



Big Brothers Big Sisters Mountain Region Annual Report 2017

We believe that all children have the potential to change the world, and we are standing together to defend that potential. Through professionally supported 1-to-1 mentoring, we create relationships that build social capital for kids, crafting new networks, opening leadership opportunities for our High School Bigs and shining a light on the path to enhanced futures.

In 2017, thanks to the efforts of our board, staff, and wonderful volunteer mentors, we matched 1,158 young people in eleven New Mexico counties in northern and southwestern New Mexico with caring, committed, carefully screened, and professionally supported mentors. As a result, we helped more kids than ever see the possibility of a better future.

That means we were one of a handful of Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies across the nation to match more kids for five of the past six years. Though matches grew throughout our service area, the biggest growth occurred in underserved areas, including rural communities and in recently merged Doña Ana and Grant counties.

Igniting Potential through Mentoring: We partner with parents/guardians, volunteers, and others in the community and hold ourselves accountable for each child in our program:

- Achieving higher aspirations, greater confidence, and better relationships
- Avoiding risky behaviors
- Achieving academic success

Research shows that mentoring programs boost their success in working with vulnerable children and families by providing staff, volunteers, and parents opportunities for training that help prepare them to respond appropriately to the cognitive and behavioral challenges often associated with toxic stress. Enhanced training equips mentors to model "soft" skills like grit, self-control, critical thinking, curiosity and resiliency in ways schools and families sometimes can't. This helps keep kids in school, leading to higher graduation rates, more productive citizens, and stronger communities.

The end result: a path is cleared to a child's biggest possible future. With this in mind, we expanded training for staff so they can outreach to volunteers and parents. We will continue this focus in 2018.

Programs, Initiatives and Achievements: In Community-based Mentoring, caring, committed, carefully screened Bigs spend several hours a week two to four times a month with their Littles for two years or more. In School-based Mentoring, elementary and junior high children meet with adult or high school mentors for an hour a week during the school year on school grounds for a year or more.

Expanded Services: In 2017 we offered mentoring services in Rio Arriba, Taos, San Miguel, Mora, McKinley, Los Alamos, Santa Fe, Colfax, Doña Ana, and Grant counties. New or expanded service areas include Luna County, the city of Grants (Cibola County) as well as Apache County in Arizona.

Equity and Diversity: As part of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America Hispanic and Native American Mentoring Initiatives, we helped create the models to better serve Native American, Hispanic and Spanish-speaking volunteers and clients. Our efforts in these areas and others have led to our being recognized as leaders in promoting inclusivity and diversity both locally and nationwide.

Research Study: We are proud to announce that Big Brothers Big Sisters Mountain Region is one of only seventeen BBBS affiliates selected to participate in the nationwide "Youth Relationships Study" to evaluate the benefits BBBS mentoring relationships provide to participating youth in several key areas such as success in school, mental health, and avoidance of risky behaviors. The study builds on the groundbreaking research conducted in the 1990s that provided evidence of the effectiveness of BBBS mentoring.

Lead researcher and professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago Dr. David DuBois notes that "As important as that study was, there is a pressing need to understand the present-day benefits of the program and to see if these are lasting over time, which is something the original study did not do."

Marketing Efforts: Matching more youth requires recruiting more mentors. In 2017 the Lineberry Foundation funded a multi-faceted outreach campaign, including a region-wide series of videos and social media messaging, combined with local informational and recruitment events. We hope to raise awareness of our vital mission and expand marketing exponentially in 2018 and 2019 as a result of the nationwide Big Brothers Big Sisters brand transformation efforts paired with another infusion of Lineberry Foundation funds.

Funding: Supporting more matches necessitates raising funds to underwrite the cost of those matches. One highlight was growth in fundraising in outlying areas. Events in Gallup, Los Alamos, Española and Las Cruces were particularly successful. Our annual gala was less fruitful than usual. Fortunately, previously accrued pledges from our 2016 One Give event, combined with ongoing pledges from our 2012 campaign to raise funds and friends, offset this shortfall.

In 2018 we will focus on enhancing individual giving throughout our service area, allowing us to sustain matches in areas where the need is great and services are limited. Ideally this will allow us to further build our endowment which currently stands at \$778,306. Once we reach \$1,000,000 we will start to draw from the earnings to support matches.

Thank you: We would like to thank our Bigs, families, donors, partners and staff throughout the state. Each and every individual who interacts with our organization has the responsibility and power to act as a defender. With your help, we can give even more northern and southwestern New Mexico children an opportunity to ignite and harness their own potential in 2018.

Geno Zamora, Board President David Sherman, CEO Andrea Fisher Maril, CEO Emeritus