



Back-to-School at BBBS 2026



PARENT NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026

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A MESSAGE FROM THE BBBS TEAM

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Over the past year, Big Brothers Big Sisters had the privilege of impacting **4,744 youth** across Orange County and the Inland Empire. Behind that number are thousands of moments that often go unseen. A mentor showing up consistently. A parent finding support during a difficult season. A family connecting to resources. A child discovering new confidence.

We know that mentorship is just one part of the solution to ensuring young people thrive, and our support has reached families in countless ways across Orange County, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties this year:

1,542
YOUTH

connected to educational resources, housing, healthcare, and other wraparound support

\$173,750

awarded to BBBS youth pursuing their college and career goals

1,113
FAMILIES

connected to engagement opportunities, parent education, family resources, and support

400
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

provided resources to our BBBS families

Every one of these numbers represents a child who felt encouraged, a family who found support, a mentor who continued to show up, and a community that came together to help young people reach their full potential.

So, as you explore this edition of our Parent Newsletter, we hope you'll discover new opportunities to stay connected, participate in upcoming events, and learn about the resources available to your family. Whether it's through mentoring, family engagement, community resources, or simply knowing our team is here when you need us, our commitment remains the same: **to help every child and every family feel supported.**

Thank you for trusting us to be part of your family's story. We look forward to continuing to grow alongside you in the year ahead.

In partnership,



Jessica González

Senior Director of Program Support Services
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To stay up on the latest news and updates for parents and guardians, visit ocbigs.org/parent-news



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



FOR BBBS YOUTH 16+



NETWORKING WITH CONFIDENCE

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Saturday, September 12 | 10 AM - 3 PM
BBBS OC Office, Santa Ana

Want the inside scoop on what Human Resources is *actually* looking for when hiring? BBBS youth (and their mentors!) are invited to this half-day seminar—hosted by real HR professionals—to learn and practice the skills that can help them land their dream career.

FOR BBBS PARENTS & GUARDIANS



LOVE AND THE ANXIOUS-AVOIDANT CYCLE



Thursday, September 17
6 PM - 7 PM | ZOOM

Hosted by Latinx Therapy, this workshop will explore the anxious-avoidant cycle in relationships and help participants recognize unhealthy relationship patterns, rebuild confidence, and learn practical ways to protect their emotional well-being.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



BUDGETING FOR REAL LIFE



Wednesday, September 23
6 PM - 7:30 PM | ZOOM

Learn practical ways to track your spending, manage monthly expenses, and create a realistic budget that works for you and your family.

Topics: Income & expenses • Tracking spending • Monthly budgeting • Simple money-management tools

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

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: SEPTEMBER 24

Register now at ocbigs.org/food

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

EVENT SPOTLIGHT | BACK-TO-SCHOOL WITH BBBS

Across our Orange County and Riverside offices, we helped **178 BBBS families** get ready for the school year at our **Annual Backpack Drive**. This year, we added **Career Fairs** to connect our high schoolers with dozens of local colleges, universities, and companies.



Recently, we received a **\$50,000 Community Possible grant from the U.S. Bank Foundation**, which will help us bring more events and resources like these to students throughout the upcoming school year—and beyond. Stay tuned!



FOR COMMUNITY PROGRAM PARENTS

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The Match Support team hopes you and your family are enjoying a wonderful start to the new school year! As everyone settles into new routines, here are a few reminders to help ensure your child's mentoring relationship continues to thrive all year long.



As your family's schedule evolves with school, sports, and extracurricular activities, **please keep your Big and your Match Support Specialist (MSS) informed of any changes that may affect your child's availability.** Open communication helps make scheduling outings and support calls easier and supports consistency within the match.



During our regular Match Support check-ins, we encourage you to **share big and small updates about academics, extracurriculars, accomplishments, or any challenges your child may be experiencing.** These conversations help your MSS celebrate milestones, identify opportunities for additional support or resources.

We look forward to another wonderful school year of supporting your family and celebrating the incredible impact of mentorship together!



Michelle Urquiza

Associate Manager, Match Support

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Bigs and Littles at our Summer Match Picnic. Thank you for joining us!



FOR HIGH SCHOOL BIGS PARENTS

Welcome to a brand-new school year, Parents and Guardians!

We hope you and your family had a wonderful summer and are feeling excited for all the opportunities this year will bring.

As we begin another year of the High School Bigs Program, we're thrilled to continue creating meaningful mentoring relationships that help children build confidence, develop new skills, and create lasting memories. Whether your child is returning to the program or joining us for the very first time, we are committed to providing a safe, fun, and supportive environment where they can learn, grow, and thrive alongside their Big (mentor).

This year will be filled with engaging activities, hands-on learning experiences, and opportunities for your child to strengthen friendships, discover new interests, and reach personal goals. Behind every successful match is a strong partnership between our families, schools, mentors, and Program Specialists, and we are grateful to have you as an important part of that team.

Throughout the school year, your Program Specialist will keep you informed with important updates, match progress, upcoming events, and program information. We encourage you to stay connected, ask questions, and share any changes that may help us best support your child.

Thank you for trusting Big Brothers Big Sisters to be part of your child's journey. We look forward to another year of growth, connection, and unforgettable moments.

Here's to an amazing 2026-2027 school year!



Maria Muret

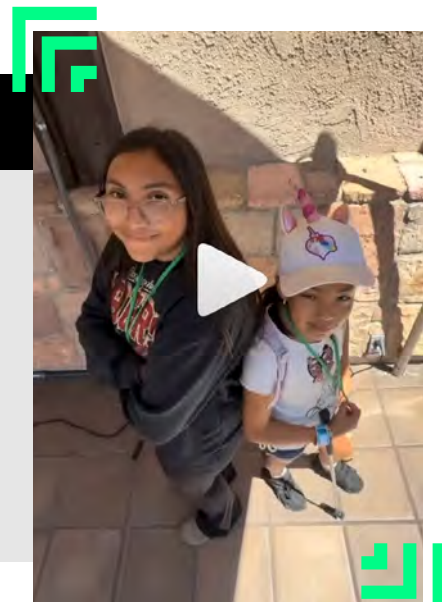
High School Bigs Senior Program Specialist
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EVENT SPOTLIGHT | SUMMER CELEBRATION

What an incredible way to celebrate an amazing year of mentorship! We welcomed **570 Bigs and Littles** to our Annual Summer Celebration for a day filled with fun, connection, and unforgettable memories.

Matches took over Camelot Golfland to enjoy mini golf, laser tag, arcade games, face painting, a photo booth, and lunch, all while celebrating the friendships and growth they built last school year.

Check out this music video our students made of the day!





FOR HIGH SCHOOL BIGS PARENTS



PROGRAM REMINDERS

To help your child have a successful and rewarding experience this school year, please review the following important reminders:



Weekly Program Schedule

High School Bigs sessions are held once a week at your child's elementary school from 3:45 PM - 4:45 PM. Our program follows the school calendar, so sessions will not be held during school holidays, breaks, or other scheduled school closures.



Attendance Matters

Regular attendance helps your child build a strong, trusting relationship with their Big and get the most out of the mentoring experience. If your child will be absent, please notify your Program Specialist (PS).



No Contact Outside of Session

All communication between Bigs and Littles will take place at program sites only. No outside communication is permitted.



Keep Your Information Updated

If your phone number, address, emergency contact, or dismissal arrangements change during the school year, please let your PS know as soon as possible.



We're Here to Support Your Family

If your family needs assistance accessing community resources such as food, housing, clothing, mental health services, or other basic needs, your PS is here to help. We can connect you with our Program Support Services team and other available resources.



PERSONAL SAFETY

At BBBS, the safety and well-being of every child is our highest priority. To help maintain a safe, respectful, and positive mentoring environment, all participants are expected to follow these program guidelines:

- **Be Respectful.** Students are expected to treat their Big, peers, BBBS/school staff, and program materials with kindness and respect at all times.
- **No Exchange of Personal Contact Information.** Bigs and Littles may not exchange personal phone numbers, social media accounts, email addresses, home addresses, or any other personal contact information. All communication takes place only during supervised program sessions.



FOR HIGH SCHOOL BIGS PARENTS



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the school year, your child and their Big will work together on a **Youth Outcome Development Plan (YODP)** using our curriculum and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) activities. Through engaging conversations, hands-on projects, and guided experiences, students will build lifelong skills that support their success both in and out of the classroom.

Our curriculum focuses on **five key areas of growth**:

- **Increasing Confidence** – Building self-esteem, recognizing strengths, and developing a positive self-image.
- **Building Social Skills** – Strengthening communication, teamwork, empathy, and healthy peer relationships.
- **Learning Self-Regulation** – Practicing emotional awareness, problem-solving, and strategies for managing thoughts and feelings.
- **Future Planning & Exploration** – Inspiring curiosity about future education, careers, and personal goals.
- **Creating Stronger Relationships** – Building trust, fostering meaningful connections, and developing healthy relationships with peers and caring adults.

Through consistent mentorship and SEL-focused experiences, we're committed to helping every child grow into a confident, capable, and resilient individual.

PARENT TIP: KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING



One of the best ways to support your child's mentoring experience is by asking about it! After each session, take a few minutes to ask open-ended questions like:

- **What was your favorite part of today's session?**
- **What did you and your Big do together?**
- **What is something new you learned about yourself or your Big?**

Showing interest in your child's mentoring journey reinforces the skills they're learning and helps them reflect on their experiences.

Your encouragement at home makes a lasting difference!



FOR WORKPLACE MENTORING PARENTS

Dear Parents and Guardians,

While Workplace Mentoring program sessions for our **Loara High School** and **Disneyland Resort** are on a brief summer break, our mentors, mentees, and staff have continued to stay connected. Matches have maintained communication through text messages and phone calls, helping to strengthen the relationships they've built over the past two years. In addition, each student has participated in an individual summer check-in with our Program Specialist to share updates on their summer experiences, including family vacations, summer school, internships, and personal accomplishments.

As we prepare for the upcoming school year, we are excited to welcome our students back for the **third and final year of the Workplace Mentoring Program**. With senior year bringing important milestones, our sessions will place an even greater emphasis on college and career readiness. Students will receive guidance and support as they navigate college applications, career exploration, postsecondary planning, and the many decisions that come with preparing for life after high school.

During our summer conversations, we also reminded students and families of the wraparound resources available through Big Brothers Big Sisters, including our **College & Career Resource Center led by Christina Sundermeier**. Students are encouraged to connect regularly with their school counselor and take advantage of college and career resources and workshops available through BBBS.

One thing was clear during every check-in: **our students are excited to return, reconnect with their mentors, and make the most of their final year together**. We look forward to supporting them through this exciting chapter and celebrating all they accomplish in the year ahead.



Renee Valencia

Workplace Mentoring Engagement & Partnership Specialist
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PARENT TIPS: SUPPORTING YOUR SENIOR

Here are a few simple ways you can help support your student throughout their senior year:



Ask about their conversations with their mentor and encourage them to stay engaged between sessions



Set aside time to discuss post-graduation plans, even if they are still exploring their options



Encourage them to connect regularly with their school counselor and take advantage of resources available through BBBS' College & Career Team



Celebrate both the big milestones and the small victories as they prepare for life after high school



COMMUNITY RESOURCES & EVENTS



Santa Ana Fiestas Patrias 2026

FREE family-friendly celebration honoring Mexico's Independence Day and the rich cultures and traditions of Hispanic and Latin American communities. Families can enjoy a festive parade, live entertainment, carnival rides, delicious food, and more throughout the weekend.

Dates & Time: Saturday, September 12 | 12 PM - 11 PM

Sunday, September 13 | 12 PM - 1 PM

Location: Downtown Santa Ana

[Learn more](#)

25th Festival of Children®

The Festival of Children® at South Coast Plaza is a free, family-friendly celebration taking place throughout September. Families can enjoy fun activities, hands-on exhibits, live performances, face painting, arts and crafts, and more while connecting with local organizations that support children and families. Each weekend offers something different, so there is always something new to explore and enjoy together!

Dates: September 5-27, 2026

Location: South Coast Plaza, Costa Mesa



[View schedule](#)



Anaheim Fall Festival & Halloween Parade

The Anaheim Fall Festival & Halloween Parade is a fun-filled community event for the whole family! Families can enjoy costume contests, kids' crafts, live entertainment, local artists, delicious food and treats, a scavenger hunt, and the Anaheim Classic Car Show.

Date & Time: Saturday, October 24, 2026

FALL FESTIVAL: 10 AM - 4 PM | Center Greens

CLASSIC CAR SHOW: 10 AM - 4 PM

HALLOWEEN PARADE: 7 PM | Downtown Anaheim

[Learn more](#)



COMMUNITY RESOURCES & EVENTS

Mexican Day of the Dead

Bowers Museum invites families to celebrate Mexican Day of the Dead at this free family festival. Families can enjoy live performances, art activities, face painting, and complimentary treats while learning more about this special cultural tradition.

Dates: Sunday, November 1 | 11 AM- 3 PM

Location: Bowers Museum, Santa Ana



[Learn more](#)



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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