our program and continuing to support her and her Big Sister. When T’Naeh reaches her junior year of high school, she may get involved in Big Futures too, where Shauna-Kaye will continue to support her every step of the way.

Learn more at: [ctbig.org/bfp](http://ctbig.org/bfp)





# Leo

Little Brother, Age 11  
with Big Brother Damian



# Igniting Potential

Big Brother Damian Smith is from West Hartford and is the Engineering Management Director at Evernorth Health Services. He's mentored Little Brother Leo for over three years and is **helping to ignite his potential.**

Leo's mom **ignited his potential** by enrolling him in and continuing to support him in our program. Amy Brazauski of Meriden, a high school English teacher with New Haven Public Schools, has mentored Little Sister Olivia for about 2 ½ years and is helping to **ignite her potential.**

Olivia's mom helped **ignite her potential** by enrolling her in our program and supporting her every step of the way.

## Olivia

Little Sister, age 14  
with Big Sister Amy



# Chairman's Letter

For the past three years, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Connecticut's leadership team and Board of Directors have pursued a straightforward goal: reach more children in need with top quality mentoring. We built a three-year growth plan to achieve this goal, with clear milestones along the way. It will wrap up in June.

I'm happy to report we met and exceeded our robust goals. In 2024, we served 20% more children than the prior year, and we're aiming for double digit growth in kids served this year as well. We're now working on our next three-year plan, which will involve continued expansion of children served, along with program innovations to help more kids thrive than ever before.

Setting and meeting audacious goals is only possible thanks to great staff, Board, volunteers and families working together. And there's more work to be done. With so many Connecticut children facing challenges today, we will do all we can to reach as many as possible.

With your help, we know we can. Thank you for your support. Let's work together to help all Connecticut children thrive in the years to come!



Jay Buth  
Chairman, Board of Directors  
Vice President, Controller & Chief Accounting  
Officer Eversource Energy

## The Saunders

Nigel, age 10 (front, left)  
Lennox, age 10 (front, right)  
Lawrence, age 13 (back, left)  
Nija Saunders, mom (back, middle)  
Leo, age 11 (back, right)



# President's Letter

The past three years brought major changes for our team: A merger that made us Big Brothers Big Sisters of Connecticut, the launch of the Big Futures Program, the start of new mentoring programs at schools, universities and workplaces across the state, the use of Developmental Assets to spur mentees' personal growth – the list goes on.

We're now developing our next three-year strategic plan, which will focus on two key things:

- Increasing the number of children we serve through our core programs – Community-Based Mentoring, School & Site-Based Mentoring, Big Futures and the Foster Grandparents Program.
- Leveraging the Search Institute's Developmental Assets model to help our children thrive.

In plain English, the Developmental Assets are 40 supports and strengths - identified through analysis of thousands of data sets – that help a young person succeed. Half relate to external factors, e.g., support from caring adults, families and schools. Half relate to internal factors like social-emotional skills and values. Studies show that a young person with 30 or more assets is most likely to achieve their goals and thrive.

We have trained all our staff in this model and are now training our volunteers as well. Over the coming three years, we plan to incorporate Developmental Assets into our programs, using pre-match and annual surveys to assess each young person's growth. We'll ensure that youths' goals align with their assessments, and we'll use follow-up instruments to track progress and promote continued growth.

Our aim is straightforward: Help every child and youth with whom we work gain the assets they need to thrive. We look forward to making this vision a reality. We couldn't do it without your support and partnership – thank you!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andy Fleischmann". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Andy Fleischmann  
President & CEO  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Connecticut

# Igniting Potential

The information below adds up to potential ignited for children across Connecticut.

## CHILDREN

### MALE:

46%

### FEMALE:

53%

### NON-BINARY:

1%

### AFRICAN AMERICAN/ WEST INDIAN:

28%

### ASIAN:

7%

### MULTI-RACIAL:

13%

### CAUCASIAN:

14%

### LAT/PUERTO RICAN:

44%

### OTHER:

1%

## ADULTS

### MALE:

32%

### FEMALE:

66%

### NON-BINARY:

1%

### AFRICAN AMERICAN/ WEST INDIAN:

12%

### ASIAN:

7%

### MULTI-RACIAL:

3%

### CAUCASIAN:

58%

### LAT/PUERTO RICAN

15%

### OTHER:

4%

## AUDITED FINANCES

Fiscal Year July 1, 2023  
– June 30, 2024

### SUPPORT AND REVENUE

**\$ 3,290,756**

Individual Contributions	\$ 333,726
Government Grants	\$ 1,654,676
Corp & Foundation Grants	\$ 757,483
Special Events	\$ 344,721
United Way Grants	\$ 35,368
In-Kind Contributions	\$ 112,840
Investment Income	\$ 51,942

### EXPENSES

**\$ 2,877,561**

Program & Program Management	\$ 2,462,582
Other	\$ 184,584
Fundraising	\$ 230,395

### NET ASSETS

Net Assets – Beginning of Year	\$ 1,584,197
Changes in Net Assets	\$ 413,194
Net Assets – End of Year	\$ 1,997,391



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**Bella**

Little Sister, age 19

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## Parker

Little Brother  
Age 12





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## Christiana

Little Sister, Age 9



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## Johan

Little Brother, Age 8

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Director of Site and School-Based Programs

### **Rebecca Arther**

Volunteer Manager

### **Rosalin Alcantara**

Foster Grandparent Program Manager

### **Alyssa Barone**

Lead Program Specialist

### **Thomas Bautista**

Match Support Coordinator

### **Susan Black**

Lead Site-Based Match Support Coordinator

### **Ashley Bongiorno**

Match Support Coordinator

### **Julia Correia**

Site-Based Program Specialist

### **Ryan Elgin**

Development & Events Coordinator

### **Jessica Fontaine**

Marketing & Community Engagement Manager

### **Melinda Fuentes**

Youth & Family Manager

### **Janay Hagins**

Big Futures Program AmeriCorps Vista

### **Nathalie Herrera**

Match Support Specialist

### **Isabella Lage**

Program Assistant

### **Margarita Laboy**

Foster Grandparent Lead Program Specialist

### **Cecilia Lopez**

Foster Grandparent Program Specialist

### **Jacqueline Lundie**

Senior Match Support Specialist

### **Melissa Novak**

Site-Based Program Manager

### **Lillian Nunez**

Volunteer Manager

### **Mikhel Pagan**

Site-based Program Coordinator

### **Eleanor Powell**

Program Training & Quality Assurance Coordinator

### **Emma Russell**

Learning & Engagement Manager

### **Justin Santana**

Big Futures Program Coordinator

### **Bria Stanley**

Site-Based Program Coordinator

### **Antonisha Spence**

Site-based Program Coordinator

### **Katie Tremblay**

Program Data Coordinator

### **Melissa Tritinger**

Grants Administrator

### **Jessica Williams**

Youth & Family Manager

### **Elizabeth Zetina**

Site-Based Program Specialist

Our community and site-based programs are continually

# Igniting Potential



## The Annual Golf Classic

Big Brother Saurabh Bohra from Farmington and his Little Brother Kaden from West Hartford were the featured speakers at our Annual Golf Classic in June.

Kaden and Saurabh rocked the mike at the Golf Club of Avon as they spoke

about their **Community-Based Program** match and the benefits of mentoring. Kaden, 9, warmed golfers' hearts when he said how much he loved his Big Brother and reminisced about their fun outings. Kaden (middle) and Saurabh (right) posed for a photo with their Senior Match Support Specialist, Jackie Lundie.

## Flip Circus Outing

Thanks to Flip Circus' generous donation of 40 complimentary tickets to Bigs and Littles in our **Community-Based Program**, matches enjoyed an unforgettable outing!

Big Brother Laurence Burnsed (left) and 9-year-old Little Brother Desai (right) were all smiles while watching the performers dance, juggle, and amaze with acrobatics and stunts. Mike Stacy, host of Lite 100.5 Radio, presented BBBST with the tickets.



## Big Futures Program

At our 2024 Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Year Awards event, 16-year-old Little Brother Denzel of Bristol (right) and his Big Brother Joey Redmond (left) of Higganum spoke about their almost six-year-old Community-Based Match – our team had just named Joey Big Brother of the Year. To further help Denzel reach his academic and career goals, the duo has enrolled in our **Big Futures Program** and look forward to making more memories together.





## Truman School Site-Based Program

Our **Site-Based Program** at the Truman School in New Haven is thriving and expanding. It meets every Thursday during the academic year from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mentors and students explore STEAM activities (science, technology, engineering, art, math). They also play games together and get to know each other.

Our Big Brothers and Sisters (back row), who attend Yale University, Southern Connecticut State University and other local institutions look forward to their get-togethers with their Littles, pictured here in the first and second rows.

## Community-Based Program

Local celebrities! Big Brother Joe DeLutrie and 11-year-old Little Brother Ocean of our **Community-Based Program** were the stars of Macy's nationwide in-store holiday campaign. Joe, of West Hartford, and Ocean, of New Britain, participated in photo shoots, and their images appeared in over 500 stores across the country.

They got to travel to Macy's headquarters in New York City for the campaign's premiere, where their photos appeared on the Times Square Jumbotron for all to see. Ocean told us, "I feel famous!"



## The Designing Big Futures Gala

Our mentoring matches, families, community partners, and advocates enjoyed a festive evening at the Designing Big Futures Gala on March 9. We raised over \$220,000 in support of youth mentoring. One of our community-based matches, Big Brother Francesco Lascari and Little Brother Wilfredo, dressed up for the inspiring night, which included a live auction, music by the Hart School of Music, and dancing at the end to the music of the School of Rock House Band.

We presented our Visionary Leader award to Ted Cutler, Principal & CEO of Tecton Architects and our immediate past Board Chair. Ted's commitment and leadership helped us weather the pandemic and resume growth afterwards – growth that continues today.



# Help Ignite a Child's Potential

Desai

Little Brother, Age 9

Join Big Brothers Big Sisters  
And Help Youth Reach Their Full  
Potential – Volunteer, Donate or  
Partner With Us Today!



**Big Brothers  
Big Sisters.®**

OF CONNECTICUT

34 Sequassen St. Suite 202  
Hartford, CT 06106

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ctbigs.org

To volunteer, email [programs@ctbigs.org](mailto:programs@ctbigs.org)  
For event info, email [events@ctbigs.org](mailto:events@ctbigs.org)



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