

Big Brothers Big Sisters[®]

MOUNTAIN REGION



Dante and Rob, matched Sept. 2008

Rob and Dante were matched 10 years ago and have been together since we first opened our McKinley County office. Dante was a 9-year-old, extremely shy and withdrawn boy. He loved running, being outdoors, and doing art. Cheryl, Dante's mom, was a single mother, and Dante's father had just gone to prison. He was in need of some positive role models in his life, so Cheryl enrolled him at Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Rob was looking to get more involved in his community. He was a quiet man who also enjoyed outdoor activities. It was a perfect match right from the start. "When Rob and Dante met for the first time, they were both so quiet and shy," said Cheryl. But that quickly changed. The two began forming an unmistakable friendship.

"I looked up to Rob and appreciated the advice he had to offer," says Dante. Rob would go to Dante's piano recitals, and they would go out to eat. As Dante got older, Rob would attend his cross-country meets, and they would share their love for caffeine at Starbucks.

Today Dante is a social and assertive young man. Rob has helped Dante with college preparation and has empowered him to follow his passion. "Rob was very encouraging and helpful in pursuing my education," says Dante. "I am so thankful for this program. I have grown so much."

As Dante makes plans to attend college in the fall and "ages out" of Big Brothers Big Sisters, Rob says that he always wants to stay in his life. When you're a mentor, "you are able to be a role model to someone," says Rob.

"This program is so beneficial," Cheryl explains, "if you are thinking about getting involved, take the chance, even if you aren't sure. *It only takes one person to see the bright future in a child.*"



Dante and Rob at the 2017 Bowl for Kids' Sake