Only child to single mom Antigua, TJ is a 7 1/2-year-old, smart, courageous and talented 2nd grader residing in Brooklyn. Like many moms in our program, Antigua came to Bigs & Littles NYC because she values the importance of mentorship and positive influences. She was intentional about choosing the right options for TJ that could provide opportunities for him to learn and grow. She also hoped for a role model who could teach TJ how to carry himself and develop healthy relationships. In just six months, Antigua happily describes TJ and his mentor as “best buds” who have an easy time connecting and truly enjoy each other’s company.

When TJ was initially introduced to his Big Brother Michael, a 30-year-old Transportation Planner from Virginia, he was shy and quiet, but that was short-lived as the two opened up to each other, bonding over their love of games, sports and exploring different neighborhoods. Michael is the youngest of four siblings, and having been a teacher for two years in Spain, is enjoying the opportunity to give back as a mentor while being around the energy and candor of TJ. Together they have explored the Botanic Garden, Prospect Park, the zoo, and the Museum of Natural History. They have also played basketball and are looking forward to more outdoor adventures now that the weather is getting better. Antigua is grateful to see her son’s increased joy, laughter, and enthusiasm as he continues to develop a friendship with Michael.

Dear Friends,

Building on over 120 years of successful one-to-one youth mentoring, we have created a model that works — one that is research proven with clear and measured outcomes, an important piece of the puzzle. However, creating the right match is a meticulous and often arduous endeavor because healthy relationships are profound. They lift us up in ways we cannot see and cannot measure. They make us believe in ourselves and others; they make us feel like we can achieve anything.

It is with immense pleasure that we present the 2023 Bigs & Littles NYC Mentoring Impact Report. In these pages, you will witness the connections, perseverance, resilience and triumph that define our organization — from the inspiring achievements of our Little Brothers and Little Sisters that stem from within but flourish by the guidance of their Big Brothers and Big Sisters, to the deep compassion of our professional staff, and the unwavering support of our donors who generously invest in the futures of the children and families we serve.

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for the countless people it takes to do our work. Please join us as we celebrate our collective accomplishments and recommit to shaping a brighter, more promising future for all.

Thank you for being an integral part of our community.

With great appreciation,

Andrew R. Bogart
Board President
Vidhya R. Kelly, LMSW
CEO / Executive Director
Mission
Founded in 1902, Bigs & Littles NYC Mentoring strives to transform the lives of children through one-to-one mentoring, while strengthening entire families in hardship.

Vision
A city in which all young people are empowered to recognize, reach for and achieve their full potential.

2023 Annual Budget: $1.3M
Thanks to annual donations from our Board of Trustees, 100% of every dollar raised goes to directly supporting our programs.
To make a contribution, visit bigslittlesnyc.org/donate

Our Impact
- 100% of youth served were promoted to the next grade
- 98% of youth showed increased self-confidence
- 99% of parents showed increased self-efficacy
- 100% of youth served graduated High School within 5 years
- 89% of High School graduates entered a college or training program, while the remainder entered the workforce
- 99% of youth served avoided early parenting and substance abuse
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Thank you to our World of Work (W.O.W.) Partners

Our site-based, one-to-one, group mentoring program pairs employees at New York City corporations with students from nearby high-need schools, leading them through college and career readiness with a curriculum that develops 21st century skills such as communication, collaboration and critical thinking.
2023 Signature Events

The Big Little Casino Night

Birdies for Bigs & Littles NYC

6th Annual 5K Run/Walk

Spring Gala
Our Staff
Vidhya R. Kelly, LMSW
CEO/Executive Director
Susan Varghese, MSW
Chief Program Officer
Tamanna Vaswani, MSW
Chief Development Officer
Vidhi Mehta
Director of Finance & Operations
Jessica Castillo
Communications and Development Officer
Ana Melo, MA
Senior Program Officer
Blanca Arellano
Program Manager
Sophie Behrend
Program Manager
Kayla Bernstein
Community Engagement Coordinator
Thais Elizalde
Program Coordinator

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Special Events Manager
Diane Rubino, LCSW
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Administrative Coordinator

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Ericsson

2023 Impact Report | 9
Chelsea and Mykayla

Back cover

Matched January 2024

While 47-year-old Deneega struggled to keep up in school when she was a child, she is doing everything possible to make sure her daughter is set up for success in every way. Born and raised in Queens and having lost her own parents at the age of 11 to addiction and HIV, Deneega persevered through years of hardship to earn her GED later in life, and pursue a bright future as a Certified Nursing Assistant. She now lives in the South Bronx as single mom to 12-year-old Chelsea, an outgoing and fearless 7th grader with a passion for dancing and a dream of becoming a criminal justice attorney. Chelsea has struggled with anxiety and often feels lonely, so Deneega felt having a Big Sister would provide her with a healthy connection and introduce her to new opportunities, helping her to evolve into a confident young lady as she navigates her teen years ahead.

A few short months ago, Chelsea was matched with 27-year-old Mykayla, an HR specialist originally from Minnesota who heard about Bigs & Littles through a fellow mentor and member of the organization’s Junior Board Committee. With a degree in Psychology and Communications, Mykayla was excited to provide her with a healthy connection and introduce her to new outings exploring the city, trying new foods and checking out night classes in Employment Law), the pair have bonded over love of dance and interest in the legal industry (Mykala takes amazed at how quickly Chelsea and her clicked. Beyond their volunteer in the city she made her home three years ago, and was born and raised in Queens and having lost her own parents at the age of 11 to addiction and HIV, Deneega persevered through years of hardship to earn her GED later in life, and pursue a bright future as a Certified Nursing Assistant. She now lives in the South Bronx as single mom to 12-year-old Chelsea, an outgoing and fearless 7th grader with a passion for dancing and a dream of becoming a criminal justice attorney. Chelsea has struggled with anxiety and often feels lonely, so Deneega felt having a Big Sister would provide her with a healthy connection and introduce her to new opportunities, helping her to evolve into a confident young lady as she navigates her teen years ahead.

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