



Big Brothers Big Sisters
State Association of New Jersey

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NEW JERSEY BIG BROTHER / BIG SISTER OF THE YEAR AWARDS PRESENTED

The New Jersey Big Brothers Big Sisters Foundation recently presented its 2011 Big Brother and Big Sister of the Year Awards. These deserving Bigs were honored for their dedication and commitment to mentoring their Littles. The recipients were selected from over 5000 matches in the state. Each of the nine Big Brother Big Sister agencies reviewed all their current mentoring matches and submitted one Big Brother and one Big Sister for award consideration. The State Association then selects the Bigs they feel are most deserving.

The New Jersey 2011 Big Brother of the Year Award was presented to Jamal Goodson. Jamal has served in the United States Navy for the past 16 years in the Military Police at NAVIAR- Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. He has always believed in volunteering, giving back to the community and being a positive role model. Jamal helps run a basketball camp in Paterson, talks to the children in the schools, prepares meals for the less fortunate through his church and is the coordinator of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Ocean County's partnership mentoring program at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst. Most importantly, he is Isaiah's Big Brother, his mentor, positive role model and friend.

The New Jersey 2011 Big Sister of the Year Award was presented to Tina DiNicola, who is a Big Sister in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Cumberland & Salem Counties program. Tina has been matched to her Little Sister, Ahnonda since 2006. The pair became fast friends and continue to build a strong relationship that has overcome many obstacles and life changes. A lot has changed since they met; Ahnonda is now in high school and Tina is a new mother but Tina's commitment to Ahnonda has only deepened. "Even though I became a Big to make a difference in Ahnonda's life, the truth is, she is the one who has made a difference in mine! I've learned so much from her: that there is always something worth smiling about; that everyone has something good to offer; and that being a friend is the simplest of life's obligations, but yet the greatest reward." Big Brothers Big Sisters of Cumberland & Salem Counties is proud to have Tina and Ahnonda as a part of their mentoring family.

Isaiah and Ahnonda are just two of the matched children across the State of New Jersey in the Big Brother Big Sister program that have brighter futures due to the power of mentoring. Both Jamal and Tina were honored with this award for their commitment and dedication to mentoring children. They are outstanding examples of how being a mentor to a child will change both the Big and the Little's world, and they are only two Bigs out of many adult mentors in New Jersey sharing their time and energy to positively impact children in our communities.

There are 9 community Big Brother Big Sister agencies in New Jersey serving over 5000 children. These agencies rely on donations to recruit, carefully screen and match volunteers, and provide ongoing support to the mentors, children and their families. Big Brothers Big Sisters is proven to improve children's odds for succeeding in school, reducing truancy, behaving nonviolently, avoiding drugs and alcohol, and most importantly succeeding in life. Learn how you can change how children grow up in New Jersey by going to www.bbbsnj.org.