

Newsletter of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Johnson County



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Johnson County

"She's come a long way. When I first started, her confidence was not great. She would feel intimidated asking the waiter for ketchup. She's grown a lot in that sense. She did this picture at school of her face; the words 'confidence' and 'confident' made up the whole face. (right) She said, 'Hey I want to show you something. We had to pick two words that remind us of someone. You've really helped me with this.' It was everything - the eyes, lips, shadowing. So cool.

-Melissa Stanton, Big Sister of 1 year, 7 months to Little Sister Aniya



Our Mission:

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

Our Vision:

All children achieve success in life.

In Their Words:

Littles, Bigs, Families, & Supporters

Why do you support Big Brothers Big Sisters of Johnson County?

"I have been a supporter of Bowl for Kids' Sake for nearly 20 years. My passion for Big Brothers Big Sisters comes from seeing and knowing those who have benefited from the organization. **There is nothing more important than for kids to have the support of great role models in their lives; sometimes just to know people care about them.**

And you can use my name if you like - **I'm proud of what I do for BBBS."**

-Rhonda Case

(SEE IN OUR WORDS PAGE 2)

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Your BBBS Team

Executive Director:
Daleta Thurness

Community-Based Program Supervisor:
Chanel Meredith

Community-Based Mentoring Specialist:
Kristen Elting

Community-Based Mentoring Specialist:
Mindy Paulsen

School-Based Mentoring Specialist:
Molly Gilroy

Secondary-School Based Mentoring Specialist:
Jill Kromminga

Mentoring Specialist & Content Strategist:
Tyson Wirth

Program Manager, Mahaska County Satellite
Robbyn Duchow

AmeriCorps Member & BBBS@Iowa President
Monica West

Donor Support & Events Coordinator Intern
McKenzie Musser

Masters of Social Work Intern
McKenzie Grimm

*Like and follow Big Brothers Big Sisters of Johnson County on Facebook for more great photos, and videos!

In Our Words (continued from Page 1)



Andrew (left) and Dan (right) play video games after cooking dinner together at Dan's apartment. Community-Based matches can only visit a Big's home after attendance at a Big Little Talk (see p. 5), attendance at a group event, and with parental approval. Matches never have overnights in the first year of a match, and only thereafter if they have received BBBS approval.

"It's really fun. My family loves him. I like spending time with him. He's a really positive guy. I can learn a lot from him. **He made me love fishing more. He's a really great model for me. Cooking, I learned too;** he likes to cook. We've made homemade pizza."

-Andrew, Little Brother to Big Brother Dan McGrath for 3 years & 1 month



Little Brother Sa'Ron hugs his friend Helen while his Big Sister Cassie Jenn laughs at BBBS's Community Service Night. Sa'Ron and Cassie were 1 of the 34 Big-Little matches that helped tie blankets for Shelter House of Iowa City, played BINGO to win/donate canned goods for the Crisis Center of Johnson County, and made cards for seniors at the Atrium Village Nursing Home.

Make a Difference!

If you care about your community...
... *YOU could be a great mentor, short-term volunteer, or financial supporter! Experience not required. Ongoing support provided.*

Learn more today at www.bbbsjc.org!



Dashanaro takes aim during a Noble Knights archery field trip as leader Greg Brenneman looks downrange. Noble Knights is an afterschool partnership with 4-H of Johnson County. 7th and 8th graders from North Central Jr High do service, learn life skills, and benefit from 1-on-1 and group mentoring while having fun with hands-on activities.

"[Noble Knights] has been fun for me because I get to meet new people and communicate with some people I'm comfortable with. **I'm getting comfortable with talking to people more. It's also causing me to have less stress about school.** It's something fun to look forward to."

-An 8th grade Little Sister, described by her mother as shy and quiet

"**I cried** and told [Big Brother] Marty I am so thankful. So thankful. Because I would have never thought - I was shocked, amazed, that he would go to Four Oaks... He goes up there and they go to Pancheros and hang out. [My son] and Marty are still seeing each other, are the bestest of friends. Marty is great, awesome, no complaints. **He even invited [my son] to his wedding. [My son] got to be in his wedding pictures. [My son] has basically become part of Marty's family. He's met Marty's mom, dad, sister, brother. It couldn't be better.**"

-Mother of a 15-year-old Little Brother matched with his Big Brother for 2 years, 5 months

Winter Activity Ideas:

- ◇ **Research your family trees together** – the library and Internet are great resources!
- ◇ **Create a scrapbook or photo album** to record all your fun times together and share with your Little's family
- ◇ **Help an elderly person.** Winter can be tough on grandparents and other seniors. Offer to shovel an elderly neighbor's drive or walk together!

4-H/BBBS Health

Night:

Mon, 3/26 6-7:30
Mercer Rec Center
Iowa City

Big & Little Talks:

(Just for new matches & anniversaries)

Wednesday 4/25 6-7:30 pm

Wednesday 5/16 6-7:30 pm

Enjoy snacks,
hands-on 4-H activities,
& exchange ideas
with other Bigs to
help your match flourish!

THANK YOU, Board!

The following volunteer Board Members help local kids facing adversity through their time, donations, community connections, advocacy, and more.

A BIG Thank You to our 2018 Board Members!!!

H. Scott Asay, U of I Tippie College of Business

Byson Croy,
Hills Bank and Trust

Robbie Deckard, UICCU

Guy Falsetti, U of I Information Technology

Michelle Gehrke, US Bank
Planning Chair

Aaron Helling, Wells Fargo
Chair

Amy Hospodarsky,
MidWestOne Bank
Secretary

Tina McCoy Hearn, ACT
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Susie Poulton, Iowa City Community School District
Program Chair

Angela Street, Pearson
Marketing Chair

Danny Stafford,
LattaHarris, LLP
**Treasurer &
Finance Chair**

Laurie Walters, Oral B

Karissa Wikert,
Hills Bank and Trust

Big Hearts: UICCU Invests in Kids

Time: Early 1980s. Place: Iowa City.

Heroin: Jean Knepper.

"I happened to see that there was a Bowl For Kids' Sake," said Knepper, now the 1st Vice President & Director of Community Relations for the University of Iowa Community Credit Union (UICCU). "We did not get a flyer or anything like that. So I called and I said, 'We'd like to put together a team.'"

With just a phone call, the first domino fell. Then 10 or 12 more, as that's how many UICCU colleagues bowled that year. They had a great time, striving for strikes together and helping local kids. That led Knepper to become a BBBS Board Member. That sparked UICCU to maintain an unbroken presence on the BBBS Board that continues to this day. And over the 30+ years since Knepper's phone call, UICCU's Johnson County bowlers have grown from 10 to 138. They made up 23 teams in 2017, and collectively raised over \$36,000 to create and

local youth. That includes a \$5,000 donation as the title sponsor for Bowl For Kids' Sake's; a gift the company is giving again in 2018.

"The Credit Union does a lot of good things in the community," Knepper said. "But if we were to be title sponsor for any particular event, in all of the markets we serve, that would be the Bowl For Kids' Sakes."

UICCU's support for local communities extends far beyond one event. In 2016, the last year for which data is readily available, Knepper says UICCU donated \$1.16 million to community initiatives, and invested 4,125 volunteer hours. Some of those hours were invested by incoming Board Member Robbie Deckard, a 2nd-year mentor for his 5th-grade Little Brother, Luke.

"That comes back to the Credit Union encouraging you to get involved with the community," Deckard said. "Often times, when other people ask about it I say,

*UICCU's Jean Knepper and Robbie Deckard take turns in hallway bowling, leading up to Bowl For Kids' Sake. **Watch the video and their extended interview on the Facebook page of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Johnson County!***





BBBS Board Member & Big Brother Robbie Deckard (left) and former Board Member Jean Knepper (right) laugh while remembering UICCU employees toasting & celebrating together at the bowling alley, during Bowl For Kids' Sake.

Bowl For Kids' Sake 2018 raised \$120,000 for kids facing unique challenges. That will fund nearly 10,000 hours of life-changing mentor impact for local youth. THANK YOU to all of you, our supporters, for making this possible!!!

making a difference in somebody's life. Not only is he making a difference in mine – it goes both ways. I have really enjoyed that opportunity.”

Deckard is in his 5th year supporting Bowl For Kids' Sake. His 2017 team raised half of their funds via a branch bake sale each Friday of February, rotating responsibilities each week for baking. Other UICCU teams have hosted freewill donation lunches, or longest golf drive contests.

Knepper said senior leadership from enthusiasts like Steve Quigley, former BBBS Board Member, and Jeff Disterhoft, UICCU CEO, has been essential. In 2017, their Team UICCU squad was the top-grossing team from *any* company *or* organization within Johnson County. Both Knepper and Deckard say a healthy competition is part of the fun and reason for success.

“For those staff that work in other branches, to say, ‘Well we can do this in our market too!’ And, ‘We can make this a fun event!’ I think that’s probably the key to it,” Knepper said. “Realizing how much fun it is. It can be contagious.”

Deckard adds it helps to remember the purpose behind fundraising. He sees that purpose every time he and Luke share laughs going bowling, playing laser tag, or at the Children’s Museum (free for Bigs and Littles together with their BBBS card). “The monies that are raised go towards creating those matches — ultimately, that’s how the matches are created,” Deckard said. “Without those dollars raised, it keeps that Little from potentially having a Big.”

“It’s money well spent,” Knepper added. “A big part of it is we really believe that Big Brothers Big Sisters organization of Johnson County does a good job making sure that the way the funds come in, that they’re spent very wisely. And that it’s an investment.”

Deckard said it’s extremely exciting when his BFKS team hits its goal:

“When we get the final numbers at the end, being able to say this is how much money we raised for the kids; that’s the best part of it for me.”

See pictures and video from Bowl For Kids' Sake 2018 on the Facebook Page: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Johnson County.

Thank you for being amazing partners and friends, UICCU!

About Big Brothers Big Sisters of Johnson County

By partnering with parents/guardians, volunteers, and others in the community we help each child in our program achieve:

- Higher aspirations
- Greater confidence
- Better relationships
 - Avoidance of risky behaviors
- Educational success

Learn about our impact at: www.bbbsjc.org/impact

Stay Connected

- **Facebook:** Like & follow Big Brothers Big Sisters of Johnson County
- **Twitter:** Follow BBBS of Johnson Co. @BBBSmentoring
- **Favorite** www.bbbsjc.org

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Resource Corner: Alcohol Abuse Prevention

By Jill Kromminga, Secondary School Based Specialist



Grown-ups, particularly the highly significant ones like parents and mentors, influence how kids think about alcohol consumption. Since alcohol consumption is prevalent in our culture we often get opportunities to share our views, or at least have a reaction to drinking.

For example, **what is your response if you see someone who is obviously inebriated?** Do you laugh? Do you judge them negatively? Do you laugh at stories of “funny” things someone did when they were intoxicated?

What is your answer to the question: Is it bad to drink? What happens when somebody is drunk? Can you die from drinking too much?

What makes someone an alcoholic?

If you want some help sorting out your own views about alcohol consumption and its consequences AND desire some facts, check out the website for the National Institute of Health (NIH) at <https://niaaa.nih.gov/>. You'll find **a survey to help determine if alcohol is a problem for you (or how much of a problem; it is a continuum) as well as places to get help.** An estimated 17 million U.S. adults have alcohol disorders.

The NIH webpage also has a section specifically for teens that is fun and helpful. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Johnson County has been the grateful participant/recipient of a grant from the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). This grant primarily funds our Secondary School Based Mentoring Program, our in-school mentoring program for junior high and early high school students. Drug abuse/misuse prevention is one of the goals of this grant. Thank you, IDPH!

Reach Jill at jill@bbbsjc.org.

