

March 2, 2016

My Fellow Staten Islander;

I recently met with the Henry Batista, Executive Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York. This venerable organization, a New York fixture since 1904, has recently opened a permanent Staten Island location to service our needy communities.


There is no shortage of youngsters, which are referred to as "Littles," seeking the mentorship of a "Big." The problem is that Bigs are being imported from other boroughs, because very few Staten Islanders are stepping forward.

The benefits of having a trusted Big Brother or Big Sister is great: self-esteem is enhanced, grades get better and graduation rates increase dramatically. And more importantly, a Big fills a void in the life of a Little in a way that can't be measured.

I'm asking you to consider whether this might be something you would undertake. The commitment is small – four hours, twice a month – but the emotional rewards could be huge. Or, perhaps, you know someone for whom being a Big Brother or Sister would have great appeal. If so, I urge you to visit their website at <http://www.bigsnyc.org/> to get a feel for the good work BBBS does in any community they touch.

As the old expression goes, charity begins at home. It is time for Staten Islanders to step up and play Big - the little ones need your help.

Sincerely,

  
James S. Oddo  
President, Borough of Staten Island

