



**IAN, DURRAH & EMILIANO**  
2026 Bigs & Little of the Year



 **Big Brothers Big Sisters.**  
OF ORANGE COUNTY & THE INLAND EMPIRE

# PARENT NEWSLETTER

**MARCH 2026**

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE BBBS TEAM

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

And just like that, we are already a few months into 2026. Some of our families' mentoring journeys are just beginning. For others, your child has already built a steady rhythm with their mentor, and mentorship has become a meaningful part of your family's routine.

As parents and guardians, you know all too well that what worked a month ago may not work today. Children grow. Seasons shift. Needs change. And you adjust.

The same is true in our work.

In a field centered around people, growth requires reflection and intention. We are consistently looking at how we can strengthen communication, increase consistency, and ensure every mentoring relationship is supported with clarity and care.

Just like parenting, this work requires us to adjust as we go. As we strengthen how we support families, we are grateful for your trust and your patience. Strong partnerships make growth possible.

Our whole-family, whole-child approach keeps your experience with our organization at the forefront of all that we do. We all know how powerful mentorship can be, and when the adults surrounding a young person are connected and communicating with care, that impact deepens.

Thank you for continuing to partner with us. We are committed to growing alongside you.

In partnership,



*Jessica González*

Director of Program Support Services

[jgonzalez@ocbigs.org](mailto:jgonzalez@ocbigs.org)

To stay up on the latest news and updates for parents and guardians, visit [ocbigs.org/parent-news](https://ocbigs.org/parent-news)





# A MESSAGE FROM THE BBBS TEAM

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2026 MENTORS OF THE YEAR

During January, National Mentoring Month, Big Brothers Big Sisters honors six outstanding mentors and matches from its three cornerstone programs to celebrate the invaluable contributions of our Bigs and highlight the resiliency of our Littles.

[READ THEIR STORIES](#)

Please join us in celebrating the extraordinary mentorship, friendship, and advocacy of this year's honorees!

### COMMUNITY PROGRAM



**JESSICA & YAITZA**



**IAN, DURRAH & EMILIANO**

**BIGS & LITTLES  
OF THE  
YEAR**

### HIGH SCHOOL BIGS PROGRAM



**TRAM NGUYEN**  
Buena Park High School



**CHRISTIAN HERNANDEZ**  
Western High School



Tram and Christian each received the \$2,500 Angelitos Award to help fund their college and career dreams thanks to the support of Angelitos de Oro.

### WORKPLACE MENTORING PROGRAM



**JENNIFER WIEGMAN**  
Ingram Micro



**SIMIR SHAH**  
Google

Thank you to our partners



**TRAINING FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS**[CLICK HERE TO RSVP](#)

*Presented by the Child Guidance Center*  
Saturday, April 4, 2026 | 10 AM - 11:30 AM  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County Office, Santa Ana

Building strong communication at home can make a big difference in a child's life. During this training, parents and caregivers will learn simple, practical ways to communicate more effectively with their child and better understand their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Together, we'll explore how stronger connection can help children feel heard, supported, and confident as they navigate everyday challenges.

**PARENT TRAINING SPOTLIGHT | WELLNESS WITH MEDI-CAL**

This past quarter, we were excited to host a virtual Parent Training to share updates about **Medi-Cal** and other public assistance programs under the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (H.R. 1). Families learned about important changes, how to complete renewals on time, and ways to keep their coverage active. Our partners also shared information about CalOptima services, including virtual health options through their **Get Care Now campaign**, which helps families learn about different ways to access care when they need it.

**FOOD DISTRIBUTION AT BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS**

Our monthly **TEFAP Food Distribution** continues to be a vital resource for families in our community, providing both fresh and pantry foods to around 60 families each month. We are grateful for our volunteers and staff who make this event possible each month, and we're honored to support families facing food insecurity. We look forward to seeing you at our next food distribution!

**NEXT EVENT: APRIL 23**Register now at [ocbigs.org/food](https://ocbigs.org/food)[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

# FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAM PARENTS

## MATCH EVENT SPOTLIGHT | CRAFTS & SWEETS GATHERING

In February, our Bigs and Littles gathered at our office for an afternoon of creativity and connection. Matches collaborated on custom picture frames, friendship bracelets, and phone charms. The most popular station by far was the shrinky dink table, where Littles designed backpack charms, keychains, and even earrings.

The event gave matches the opportunity to spend quality time together while also connecting with other Bigs and Littles in the program. It was a joyful reminder that sometimes the simplest activities create the sweetest memories.



## ALUMNI

Big Brothers Big Sisters



Big Ralph (left) & Little Alessandro (right)  
Class of 2024

## BBBS ALUMNI NETWORK

With graduation season approaching fast, we encourage parents to start encouraging their seniors to connect with the **BBBS Alumni Network**. Once they graduate high school, Littles can continue receiving support from Big Brothers Big Sisters through our college and career resources and alumni networking events.

**Alumni youth have access to exclusive scholarships, career workshops, resource newsletters, and 1:1 appointments** to help with their transition into college or the workforce. Your Enrollment & Match Specialist will share more details as graduation approaches.

[LEARN MORE](#)

# FOR HIGH SCHOOL BIGS PARENTS

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we move into the final months of the school year, we want to take a moment to thank our families for their continued partnership and support. This time of year is especially important as students prepare to finish strong academically and personally, while continuing to build meaningful connections with their mentors. The relationships developed throughout the year play a significant role in supporting students' confidence, social development, and overall growth.

We deeply value the role families play in this process. Open communication and active engagement help ensure that we are meeting the needs of each student and creating a positive, supportive experience. Your encouragement at home reinforces the skills and lessons being developed during program sessions and strengthens the impact of mentorship.

As always, we remain committed to providing a safe, structured, and enriching environment for all participants. Our goal is to continue fostering meaningful connections and opportunities that support student success both inside and outside of the program. We are grateful for your trust and partnership and look forward to continuing this work together in the months ahead.

Warmly,



*Yvette Lira*

High School Bigs Associate Manager

[ylira@ocbigs.org](mailto:ylira@ocbigs.org)

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**SAVE THE DATE!**



**HIGH SCHOOL BIGS SUMMER CELEBRATION**

Our annual Summer Celebration brings together Bigs and Littles for a day of fun to create lasting memories and strengthen the bonds they formed throughout the year. As our site sessions will not be held during the summer, this is a unique opportunity for Littles to connect with their mentors before we resume in the fall.

**To attend, your student must return a signed, physical copy of the permission slip given to them by their Program Specialist by the last day of site.** Don't miss out!



# FOR HIGH SCHOOL BIGS PARENTS



## PROGRAM REMINDERS

• **Weekly Session Attendance:** Consistent attendance is essential to your student's success in our program. Weekly participation allows matches to build trust, strengthen their relationship, and fully engage in activities together. When students attend regularly, they get the most out of their mentoring experience and continue building positive momentum with their Big. We kindly ask that students prioritize attending every scheduled session whenever possible.

• **Communication with your Program Specialist:** If your child will be absent, arriving late, or needs to leave early, please notify your Program Specialist as soon as possible. Early communication helps us inform the Big and adjust plans accordingly, ensuring everyone's time is respected.

Your Program Specialist is also here to support you. If you have questions, updates, or concerns at any time, please don't hesitate to reach out. Strong communication helps us work together to provide the best possible experience for your child.

• **End-of-Site Reminder:** As we prepare for the end of the school year, please note that High School Big's after-school sessions conclude approximately one month before the last day of school.

• **Contact Over Summer Break:** Per agency policy, communication between Bigs and Littles outside of facilitated program sessions is not permitted—including during the summer months. This policy helps ensure safety, consistency, and clear boundaries within the program.

To help matches close the year in a meaningful way, we will continue our special **Summer Letters Tradition**. During the final month of the program, Bigs and Littles will write letters to one another, which Program Specialists will then mail to your home over the summer.



**Important: If you have recently moved or plan to move soon, please update your address with your Program Specialist ASAP to ensure your child receives their letter!**



## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Throughout the year, your child and their Big will work on a Youth Outcome Development Plan (YODP) to help achieve their goals. Our proven curriculum focuses on five key goals:

- Increasing confidence
- Building social skills
- Learning self-regulation
- Future planning and exploration
- Creating stronger relationships

If you have specific goals you'd like your child to focus on, please share them with your Program Specialist.



# FOR HIGH SCHOOL BIGS PARENTS



## SITE ACTIVITIES

• **RIASEC:** Students have been learning about RIASEC, a career interest tool that helps them better understand their strengths and the types of jobs they may enjoy in the future. RIASEC stands for Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. Each letter represents a different type of interest and work style, helping students explore what activities and careers may be a good fit for them. Through these activities, students and their mentors have had meaningful conversations about their interests, strengths, and future goals, connecting what they enjoy now to possible career paths in the future.



• **Big Buck Store:** Students have been practicing financial responsibility by earning “Big Bucks” for attending the program and completing tasks. They will soon have the opportunity to redeem their Big Bucks for rewards, celebrating their hard work and accomplishments. Littles won’t want to miss out!

• **End-of-Year Pizza Party:** We will celebrate the end of the school year with a pizza party, recognizing students’ growth and achievements, and honoring our promoting Littles and graduating Bigs for their dedication and impact throughout the year.



## PERSONAL SAFETY RULES

At BBBS, safety is our number one priority. Here are some of the site rules your child must follow:

• **Respectful Behavior:** Students are expected to show respect to their Bigs, peers, Program Specialist, and the material at all times.

• **No Exchange of Contact Info:** For the safety of all participants, students are strictly prohibited from exchanging personal contact info with their Big, such as phone numbers or social media profiles.

• Additionally, **meeting outside of the supervised mentoring sessions is NOT permitted.**



# FOR HIGH SCHOOL BIGS PARENTS

As the school year comes to an end, so does another year of High School Bigs. So, **what's next for your child?**

## FOR RETURNING LITTLES

If your child will be returning to the same elementary school in the fall, weekly High School Bigs site sessions will restart in Fall 2026. You do not need to submit a new application to participate in our program again next school year. If you plan to change schools next year, please contact your Program Specialist.

Your Program Specialist will be in touch in September-October to update you on your site start date and 2026-2027 schedule. Please note that Big Brothers Big Sisters is open all year round; please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or require community support or resources—we are here to help!

## FOR PROMOTING LITTLES

If your child is promoting to middle school this fall, their High School Bigs match will be officially closed in June, meaning your child will no longer be active in our program. Your Program Specialist will send you a closure letter for final communication from our agency.



**IS YOUR KID HEADED TO MIDDLE SCHOOL?**  
**Their mentorship journey doesn't have to end here!**

Enroll your child in one of these Big Brothers Big Sisters programs and **help them realize their potential**. By giving them the opportunity to continue to be mentored, you can keep your Little on the path to a bright, promising future.

### SPORTS BUDDIES

*Connecting young people with a mentor through sports.*

- >> **Mentor (Big):** Adult volunteer (18+)
- >> **Mentee (Little):** Youth (ages 11-14)
- >> **Structure:** Matches participate in 1 or 2 group activities per month facilitated by BBBS

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

### COMMUNITY-BASED

*Big Brothers Big Sisters' traditional mentorship program!*

- >> **Mentor (Big):** Adult volunteer (18+)
- >> **Mentee (Little):** Youth (ages 6-16)
- >> **Structure:** Matches schedule their own one-on-one outings in the community 2 times per month

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)



# FOR WORKPLACE MENTORING PARENTS

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

This month, the BBBS Workplace Mentoring Program proudly facilitated a campus tour at Cal State Fullerton for our Loara High School mentees and their dedicated Disneyland Resort mentors.

During the tour, students explored the campus environment, learned about academic pathways, and gained insight into college life. For many, this experience made higher education feel more tangible and achievable.

By providing early exposure and supportive mentorship, we continue to empower our high school cohort to think boldly about their futures and take meaningful steps toward their educational and career goals.



*Renee Valencia*

Workplace Mentoring Program Specialist

[rvalencia@ocbig.org](mailto:rvalencia@ocbig.org)





# COMMUNITY RESOURCES & EVENTS

## 2026 Youth Safety & Well-Being Summit

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is hosting their annual Youth Safety & Well-Being Summit, a national training focused on supporting youth safety, mental health, and well-being. This year's theme, *Strengthening Connection Within a Changing Landscape*, explores the challenges youth face today and shares practical tools, research insights, and expert perspectives to help create safer and more supportive spaces for young people. Parents across all of our programs are encouraged to attend this virtual event.

Dates & Time: Tuesday, April 7 - Thursday, April 9  
Sessions will be scheduled daily from  
1 PM - 2:15 PM and 2:45 PM - 4 PM

[Register Here](#)

## YOUTH SAFETY & WELL-BEING SUMMIT

APRIL 7-9, 2026

Strengthening Connection  
Within a Changing Landscape



## Easter Celebration

The Stanton Family Resource Center is hosting its annual Easter Celebration, a fun community event featuring an egg hunt for children ages 0-14, an informational resource fair, and a special visit from the Easter Bunny! Be sure to arrive on time with your cameras ready.

Dates & Times: Saturday, April 4 | 9 AM - 11 AM  
Egg hunt begins at 10 AM

Location: Stanton Central Park  
10660 Western Avenue, Stanton

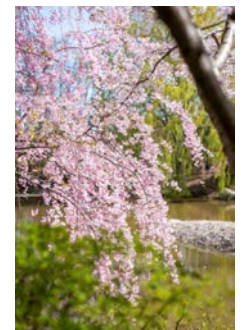
[View Flyer](#)

## Japanese Cherry Blossom Festival

The Bowers Museum invites families to a free Japanese Cherry Blossom Festival featuring traditional music and dance, taiko drumming with audience participation, cherry blossom-themed art projects, face painting, and bonsai demonstrations by Kofu Bonsai Kai. This is a wonderful community event for families to enjoy together.

Dates & Time: Sunday, April 19 | 11 AM - 3 PM  
Location: Key Courtyard, Bowers Museum  
2002 North Main Street, Santa Ana, CA 92706

[Learn more](#)





# COMMUNITY RESOURCES & EVENTS



## 15th OC Día del Niño Celebration

Presented by Arts Orange County and Media Arts Santa Ana, this free community event celebrates children and families through youth music, dance performances, and arts and craft workshops. This special celebration belongs to the community and offers a wonderful day of culture, creativity, and fun for children and families to enjoy together.

Date & Time: Saturday, April 25

Location: Hunt Branch Library & Event Center

201 S. Basque Ave, Fullerton, CA 92833

[View Flyer](#)

## California Community Resource Guide

This easy-to-use online directory helps families locate state services and support in areas like children and families, healthcare, food assistance, mental health, housing, education, jobs, and more. It's a valuable tool to connect with essential resources that can strengthen well-being and provide help when navigating everyday needs

[Learn More](#)



## CalKIDS College Savings

The CalKIDS program automatically provides eligible California children and public school students with a college savings account and seed money to help jump-start their future educational savings with scholarship funds waiting to be claimed!

[Learn More](#)



# Big Brothers Big Sisters®

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