



Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Big Impact

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For Los Alamos National Laboratory employee Alyssa Schreiber, volunteering with Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) feels more like a privilege than a service.

“I think that BBBS is an important program because it gives kids someone to talk to and play with consistently every week,” she says. “It gives them a place at lunch removed from their classmates to spend time with a person that is there just for them.”

Alyssa started with the program in 2014 when she was looking for ways to help the community. “I specifically choose them because I had a mentor when I was in high school that was involved, so I knew what this program could do.”

Adult volunteers, known as ‘Bigs’, are paired with children, known as ‘Littles’, who have requested a match. Alyssa’s Little is Madison, a sixth grader at Chamisa Elementary School in White Rock, and they’ve been together for four years.

They meet regularly to play board games, and Madison shows Alyssa her latest gymnastic trick or hip-hop move. “But really most importantly we just enjoy talking and eating lunch together,” says Alyssa.

Benefits of having a Big

Research reveals that having a Big can have a positive, long-term influence on the children ages six through 18 who participate. A survey of BBBS alumni also found that 77 percent believe they did better in school because of their Big, and 65 percent believe that their Big helped them reach a higher level of education than they thought possible.

“I feel that the main benefits of the program for the kids who participate are greater self-confidence, better social and academic skills, and exposure to new perspectives and interests,” says Gordon Lazar, program specialist lead at BBBS Mountain Region.

As Alyssa makes clear, there are also positive results for the Bigs that take part. “My favorite part of being a Big Sister is see how much my Little has grown, and who she is becoming. Plus, it gives me an excuse to get out of the office once a week and go play!” she says.

Alyssa is one of 28 Laboratory volunteers working with BBBS, but there is always a need for more help, particularly from men as there is a large number of boys waiting to be matched.

“When anybody asks me about my experience, I tell them that I love being a part of the program and they should look into it,” says Alyssa.

For more information visit the [Big Brothers Big Sisters Mountain Region website](#) or call (505) 629-0090.

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