

Organization Name: **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay, Inc.**

Organization Info

Year Established: 1964

Most Recent 990 Year: 2018

Total Revenue: \$5,243,044

Total Expenses: \$5,192,440

Philanthropy Hub Profile Created: Yes

Program Snapshot

Program Name: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alachua County

Contract Number: 11562

Award Amount: 29554

Type of Program: Out of School Time/Youth Development

Program Summary: Mentorship program for youth

Target Population: School-Age: 6-18

Program Staffing:

Program Director

Program Site(s):

4630 Woodland Corporate Blvd

Suite 160

Tampa 33614

United States

Partner(s):

To be completed by the Providing Agency

How much?	Actual	How well?	Actual	Anyone better off?	Actual
<p>Expected # of children to be served: 20</p> <p>Intensity of Services: On-going engagement (weekly sessions)</p> <p># of mentorship sessions attended</p>	2	% of mentorship sessions attended		<p>% increase in academic achievement</p> <p>% improvement in life skills</p>	No youth have been matched long enough to track outcomes at this time.

Project Narrative:

Describe what has been accomplished year-to-date.

Include any adjustments due to COVID-19 or any other helpful information

Once we secured funding from the Children's Trust of Alachua County this past Spring, we focused on hiring a Program Director for Alachua County to launch our mentoring program here. Our initial hire, Graham Glover, who recently retired from the military, began working for us on Monday, February 24th. Graham helped get us started in Alachua County, and did some interviews and obtained local media coverage to build awareness. Graham made the difficult decision to leave our agency over the summer, to be the new Information Officer at the Gainesville Police Department.

We quickly replaced Graham with Jasmyn Copeland, a former educator with the Alachua County School System. Once she completed her training with us, Jasmyn hit the ground running and quickly worked to develop partnerships in the community for both volunteers and child referrals. These partnerships include The Alachua County School District, The Boys and Girls Club, the Partnership for Strong Families, the Gainesville Police Department, the Gainesville Housing Authority, Gators for Good at the University of Florida, and the Chrysalis Counseling Center.

Thanks to our agency's partnership with the local United Way, we are leasing office space from their facility in Gainesville to conduct interviews and complete other tasks. Additionally, we were successful in raising outside funds (i.e., Regions Bank) to cover the \$8000 cost of a new LiveScan digital fingerprint machine for completing Level II background checks on all perspective volunteers in Alachua County. This machine allows us to also comply with all Florida Department of Juvenile Justice requirements for volunteers, including a photograph of the volunteer.

The COVID-19 pandemic was unexpected, of course, and slowed down the implementation of our services in Alachua County in a major way while everyone figured out how to deal with this unique and challenging health crisis. While we are still very respectful of the dangers of this pandemic, we have learned how to adjust our operations and practices to be able to still provide our mentoring services in a relatively safe manner.

In other words, Big Brothers Big Sisters is open for business in Alachua County.

Our first two Big/Little matches were made in September of this year, and we could not be prouder of this accomplishment. Details of these first two matches are provided below.

As of the end of September, we had 18 additional children enrolled and waiting to be matched. We also have 5 additional volunteers in our enrollment process.

We match a Big and Little based off interests, personalities, location, and availability so it is helpful to have a wide selection of youth ready to be matched for when a volunteer is processed.

Our first two Big/Little matches were both made virtually, a process we put into place in March of this year when the pandemic began. Traditionally, all interviews and match meetings are completed in-person and then the Bigs and Littles spend time together face to face. When it became clear this past March that our usual process for making matches was not safe to do in person due to the pandemic, we immediately pivoted to operating virtually.

Our Big Orientation & Trainings (which all interested volunteers must complete prior to being interviewed) started being conducted online in mid-March, as well as interviews with both the volunteers and families, and the initial match meeting between the Big, the Little, the Little's parent/legal guardian, and the BBBS staff member. While our Big/Little matches can utilize Facetiming, sending letters, talking on the phone, and texting most are again meeting in person, with masks and social distancing.

Here is some information on our first two Big/Little matches:

Denora, age 6, is the youngest of four children in her family. Her mother is a single mom and she wanted Denora to be able to receive more one-on-one attention and have an additional positive adult to look up to. Denora is now matched with her new Big Sister Amber and said she cannot wait to go to the playground and swing with her new Big Sister.

Here is a picture of our first match, Amber and Denora, and a bit more information about their match: (Please go to next page.)



Amber is a preschool teacher here in Gainesville and has a passion for teaching little ones. Denora is a fun and energetic six-year-old. She and Denora hit it off the moment they met. They have already enjoyed a trip to the library, the park, and a visit to a local ice cream parlor. Amber has also put her teacher skills to use by helping Denora reach her goal of improving her reading comprehension. They have played research-based learning games, such as, sentence building dominoes, practiced patterns and letter sounds, and read multiple books together. Dominique, Denora's Mom, reached out to Big Brothers Big Sisters in hopes of providing her daughter the additional emotional and academic support that she recognized her kids needed, as she is a hard-working single parent of four.



Next, we have Payton and Aaliyah...

Aaliyah, age 12, is the oldest of four children in her family and lives with her mom. Her mom tried to enroll Aaliyah into Big Brothers Big Sisters in 2019 and was disappointed to learn then that we were not yet operating in Gainesville. When she heard that Big Brothers Bigs Sisters of Alachua County had come to town this year, she was excited to enroll several of her children. Aaliyah's mom wanted Aaliyah to be matched with a Big Sister so that she could have a good role model in her life and get some help having a more positive attitude. Aaliyah says she has a "fun, goofy personality" and wanted a Big Sister to try new things with. She met her new Big Sister Peyton in September and they are off to a great start!



Payton is a student at the University of Florida who is pursuing a career in pediatric psychology. Payton also would like to become a foster parent later in life. Aaliyah is an extremely focused 7th grader who has high expectations for herself as well. One of the goals Aaliyah has identified is the need for support in organization and with strategies for studying. These are both skills Payton has mastered and is thrilled to be able to share tactics. To date, Payton and Aaliyah have enjoyed going out to eat for lunch, and spending time going through Aaliyah's virtual classes...one by one, to help Aaliyah learn to navigate her online portals so she will not to miss assignments and due dates. Aaliyah is new to the virtual world and Payton has become quite proficient. For their next outing they plan to go hiking and end the day with some outside study time. Aaliyah has a big test she wants help getting ready for.

We are super excited that we have begun to make new Big/Little matches here in Alachua County, even during a Pandemic! Here is what we have coming up...

We have an amazing “Big Couple” we will be matching in hopefully the next week or so. The husband played football in college and the wife has a heart of gold. We have an incredible young man who is so excited to be introduced to his new mentors, as soon as all safety clearances have been processed.

We also have another UF student who has patiently waited to a part of our program since the fall of last year, as we were not serving Alachua at that time. She has completed her Virtual Training and her Volunteer Interview. She too will be matched as soon as all her background information has been processed.

We have been extremely fortunate to have made many connections with families all over Alachua County that are actively being processed. The efforts are now being spent on recruiting Bigs, and huge strides have been made there too! As part of that effort, we also recently connected with a couple board members from the prior Big Brothers Big Sisters agency serving Gainesville, and obtained some files of their former volunteers who we will then reach out to in an effort to re-engage them with us.

2020 is certainly a year everyone will not forget, and we are proud of the progress we have made to make sure that the children of Alachua County are never forgotten!

Our grant goal for 2020 was to provide 20 youth in Alachua County with a quality mentoring experience. While this was not ultimately not possible to do due to Covid-19, the funds from the Children’s Trust of Alachua County did provide us funding to get our operations off the ground by hiring a quality Program Director in Gainesville, making two initial Big/Little matches and setting the stage for many more in the coming months.

While we are not yet able to track any outcomes for the Alachua County youth we are serving due to them being so new, we know the matches we are making are high quality and we have no doubt that Alachua County youth will be positively impacted by these mentoring relationships long term. We will provide outcomes on the youth served in Alachua County in the future.

We look forward for the opportunity to continue to partner with the Children’s Trust of Alachua County going forward to sustain and grow our mentoring programs even more in the coming year.