

Most Influential 2016: Mark Rutherford says Big Brothers Big Sisters helps develop the kind of people he strives to hire

[BY SUSAN GOULDING](#)

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Age: 60

Role: Director of human resources, American Financial Services; board member, Big Brothers Big Sisters Orange County

Bio: Rutherford grew up a self-described Army brat who lived in 12 cities before high school graduation. After graduating from the University of Georgia, Rutherford built a career as a human resources administrator.

Why he is an influencer: Once Rutherford's two daughters left home for college and careers five years ago, the San Clemente resident started looking for new ways to make children a focus in his life. A colleague suggested he get involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters Orange County. "At first, I wanted to be a Big Brother but I was afraid I was too old," Rutherford said. "I've since met wonderful Big Brothers and Big Sisters 10 years older than I am. Still, I decided I could make my biggest impact behind the scenes raising funds." Indeed, Rutherford's footprint has been huge. This year, under his leadership, the nonprofit's annual golf tournament broke fundraising records at \$335,000.

Biggest challenge: "A lot of young professional women raise their hands to be Big Sisters, but we need more young men to become Big Brothers."

Can't live without: "My wife, Denise. We've got a good thing going. And my iPod. I'm a big music guy. I don't keep my music on my iPhone or my iPad – I still use my beat-up old iPod."

What's next: "My goal this year is to bring more Big Brothers and Big Sisters into the organization. It sounds trite, but over and over again they tell me they get back just as much as they give. Relationships that started when the child was in third grade are still going strong a decade later."

– Susan Goulding

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