



Big Brothers Big Sisters Mountain Region

While serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, Jacob saw many kids in need of help and guidance. He decided that when he returned to the U.S., he would try to help kids in his own community. Three years ago, as he was walking by the Big Brothers Big Sisters booth at UNM Gallup he realized this was his chance to make a difference.



Ten year old Samuel was being raised by his mom. The main man in his life—his uncle—had recently passed away. His mom felt Samuel needed a man to talk with and help him with schoolwork. So she enrolled him in Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Fortunately for Samuel and for more than 1,000 children, Big Brothers Big Sisters is there to help. Our goal is to start and support one-to-one relationships built on trust, unlocking unlimited potential for children throughout northern and southwestern New Mexico.

As a donor supported volunteer organization, your gift is essential to help us create more life-changing, professionally supported matches throughout the Mountain Region.

Soon after being enrolled, Jacob and Samuel got paired together. Samuel was nervous at first but soon began to open up to Jacob as they spent time together.

Three years later Samuel feels like Jacob is his real big brother. Jacob has taught him to treat others respectfully and to keep away from trouble. “Samuel doesn’t always listen to me,” his mom said, “but he looks up to Jacob and doesn’t want to disappoint him.”

As the duo continued to grow their bond, something unexpected happened that would affect both of them deeply. In May of 2017, Big Brother Jacob was rushed to the hospital after collapsing from a stroke. “When I found out Jacob was in the hospital, I broke down and cried,” said Samuel.

Jacob wasn’t able to see his Little Brother during his long recovery. As Jacob grew stronger, Samuel messaged him, “I’m glad you are getting better. I want to hang out soon because you are my best friend.”

Jacob and Samuel are both grateful because they’ve recently been able to get together again. Samuel continues to do well in school, expresses himself more, and has a much stronger relationship with his sister and mother.

Samuel’s mom Angela notes that “Jacob is not just Samuel’s Big Brother. He has become a part of our family. Big Brothers Big Sisters is an awesome program for kids to be a part of. I am very glad I enrolled Samuel.”

Big Brother Jacob is also glad that he joined the program and wishes that more minorities would get involved as mentors. "There are many kids that need role models and it is wonderful to see Native American mentors giving back to their community."

Jacob and Samuel have been matched for three years but it looks as if it will be a life-long friendship.

These one-to-one mentoring relationships are the driving force behind helping children on a path to future success. Measurable outcomes and independent research prove that when children have a positive adult mentor walking beside them, they learn that it is okay to dream BIG. Littles in our program are less likely to skip school, be involved with violence, or use drugs.

Every one-to-one relationship is unique. Samuel and his Big Brother like to play video games, hike, watch movies and try out new food. Big Brothers Big Sisters, through the skills and support of our program staff, helped change not only Samuel's life, but Jacob's and Samuel's family's lives as well. What all matches have in common is that every Big and Little need *your* support to make their special bond last. Our sustained growth stems from the assistance of community-minded individuals like you. ***Your gift will contribute to children and families seeking better futures and a stronger community.***

Please support Big Brothers Big Sisters this holiday season. Your gift begins and sustains relationships that change lives for the better, forever. That change ripples through a family, a school, and throughout our entire community. We would like for you to be a part of creating opportunity for children here in New Mexico.

Thank you for helping us make a difference in the lives of more than a thousand children in the coming year.

Warmest regards,

Sarah Piano
McKinley County Regional Director

