

FROM STRANGERS TO SISTERS

Local chapter honors Orange resident as Big Sister of the Year.

By JONATHAN WINSLOW
STAFF WRITER

Orange resident Jessica Romley was recently honored as Big Sister of the Year by the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County and the Inland Empire.

The nonprofit partners older mentors – called “Bigs” – with youths.

Romley met her Little Sister Alejandra in 2010, when the girl was 9 years old. Romley said she had never felt so nervous as when they met for the first time. “It suddenly became really important to me that this little girl thought I was cool.”

Alejandra was quiet at first – Romley would joke that she’d talk enough for the two of them. But within weeks, the newfound sisters had discovered a shared sense of humor and



JONATHAN WINSLOW, STAFF

Jessica Romley, left, has been a “Big Sister” mentor to “Little Sister” Alejandra since 2010.

began to trust one another.

Alejandra has flourished. She’s now a 15-year-old honor student and following in Romley’s footsteps – she has become a High School Big, mentoring students at an elementary school.

“I had someone pushing me and encouraging me to do more than I

SEE SISTERS • PAGE 2

SISTERS

FROM PAGE 1

thought I could,” Alejandra said of Jessica. “She gave me that strength.”

The two are now closer

than ever, Romley said. They like to go ice skating, meet up for burgers and do homework at their favorite bookstore.

Despite starting out as strangers, both said they now feel an irreplaceable bond – they’ve become like

real sisters to one another.

“She’s honestly one of the strongest people I’ve ever met,” Romley said.

“She truly reminds me every day to be grateful. She’s very much a part of my life and will be forever.”