

# Big Brothers Big Sisters of Gallatin County

## Volunteer to *Start Something*

What if every child fulfilled his or her potential? Think how amazing that would be. Now, you can start more Littles on the path to big things.



## Volunteering is fun, BIG time!

Being a Big Brother, Big Sister, Big Couple, or Big Family is one of the most enjoyable things you'll ever do. Not to mention, one of the most fulfilling. You have the opportunity to help shape a child's future for the better by empowering him or her to achieve. And the best part is, it's actually a lot of fun. You and your Little can share the kinds of activities you already like to do.

Play sports together. Go on a hike. Read books. Eat a pizza with extra anchovies. Or just give some advice and inspiration. Whatever it is you enjoy, odds are you'll enjoy it even more with your Little—and you'll be making a life-changing impact.

Volunteering just a few hours a week with a child can **start something** amazing. So why not apply to be a Big today? There are kids out there ready to get started. Are you?

Whether you get involved as a volunteer or as a donor, we welcome and thank you for your support!



**start something**



# You Can Make A Difference

## Who are our Littles?

Ages 5 to 15

Children come from various types of

- home environments
- family structures
- socio-economic levels
- ethnic backgrounds
- neighborhoods
- Schools



Children from our community who could benefit from having a positive adult role model. Their backgrounds and personalities are unique, but they all want a friendship with a Big.

## How do Littles come into the program?

Most children in our community-based programs come to us through their parent or caregiver. We also reach out to involve children through schools, counselors, churches, youth service agencies, friends, commercials and other referrals. All children and their parents must want to be in our program.

## How can I make a difference?

It's pretty simple. By building a trusting friendship with a child you can make a powerful impact in his/her life. That's what it's all about.

Consistently sharing activities together (events, having lunch, just talking) is the biggest factor in forming a positive relationship with them.

Deciding together what activities to do fosters a stronger relationship.

By being there you are making a difference even if you don't think you are.

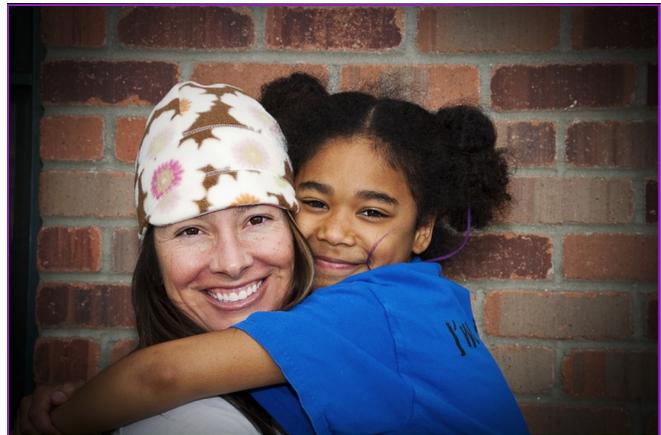
# Imagine the Possibilities.

# Your Role

The success of the match friendship depends greatly on the efforts of the Big, the Little, and the Parent. Each one plays an important role in helping build a meaningful friendship.

## What makes a successful “Big”?

- Good listeners
- Open minded
- Are not authoritarian
- Initiate contact
- Decide activities together with their Littles
- Are consistent and dependable
- Have realistic expectations.
- Patient
- Focus on having fun
- Set boundaries and limits
- Acknowledge that positive impact on the child comes after the relationship is built
- Put a child’s safety and well-being first
- Emphasize friendship over changing the behavior of the child



## What a “Big” Is Not ....

- Parent
- Financial support
- “Taxi” service
- Babysitter
- Peer
- Therapist

# What will you **start**?

# Qualifications and Expectations

## Qualifications

- 18 Years old or older
- Valid Drivers License and insurance
- Must be able to make an 18 consecutive-month commitment
- Must meet with Little for one to two hours every week

## Expectations

Most of us have had someone in our lives, other than a parent, who made a difference to us. This is what you can do for a child in our program. It's really pretty simple—it's a matter of making yourself available on a consistent basis. It's showing you care. It's having fun with a child. It's listening to them talk about whatever is going on in their lives. It's a series of small, teachable moments that, in the end, make a BIG difference.

Changes in your Little tend to occur slowly. Your Little may not call you or suggest activities for you to do; this is normal behavior. Some Littles won't say "thank you", but this doesn't mean they aren't enjoying the time with you. It just takes time for the relationship to form.

### To make the most of your relationship:

- Be a good friend: Listen, have fun, take time to get to know this new person in your life. Choose activities that you both enjoy and that will strengthen the bond between you. Don't set out to impose mandatory changes in the Little. Positive behaviors will flow after your Little trusts you and grows more secure with you.
- Be Consistent: Show the child you think your time together is important.
- Be involved and participate in agency activities: This connects you with other Bigs & Littles and allows your Little to interact with other kids in the program.
- Regularly communicate with your Little, the parents and your Match Support Specialist: We will contact you each month to provide assistance and give feedback on how you're making a difference. Anytime you are unsure about what to do or how to handle a situation, call your Match Support Specialist who is here to help.
- Work for a long-lasting relationship.
- Realize that problems may come up: It's normal for problems to arise in a match relationship. Try to balance your expectations of what it will be like with your Little and be realistic about how fast the relationship will take to develop.



# How to Get Involved

**Have Fun. Make a Difference. Make a Friend.**



## **Application Process: BBBS will gather information to learn more about you.**

- Application- fill out the enclosed application or go online to [www.bbbs-gc.org](http://www.bbbs-gc.org)
- Interview - this helps us to get to know you better; to learn about your interests, personality and preferences as well as the situation best suited for you
- Reference check
- Criminal history record check (\$15 due with application)
- Motor vehicle driving record
- Possible home assessment
- Possible interview with significant other
- Information from another BBBS agency or other service organization where you may have volunteered previously

## **Matching Process:**

- We take into account your interests, personality, likes, dislikes, age preferences, background and location to match you up with a child that will be the best fit for you.
- The process generally takes around a month, but could take longer depending on availability of Littles and preferences of both Bigs and Littles.
- We will call you to tell you about the child we think is appropriate for a match with you, but the final decision is yours.
- If agreeable, we then contact the parent about your profile.
- If all parties are agreeable then you get matched with a child. Your Match Support Specialist will work with all to set up a time for you to be introduced to your Little and his/her parent/guardian.
- Start having FUN, making a difference in the life of a child, and enjoying your new friend.

**To learn more visit [www.bbbs-gc.org](http://www.bbbs-gc.org)**