**Match Highlight of the Month**

*By Marvin Broaddus, Match Support Specialist*

Meet Little Sister, DeSiray, and Big Sister, Johnetta! DeSiray and Johnetta have been matched for a year and two months, and they truly feel like Sisters. They originally bonded over their love of books and reading and DeSiray really enjoys going to the bookstore on their outings and her preference is Half-Priced Books. In fact, they were able to find a shopping center that includes this bookstore and other favorite places such as Starbucks (DeSiray’s favorite drink is the white chocolate with extra whipped cream), Subway and Walmart! One of the most memorable outings DeSiray and Johnetta have had was when they went to paint pottery at a local art place. They were able to eat chocolates while they painted, and DeSiray was so thoughtful and asked Johnetta if she could share the chocolates with two other girls that were sitting at another table. This made Johnetta very happy as one of her goals that she has for Little is for DeSiray to become more sociable with other kids her age. Since Johnetta is an essential worker, she is very mindful of the high risk involved with seeing DeSiray in person. As a result, they have made the decision to continue to meet virtually and Johnetta found another way to show how much she cares about her Little Sister. She decided to go to Walmart and create a care package to drop off at her house with all of DeSiray’s favorite things and made sure to include enough for her to share with her siblings. So sweet, right! When you speak to both of them, you can hear the excitement in their voices as they eagerly share their amazing adventures as Sisters. Keep up the great work, Johnetta! BBBSMA truly appreciates you and all of our mentors! 😊

**COVID-19 Match Safety Guidelines**

Safety and health will always be our main priority among our matches. However, if the match decides to meet in person, here are the guidelines we recommend to follow:

- ★ Consider and discuss the level of exposure in the community of all parties in the match; if you don’t feel comfortable, you can continue to virtually meet.
- ★ Wear masks and use hand sanitizer
- ★ Meet in an open and well ventilated area away from groups of people such as at a park
- ★ Choose to do outings that provide social distancing with one another such as hiking or playing tennis
- ★ Please keep in mind that you do not have to meet if you feel uncomfortable!

**Themes of the Month**

"Communication"

Now more than ever, communication is vital for the successful maintenance and safety of your match. A match consists of a Little, parent/guardian, Big and Match Support Specialist, who all work as a team designed to achieve success within the Little’s life. Although the mentor may have already established a strong rapport with their Little, it is always important for all members to check in with one another to ensure we are all on the same page. It is highly recommended for Bigs to always get permission for in-person and virtual outings. Parents and mentors should also follow up with one another at least once a month to discuss Little’s progress; this is very important because the parent/guardian can provide the mentor with information that Little may not disclose otherwise. Nevertheless, BBBS has developed "The App" where Bigs will be able to communicate with their Littles and parents/guardians and will have the capability to upload and save outing and activity details as well. Look out for more information coming soon to your email.

**Valeska Gutierrez**

Enrollment Specialist

Valeska Gutierrez is a social impact strategist and a community builder with over six years of experience transforming learning environments and fostering the development of underrepresented minorities and marginalized student populations. Originally hailing from Oakland, CA, Valeska has worked primarily in the education field, having worked for Oakland Kids First, East Bay Asian Youth Services, Girls Inc., CDF Freedom Schools and SMASH, where she has leveraged her passion for DEI, learning and investing in the success of individuals to drive social impact. Valeska currently serves as an Enrollment Specialist at BBBSMA working to defend the potential of children and youth in the Metro Atlanta area.
ACTIVITIES TO CONNECT WITH YOUR LITTLE

1. **Virtual Robot Building Party**
   - What: Littles will learn how to build a robot and this can trigger career interests in the future.
   - Who: Littles, K-5th grade (girls only)
   - When: 09/16, 09/23, 09/30 from 6pm-7pm
   - How: Register [HERE](#)

2. **Masterclass**
   - Littles will be able to watch or listen to hundreds of video lessons taught by 85+ of the world’s best. Whether it be in business and leadership, photography, cooking, acting, music, sports and more, Masterclass delivers a world class online learning experience. The Masterclass teachers range from celebrities to professional athletes and they provide invaluable life lessons and experiences. FREE all access MasterClass pass for one year; 35 passes left so act soon! Discuss with parent, first, before signing up little. Click [HERE](#) for more information about this app.
   - Who: High School Littles
   - When: Ongoing
   - How: Register [HERE](#)

3. **Start a Virtual Book Club**
   - What: Pick and agree on a book that both Little and Big can read on their own and then meet up virtually to discuss.
   - Who: All ages
   - When: Virtually meet up every 1-3 chapters depending on little's age

4. **Have Lunch or Dinner Together**
   - Depending on little's age, you and little can make lunch or dinner and then virtually meet to eat together just as you would in an in-person outing. This can create some beautiful bonding moments!
   - Who: All ages
   - When: Anytime

5. **Virtual Arts and Crafts**
   - Let's get creative together and do some arts and crafts. Click [HERE](#) to access 25 crafting projects.
   - Who: Tweens and Teens
   - When: Anytime
   - How: Virtually

6. **High School Resources Now Available on BBBS Website under Match Resources**
   - If your little is a high school student, you can begin to review with them the following available resources:
     - College Roadmaps for [Juniors](#) and [Seniors](#)
     - Life Skills List
     - Life Paths which include [Higher Education](#), [Military](#) and [Workforce](#)
Communication with your Match Support Specialist

Maintaining consistent communication with your coach is vital to the success of your relationship with your little! Please inform us of any challenges that you are experiencing so we can work through them together and find a healthy resolution. In addition, please make sure to schedule your appointment through the acuity link that your match support specialist sends. It only takes 5 minutes to do and is very convenient to use. Keep in mind that a lack of communication may lead to match closure and we certainly do not want this to happen!

Survey Completion

The Strength of Relationship survey is important for you to complete because it allows us to better understand how your match is progressing. It is short, takes only 1-2 minutes to complete and is automatically sent to your email 45 days before they are due. Please complete it in a timely manner as they provide us valuable feedback so we can better support your match.

Support BBBSMA through Kroger Community Rewards

Do you shop at Kroger? Do you have a store card? If so, support BBBSMA by linking your card to Community Rewards and help the agency earn money to use toward our program! Be sure to select our location when you sign up.

Click on the following link below to link your card today:
https://www.kroger.com/i/community/community-rewards

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!
Community Food Bank COVID-19 Response has a "Text for Help" SMS platform to assist those who need access to food during the current crisis of the COVID-19 coronavirus. Text "FINDFOOD" for responses in English or "COMIDA" for responses in Spanish to 888-976-2232 to get locations near you.

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The BIG September Birthday Bash!

Do you have a birthday this month? Would you like to “Raise for A Purpose”? Well, we have the perfect challenge for you! This year, BBBSATL would like you to join the fun and Raise For A Purpose by hosting a Facebook birthday fundraiser. Gather your Facebook friends & family and encourage them to donate to BBBSATL for your birthday! This is a great opportunity to share the amazing friendship between you and your little while simultaneously celebrating the power of mentorship! The Big that raises the most funds at the end of the month will win a grand prize for you and your Little! How cool is that?

If you’re interested in joining September’s challenge, contact Bree Davis, Individual Giving Manager, at (404)601-7115.
MatchMakers

Your Monthly Impact Funds a Future

Benefits of becoming a MatchMaker:
- BBBS T-Shirt for you and your Little/Spouse/Partner
- Priority access to exclusive match engagement opportunities. (i.e., Atlanta Hawks, Falcons, and Braves tickets and upon availability)
- Subscription to exclusive MatchMakers monthly match stories update
- Early access to special events tickets
- Invitation to Annual MatchMakers Social
  (More details to follow)

MatchMakers empower and ignite the potential and power of children across Metro Atlanta through monthly giving. There are several children eagerly waiting and ready to welcome a positive adult role model, like you, in their lives. Join our community of MatchMakers today and help a Little get matched.

To become a Matchmaker, contact Bree Davis: 404.601.7115 | Bree.Davis@BBBSAtl.org

RECRUIT $25
Take kids off of the waiting list by helping us recruit and professionally interview mentors.

MATCH $35
Make the introduction -- Fund the first match meeting.

SUPPORT $50
Help Bigs and Littles stay connected through match engagement activities.

SUCCEED $100
Ensure Littles reach high school graduation and beyond!