Successful Match, Positive Future

Austin came to the Big Brothers Big Sisters Program (BBBS) in 2013 at 9 years of age. He had been in the process of adjusting to living with his grandparents full time as they had been declared his legal guardians.

Living with his grandparents full time was a challenge for Austin. Their roles had to change into parental figures and the transition and living situation was not always easy for everyone involved.

When we first met Austin, he expressed to us that he sometimes would get into trouble at school because of hanging with the wrong people. He told us that he needed to choose better friends and make better decisions.

Austin met his ‘Big Brother’ Michael through the SMILES mentoring program. Their SMILES relationship was going to conclude at the end of the school year and Michael felt that Austin desperately needed to have a mentor during the summer months. They were then matched through the BBBS program.

Michael played an instrumental role in getting Austin into the Nativity Prep School, an alternative middle school for boys, grades 5-8. You must apply to get in and the school only holds about 55 students each year. Austin thrived at Nativity Prep with the help of his Big Brother.

Michael started picking Austin up after school on Tuesdays so Austin could have dinner with him and his wife, do homework, and play games. It became an opportunity for everyone involved to take a breather and allowed Austin to spend more time with Michael.

Austin is currently completing 8th grade. Michael reported to us in December that he had been talking to the family about options for high school. Austin and his grandparents were solely focused on getting him into New Bedford Voke. Michael, his teachers or his grandparents, he has told us that it makes his night. “Austin is a great kid and I am trying to keep him focused on rising above his current circumstances. He's bright and very articulate. He sees the bigger picture and at least for the moment is working hard to achieve it. We have become more like family than Big/Little Brothers,” said Michael.

Observing this match, we are so grateful for the endless amount of support, guidance and resources Michael has provided for Austin and his family. He has gone above and beyond as a Big Brother and as a result, Austin has improved his overall behavior, his grades, and his outlook on his future.

“Mike has been one of the most essential parts of my life. I don’t know where I would be or who I would have been without him. He got me into Nativity and that has forever changed my life. Not only has he changed my childhood, he has given me a quote to remember for the rest of my life, ‘Life is all about choices, Austin, and to be successful you have to make the right ones.’ Thank you for truly changing my life for the better.”

-Little Brother Austin

...going the extra mile
The weather on June 6th was less than ideal for a charity golf event. The rain, wind, and cooler temperature may have dampened the players clothing, but not their spirits!

“Even with the crazy weather, we had a blast,” stated Donald Droppo Jr., President of Curtis Packaging. “Donald has been participating in this event since day one and we cannot thank him enough for all his years of support,” said Susan Remy, Director of Development at CFS. Rene Rancourt helped to brighten the day by giving players a chance to wear his coveted Stanley Cup ring and kicking off the tournament with his rendition of the National Anthem.

Over the past 12 years, this event has raised over 1 million dollars thanks to the generosity of so many. Your investment helps us to continue our mission, “…to heal and strengthen the lives of children and families.”

We are grateful for all our sponsors and those who joined us that day. Thank you again for making a difference and for supporting the work that we do!

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Have you ever packed all your belongings in a trash bag instead of a suitcase to take a trip? Would you send your children off to a sleepover with their overnight items in a trash bag?

Thousands of children in foster care go from home to home with all their belongings in a trash bag. The people at Together We Rise decided to do something about that and created an engagement opportunity for the public to give back through their “sweet cases” program. Child & Family Services was thrilled to be chosen by Rogers & Gray Insurance of Kingston and EBSCO Information Services headquartered in Ipswich, to be a recipient of their fundraising efforts to provide a total of 280 sweet cases for the children we serve in our Adoption and Community Based Acute Treatment programs.

Lynn Mason-Small, Senior Vice President at Rogers & Gray Insurance contacted us here at CFS to say she had 100 duffel bags filled with items for young boys and girls as well as teens. “We came across the Together We Rise organization and their mission of supportive programs for children in Foster Care really struck a nerve with our internal culture group called our ETF (Engagement Task Force),” said Mrs. Small. “The idea that children going into foster care went with all of their belongings stuffed into a trash bag was so disheartening to us and we knew right away that the ‘Sweet Cases’ program was something we wanted to support to benefit local children.”

Throughout the month of April, Rogers & Gray employees fund raised to buy the cases. They had an online donation platform, but also had a Bake Sale, 50/50 Raffle, and a PR Campaign that brought in donations from outside businesses, received foundation donations and employees even held benefit parties. Rogers & Gray employees and their family members gathered together to decorate, fill, and assemble all of the bags. The teen bags were filled with toiletries, journals, sanitary items, and gift cards. The little kid’s bags contained a blanket, teddy bear, toothbrush and toothpaste, night lights and coloring book/crayons.

Courtney Trudeau, Director of Web Development at EBSCO Information Services, contacted our Lawrence site to donate 180 sweet cases. “We were thrilled to be able to help such a wonderful organization,” stated Ms. Trudeau. EBSCO employees raised funds, then hosted an “Assembly Day” with employees decorating and assembling the bags at their offices. “Having two young children myself and doing a lot of reading on organizations that help the foster system, I stumbled upon Together We Rise, and we decided the Sweet Case program was a great fit” she added. Courtney then worked with Together We Rise to find a local agency where they could donate their bags, and was told to contact Child & Family Services.

“We were surprised and elated when we heard about the donations,” stated Susan Remy, Director of Development at CFS. “It is so disheartening to see children with their belongings tossed in a trash bag; it certainly should not be used for what little belongings these children have. Thanks to the kindness and generous spirit of employees at Rogers & Gray and EBSCO Information Services, children in transition will feel a sense of pride and know that they are valued.”
Be a change maker. Join the Friends of CFS

The Friends of CFS was formed in September of 2010 to raise awareness and funds to strengthen the programs of Child & Family. This group of high-spirited women meets once a month for an hour to come up with fun activities/events. We are currently looking to expand our group. Do you have one hour a month? Would you like to have fun and give back to the community?

For more information please contact Susan Remy 508.742.1032.

Get Social.  

Our Mission

“...to heal and strengthen the lives of children and families

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