



**Big Brothers Big Sisters**  
of  
Northern Nevada

**775-352-3202 | [www.bbbsnn.org](http://www.bbbsnn.org)**

changing kids' lives  
for the better...  
**FOREVER**



## Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada

*Little Moments. Big Magic.™*

### VISION

To see all children achieve success in their lives.

### MISSION

To provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, professionally supported, 1-to-1 relationships that change their lives for the better, forever.

### INFORMATION

775-352-3202 or [www.bbbsnn.org](http://www.bbbsnn.org)

745 W. Moana Lane  
Reno, NV 89509

### HISTORY

The original inspiration for Big Brothers Big Sisters came when a man in Philadelphia observed a small child eating out of a garbage pail. The man befriended the child and recruited his friends to befriend the child's companions. Around the same time, in 1904, a Juvenile Court Judge in New York, NY, became aware that most of the young children appearing before him were from "fatherless homes." He asked staff in the courthouse to become mentors for these children and the program began.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada opened its doors in 2001 and in 2011 was named "Mid-Size Agency of the Year" by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, which also selected the agency's Board of Directors as "Board of the Year." With offices in Reno and Douglas County, BBBSNN serves more than 1,000 children in need each year and continues to recruit volunteers to form lasting relationships that demonstrate the power of mentoring.



# One Happy Little Sister

Nayeli and Halley are a match made to last

By Paige Gore

Values, principles, lessons and morals are necessary components to building a bright future. The sad truth is not all children are blessed with the people to instill these qualities. Nayeli has been blessed.

Nayeli has been part of the Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring Program for almost two years. She's an animated 8-year-old girl, with energy and confidence radiating from her huge smile. However, she was born into a family with seven other siblings, which created a hectic lifestyle. It was easy for her to become lost in the everyday hustle and bustle of her home. Then Halley Picton came into her life.

"I was shaking a lot, smiling a lot, and holding onto my mom's hand a little too tight," said Nayeli, recalling her first encounter with Big Sister Halley.

Picton and Nayeli have been matched since May 25, 2010. Their two-year anniversary is creeping up, and the smiles the pair exudes show their happiness at having found each other. Picton has been more than a mentor and a friendly face to Nayeli. Over the course of these past two years, she has become a Big Sister and a best friend.

"I wasn't doing well in school and got lower grades," said Nayeli. "I would cry a lot because my reading

score was always really low. Halley helped me to be a better student and person. Now I want to be a teacher so I can help kids to learn like Halley helped me."

**"I get excited to see Halley and sometimes I jump on my bed after I talk to her on the phone because I'm so happy!"**

**Nayeli, Little Sister**

Not only does Picton help Nayeli with school, but she uses real life situations as life lessons and teaches her a thing or two about proper manners and good behavior. Nayeli is constantly surrounded by brothers and sisters, both younger and older. It's not always easy for an 8-year-old girl to get along with everyone in her family at all times, but having Picton around makes it a little easier. Nayeli says she's learning to cope with the frustration

of pestering siblings and finding effective ways to handle her emotions, instead of fighting and arguing.

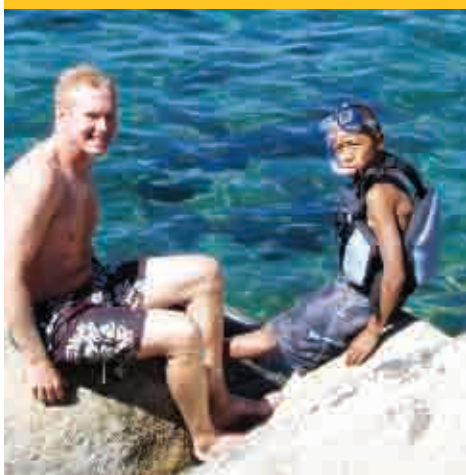
Nayeli said some of her favorite activities to do with her Big have been racing down the slides at the park or making chocolate mud cups. Their relationship flourishes and grows every time the Big and Little are reunited.

"I feel happy when I'm with Halley," said Nayeli. "I get excited to see her and sometimes I jump on my bed after I talk to her on the phone because I'm so happy!"

Similar interests are important to building a strong bond. Nayeli has a hunger for art. Picton shares in her interest and feeds Nayeli's creative side by taking her on trips to the Nevada Museum of Art. They also participate in other types of arts-and-crafts-themed activities.

With Picton's help, Nayeli is shaping up to be a well-educated, polite and cultured young lady. She will continue to hold Nayeli's hand and guide her through the trials and tribulations of life.

"I love Halley," said Nayeli. "She's the best Big Sister because she makes me laugh and is so confident and smart. I want to be nice just like her."



## TO ENROLL A CHILD

Parents, caregivers, relatives, teachers or other professionals working with youth may refer a child to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada, which provides mentors for youth ages 6-17.

**CONTACT** Karrie Craig, Enrollment Manager  
kcraig@bbbsnn.org 775-352-3202

Once a referral occurs, a time is scheduled to meet personally with the child and his or her parent/guardian. The purpose is to obtain information about the needs of the child, how mentoring may be beneficial, and what preferences the child and family may have regarding a mentor. Each child and his/her parent are also provided with an orientation about Big Brothers Big Sisters, including important child safety information, mentoring activities, training opportunities for parents, and referrals to other non-profit agencies in the community that may provide resource assistance to the family.

Last year we served  
**1,000 children**  
in Northern Nevada

# A Big Help

One man's experience with Big Brothers  
Big Sisters of Northern Nevada

By Bridget Meade

The time David Junell has spent as a Big Brother in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada program has been as beneficial for him as it has for his counterpart, 12-year-old Matthew.

"It had been a rough couple of years for me," Junell said. "When I first moved to Reno, the job prospects as a mechanical and structural engineering draftsman were good. Now things have dried up. Besides my parents, my relationship with Matthew is one of the main reasons I have chosen to stay here."

Junell relocated from Newport Beach, Calif., five years ago to be closer to his parents. He signed up with Big Brothers Big Sisters after moving to Reno as a way to get involved with the community.

"I did not think I would be without a family of my own at this point in my life," Junell said. "I was blessed with a great upbringing and wanted to give back. Big Brothers Big Sisters has not only given me this chance but has expanded my social life and opened my eyes to the opportunities in the community."

Big Brothers Big Sisters arranged the pair's first meeting five years ago. Prior to the meeting, the association provided Junell with tips and guidelines for being a Big Brother, and he credits the organization and its structure for making it easy from

day one. BBBS frequently offers a variety of events for the two to participate in with other matches. Junell and Matthew also enjoy sports like basketball, fishing, and Junell's passion: snowboarding.

**"Being a Big Brother has been a very healing and even nourishing part of my life. There is indefinable value in having someone to care for and invest in."**

David Junell, Big Brother

"Matthew teaches me about fishing," he laughed. "Reno-Tahoe is the perfect place to be, given the unique outdoor playground we are provided."

The pair tries to see each other at

least once a week and talk on the phone in between. However, it's not just playing sports and hanging out—Junell sees to it that Matthew does his homework before they go on adventures. He also helps enforce important social cues that will benefit Matthew later in life.

"I try to instill confidence in him," he said. "I don't give him answers to problems but give suggestions and another perspective he might not get otherwise. That way, when he's older, he'll be able to face life's various challenges."

From the start, Junell was delighted with his role as Matthew's Big Brother. At the beginning, Matthew was hesitant to try new things like getting off the ski lift when the two went snowboarding. He wanted to show Matthew that it's OK to fall down when he tries something new. With practice, he assured him, he would get better. Now snowboarding is Matthew's favorite activity.

"I even taught him how to look people in the eye when he meets them for the first time, Junell said. "He makes me proud."

It seems likely Matthew will continue to make Junell proud. One of Junell's goals is to show Matthew how to overcome his dyslexia and support himself as an adult. He takes Matthew with him to his work at a local construction site to



demonstrate to him that there are numerous possibilities for people who work hard.

As for the future, Junell wants to make sure Matthew becomes a contributing adult so he too can give back to the community. He wants Matthew to be a Big Brother.

"Being a Big Brother has been a very healing and even nourishing part of my life," Junell said. "There is indefinable value in having someone to care for and invest in."



## TO ENROLL AS A BIG BROTHER OR A BIG SISTER

Mentors must be at least 18 year old.

After a volunteer's initial inquiry, the potential mentor is scheduled for a brief orientation session that provides information about Big Brothers Big Sisters, its vision and mission, and what is expected from the mentoring relationship. An individual interview time is then scheduled so the volunteer may discuss his or her hobbies and interests, time availability, and preference for a child in a specific age group. A prospective mentor's life experiences and skills are noted to make the best match possible from the very beginning.

**CONTACT** Kyle Smith, Outreach Coordinator  
ksmith@bbbsnn.org 775-352-3202

Mentors complete  
an orientation program,  
criminal background check,  
and references.

# Biggest Little Connection

Bigs and Littles both give and receive inspiration and friendship

By Kate Thomas

There is something special between Horacio and Ron Anderson.

The pair is closing in on one year since they met, but the bond between them is like that of close siblings. They were introduced by the Big Brothers Big Sisters program last spring, and the relationship has been more beneficial to both Little Brother Horacio and Big Brother Anderson than they could have ever imagined.

"Most memorable moment?" Anderson says. "There have been so many. Let me show you."

Anderson brings out his cell phone and scrolls through countless joyful pictures and videos of his times with Horacio. The pictures captured moments at the motor-cross race, horseback riding, and at the Repticon Reptile show in Reno last year. They both grin as they recall the foul ball that they caught together at a Reno Aces game.

"I have the ball at home," Horacio said. "It nearly hit me and put a huge dent in the wall behind us and the ball itself. Lots of people tried to get it first, but we got it."

Anderson set out to become a Big Brother after his children left home, and he returned to Reno from the Bay Area. He described himself as being a big kid at heart and he wanted to give back to the community, as well as find a companion for his adventures.

Horacio, 10, comes from a family of three sisters, who introduced him to the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. Horacio appreciates that his sisters still see their Big Sisters and wanted something similar for himself. Horacio is a smart young man with interests in science, origami and action movies.

**"Most memorable moment? There have been so many."**

**Ron Anderson, Big Brother**

"My favorite movie was *Captain America*," Horacio said, "and Ron's is *Thor*."

Typically, Horacio and Anderson meet once a week, usually on the weekend, and spend anywhere between two and four hours together. Anderson makes it a priority to chat with Horacio about his week before he instigates their activity.

"We have a friendship," Anderson said. "We trade stories, and we listen to each other. We talk about school and what has happened that week and then we decide what to do."

Horacio likes loud and lively activi-



ties, and last week, the pair headed to the Monster Jam at the Livestock Events Center. They don't always attend events though. The duo also enjoys grabbing some dinner, especially Horacio's favorite: chicken nuggets. Horacio has begun to think about his future, and he has decided he would like to be an animator, eventually working with video games. Anderson has helped him to assess his options.

"I helped him research the art institutes in the country and the classes that they require," Anderson said. It's obvious by the way Horacio

looks at Anderson that he not only respects him, but looks to him for support and encouragement. Even though he is a confident and inquisitive young man, his relationship with Anderson is very important to him.

"He is like a brother," Horacio said. He doesn't say anything else, but the silence is golden. Horacio's eyes dart in Anderson's direction, and Anderson smiles. The pair quickly crack an inside joke and laugh fondly together. This bond will benefit them for years to come.

"I am not putting any time limit on this," Anderson said. "It will last as long as it needs to last."

Horacio turns 11 in April and, for his birthday treat, wants to go to Pyramid Lake. With the mention of the Loch Ness monster, Horacio reels off many facts on the topic, a hint at Horacio's amazing memory. It is clear that Big and Little are equally inspired by each other, and they have many more happy memories to come.

## 101 THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR LITTLE!

Here is a small sample from a list of 101 different activities to keep Littles and Bigs busy together:

1. Go bowling, hiking or walking
2. Start a collection of something you are both interested in like stamps, rocks, coins, comics, bugs, dolls, figures, sports cards, etc.
3. Take a bike ride together
4. Draw, paint, work with clay, or make paper-mache animals or casts of each other
5. Learn a new sport together
6. Attend a BBBS Match Activity each month
7. Attend Little's school play or sporting event to cheer him/her on!
8. Play charades, checkers, chess, backgammon, or any board or card game
9. See one of our local sports teams in action
10. Walk the dog
11. Prepare a meal together from start to finish - try finding good recipes online or in your favorite cookbook. (YUMMY!)
12. Go rollerskating, blading or ice skating
13. Help your Little with homework or a school project
14. Take your Little to your place of employment
15. Visit a park and talk
16. Start a garden - indoors or out
17. Go swimming or even play with the water hose or sprinkler in the backyard
18. Make friendship bracelets, or do other crafts together
19. Play video games/pinball/pool
20. Visit the Humane Society or the ASPCA

# Get with the Program

Volunteers the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada don't go it alone

The decision to become a mentor in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program is life changing and rewarding for both the BIG and the LITTLE. While potential volunteers may have some reservations about becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister, "it's really about the one thing we all try to balance, which is time," says chief executive officer, Ann Silver.

Silver says that many prospective volunteers don't know the agency provides trained staff to ensure each relationship is a rewarding and enjoyable experience. "Mentors come from all walks of life, and are young professionals, college students, and retirees," says Silver. "We don't ask a mentor to be a LITTLE's teacher, tutor or substitute parent. We ask that a mentor be a friend."

The amount of time a volunteer is able to commit to a LITTLE usually determines which of the agency's program options will work best: the site-based program in six Washoe County elementary schools where the BIG can visit with during the child's lunch break, or the community-based program which enables BIGS to connect with their LITTLES on a specific evening or over the weekend.

**"We don't ask a mentor to be a LITTLE's teacher, tutor, or substitute parent. We ask that a mentor be a friend."**

**Ann Silver, CEO, Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Northern Nevada**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada puts extensive effort into matching BIGS and LITTLES so that each relationship is fun and enjoyable for both. The process involves interviewing prospective BIGS about their interests, skills, and hobbies and matching them with LITTLES who like the same things. "We do a lot of work before that first introduction to make sure that each match will connect and endure," says Silver.

Once the match begins, the agency offers many free and low cost activi-

ties in the community for BIGS and LITTLES and publishes a monthly calendar on its website: BBBSNN.ORG. There is also an on-site reading and learning room with more than 400 books and 100 DVDs, and a list titled "101 Things To Do With Your Little" is given to every BIG for reference. Gail Lee, programs director, has been with Big Brothers Big Sisters for more than nine years, oversees the professional staff, and works directly with mentors, parents, and the children as the match matures.

"Our goal is to retain matches and see the positive outcomes from the strong bonds between BIGS and LITTLES. Our evidence-based research validates that grades, school attendance, social skills, and avoidance of risky behaviors all increase as these relationships continue," says Lee.

"We have about 200 LITTLES waiting for BIGS, and we could match them tomorrow if we had more BIGS, she says, "and then we have another 200 children who are in the process of being enrolled."



**Chief Executive Officer** (above): Ann Silver



**Match Support Staff** (from left to right): Daniela Murillo, Amanda Lattin, Carolyn Crews, Stacey Burns, Lauren Basic, Trish Scott, Monika Wieggers, and Jillian Yaworski; absent: Betty Flores and Carol Scott

# Feel Great... Donate

Home pick-ups and drop-offs  
help fund programs

By Alexandra King

The Big Brothers Big Sisters program relies on donations made by the community. A donation of gently used clothing or household goods to BBBS provides funding to support the program's children in need.

"Every item turns into money that enables us to find more volunteer mentors in this community and to pay for activities that support Bigs and Littles," says Ann Silver, chief executive officer of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada.

Donations may be dropped off at one of the 43 bins in Reno, Sparks, Carson City, Dayton and Fernley, or items can be picked up by calling and scheduling a pick-up time. It is through these donations that the BBBS programs continue to serve children in need.

"Our donation center is a revenue-generating business," Silver says. "The money we make is from selling the items to Savers, with whom we have a partnership agreement. Savers then sells to customers home goods and clothing at discount prices. All of the money we derive from our pick-ups and bins is used to support our mentoring programs."

BBBS has become skilled in collecting donated items. Matt Christopherson, one of the donation drivers for the BBBS program, said that since people are able to call BBBS and schedule a convenient pick up time, giving away no-longer-needed items has become much easier for donors.

In the past, the program would inform community members living in a designated area that Big Brothers Big Sisters would be driving around the area looking for donations. Sometimes the drivers would return with nothing. Not only is the center more efficient timewise, but donations have also gotten bigger and better.

"There has been an improvement in the consistency of the way this organization works, [and] now

the quality of donated items has improved," said Mike Stutzman, a BBBS employee.

**"When people look at their household items, they should see children being mentored, finishing high school, and becoming independent, productive citizens in this community."**

**Ann Silver, CEO, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada**

Donation drivers pick up 20,000 pounds of donated goods each week and will accept gently used clothing and small household appliances that weigh less than 50 pounds.

"We are very excited when people give us clothing, toys, lamps, appliances like toasters or microwaves, laptops or computer equipment, books, CDs, tapes, paperbacks, linens, and kitchen household items," said Silver. "Most of us have a lot we can clear out."

Donating to BBBS has more benefits than just assisting an organization that helps mentor children in the community: BBBS provides donors with a tax receipt on the spot, even mailing a tax receipt if someone donates to one of the bins.

The money collected from Savers



**Donation Center Staff** (above, from left to right): Norm Wellman, Matt Christopherson, Mike Stutzman

goes to matching Bigs with their Littles and to organize free activities for Bigs and Littles. The matching process is a lengthy one because the BBBS program wants to ensure that they make good matches for the Littles as well as the Bigs. Silver said even though the Bigs involved in the program are volunteers, running the program's infrastructure costs money.

Some of the events BBBS of Northern Nevada is able to organize due to donations include purchasing sporting tickets, planning and funding ski trips and movie days. All of these activities are free to both the Bigs and the Littles.

"When people look at their old household items, they should see children being mentored, finishing high school, and becoming independent, productive citizens in this community," said Silver.

For residential pick-ups or more info: 826-2122 / [www.bbbsnn.org](http://www.bbbsnn.org) click on: DONATE.



# Donors Make a BIG Impact

Beverly Lassiter, director of Grants & Fund Development, has been with the agency more than five years, and in that time, has experienced the annual fluctuations in financial contributions. Lassiter knows that donors make a significant investment in the children served by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada and are the silent partners in the mentoring relationships. Donors are enormously responsible for the impact our mentors have on children living in poverty and have much to do with improvements in their academic success and social skills. "These improvements create the foundation for a Little's suc-

cess," says Lassiter, who notes one Little who is now excelling at UNR and others who have gone on to become engineers and managers of local companies. "There's no doubt that donors' financial gifts enable these kids to succeed in life," Lassiter states. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada does not ask its volunteers to pay for mentoring activities and therefore, donors' financial contributions enable the agency to offer the kids opportunities to ski, snowshoe, ice skate, take tennis lessons, tour local businesses, visit the legislative building, see art exhibits, and attend Aces and

Bighorns' games. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada has been successful in maintaining long-term relationships with hundreds of individual donors and large and small business operations where companies' employees recognize mentoring as a critical way to increase a child's self confidence and self esteem. "Donors such as GolfTec, Harley Davidson Financial Services, Inc., International Game Technology, Port of Subs, Silversky Group, and John Dermody Ventures are but a few of the great supporters we are committed to recognizing as often and fully as possible," says Lassiter.



Big Brothers Big Sisters will hold its sold out **Grand Chefs Gala** on **March 31** at the Atlantis Hotel & Spa and has already booked the event for **Saturday, April 13, 2013** at the same location.

Beverly Lassiter is excited to tell potential donors that financial contributions go a long way. Here is a sample of what their donations can do for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northern Nevada:

**\$875.00**

one match between a Little and a Big for one year  
(includes interviews of children and adults, match introduction, match activities, and professional resources)

**\$375.00**

the cost to sustain a match between a Big and a Little for one year  
(includes monthly follow-up, training for mentors, family visits, and match activities)

**\$200.00**

one weekend match activity for 50 Bigs and Littles  
(the BBBSNN.org website lists all monthly activities under its "EVENTS" section)

**\$50.00**

a comprehensive background check for each volunteer

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