



Big Brothers Big Sisters
Of Central Texas

PRESS RELEASE

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AUSTIN ATTORNEY TO BE NAMED BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS 2009 NATIONAL BIG BROTHER OF THE YEAR

De Leon to Accept Award at 2009 National Conference in Miami

April 30, 2009, Austin, TX -- When Austin attorney Ben De Leon met a second grader for a short-term mentoring program through his church three years ago, he discovered the then 7-year-old Anthony had been waiting to be matched with a Big Brother. Impressed with how well they interacted, Anthony's grandmother put Ben in contact with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Texas. She wanted to make the friendship official and ensure the mentoring relationship had the support that would make it last.

Three years later, De Leon is not only still matched with Anthony; he just learned that this summer, he'll be named Big Brothers Big Sisters of America's national Big Brother of the Year. On Tuesday, June 16, he will accept the award at BBBS' national convention in Miami. Anthony, his grandmother and grandfather will attend the banquet as well.

"Ben has been a reliable, trusted and exciting addition to Anthony's life. They get together several times a month and enjoy visiting book stores, attending sports events, spending time at the lake, and various other activities," said Jeni Findley, Senior Match Support Specialist at the Central Texas agency.

Anthony lives with his grandmother and grandfather, the latter suffering from arthritis, which makes it difficult for him to enjoy many physical activities with the youngster. Anthony says with his Big Brother, he's able to share sports activities, have someone to help him with homework and have a trusted adult to talk to about anything. Working with his match support specialist, Ben makes sure Anthony's family has resources to give his Little Brother every opportunity to succeed.

"Ben is not only a Big Brother to Anthony; he is a best friend. I can always count on Ben for extra guidance and let him know when there is something wrong with Anthony. Ben is always there to direct him in the right direction," said Cathy Carrillo, Anthony's grandmother. "Anthony has great appreciation of what Ben teaches him; to be strong and patient. Anthony has developed a strong relationship with Ben, his wife and daughter. He knows that it is important to listen, learn and turn in all his school work."

Ben also supports Big Brothers Big Sisters financially. He knows firsthand the importance of funding to recruit and carefully match volunteers as well as providing ongoing support for mentors, children and their families. He sees personally what independent research finds about Big Brothers Big Sisters: that longer matches yield strong results for children, increasing their odds to succeed educationally and socially.

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About Big Brothers Big sisters

Big Brothers Big Sisters helps vulnerable children beat the odds. The organization depends on donations to help recruit volunteers and reach more children. Funding is used to conduct background checks on volunteers to ensure child safety; and provide ongoing support for children, families and volunteers to build and sustain long-lasting relationships. Big Brothers Big Sisters is proven to improve children's odds for succeeding in school, behaving nonviolently, avoiding drugs and alcohol, and breaking negative cycles. Headquartered in Philadelphia and with nearly 400 agencies across the country, Big Brothers Big Sisters serves more than a quarter million children. Learn how you can change how children grow up in Central Texas by visiting www.bigmentoring.org.

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