



Big Brothers Big Sisters Success Story

Why Education?

Metro United Way is working to advance the common good by focusing on education, income and health. These are the building blocks for a good life—a quality education that leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, and good health.

All children deserve to be safe, healthy, nurtured and prepared to succeed in school and in life. We can achieve this through:

- Improving access to quality, affordable, child care and early learning opportunities.
- Partnering with schools, families, community groups, service providers and neighborhoods to improve graduation rates.
- Supporting after-school and mentoring programs for youth.

When children begin school prepared, stay connected with caring adults, and have empowering experiences, they are more likely to do well in school, graduate from high school, and go on to further education and success in life.

Measuring results...2018 Goals and Indicators:

MUW Goal:

Increase the graduation rate for our community's high school students from 73% to 87% resulting in 1500 more graduating youths in our region.

Indicators (Why this is important):

- On a national level, every 26 seconds a child drops out of school.
- Every \$1 invested in early childhood education saves \$17 down the road.
- Research has demonstrated that when school age youth are constructively engaged in quality out of school community programs then they are more likely to attend school, stay in school and graduate.

Metro United Way supports high-quality programs that demonstrate results in mentoring children and young adults to help them grow in many ways including increasing the graduation rates for youth in our community.

My Life-Changing Experience as a Big Sister

Hello, my name is Gina, and my relationship with my Little Sister, Stephanie, began almost ten years ago. I was a young college student and she had just celebrated her eighth birthday. As I began my college career, I really wanted to make an impact on a young child's life. I had seen first hand the awesome relationship between a high school friend of mine and his Big Brother and I wanted to have that same effect on a child.

Stephanie and I were matched in July of 1999. Instantly, I knew we were a fit! We had so much in common right from the start. Whether we were at the park, reading a book, walking my dog, or just going for a ride, we were just plain having fun! Stephanie thrived when we were together. As time went on, our commitment towards each other grew and her faith in me grew even more.

During the early years of our match, most of our time was devoted to her learning- both as an academic student and as a productive member of our community. Living in Louisville, we were never lacking with positive opportunities to explore. We attended baseball games, enjoyed movies and plays, took walks in the park or went out for dinner. Stephanie was truly becoming 'family'! Major events happened during this time period for me, and Stephanie was included in all of them, including my wedding- she even wore a dress that I had saved from my childhood! Additionally, she played an active role when I brought both of our sons home from the hospital.

The most interesting time of our match was during Stephanie's late middle school years. During this time period, we had the opportunity to take our relationship one step further. Stephanie moved into our home and lived with us for a while. This was a wonderful opportunity to be an even stronger influence in her life. My husband and I were able to model what a positive family dynamic looks like on a regular basis. Even little things, like having dinner together on a regular basis, driving her to her friends' houses, and cheering her on at soccer games are memories that I deeply cherish.

Now, I look at my Little Sister, who is about to turn eighteen and will begin her senior year of high school in the fall. She is a strong young lady who is moving along the path to adulthood. Like all teenagers, she's had to learn some lessons the hard way, but deep down, I know that many tragedies were avoided because of the self-confidence she has developed through our match.

Our match with Big Brothers Big Sisters has forever impacted both of our lives. She is my sister! I have an unconditional love for her and I can't wait to see what

the future brings her. Our match with Big Brothers Big Sisters will continue until Stephanie graduates from high school- which will then total eleven years! Our relationship will last a lifetime- I will continue to encourage Stephanie to go to college, keep working hard, and be a positive member of our community.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kentuckiana is a Metro United Way participating agency, and provides 1-to-1 relationship with a mature volunteer for youth in need of friendship.

Here's how you can help:

- Become an advocate for children. For more information, please call (502) 292-6157.
- Give. With your donation, you will help us meet our goal of ensuring children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed in school and in life.

Suggested Props/Visuals

- A picture of Gina and Stephanie



To live united is to understand that we are all interconnected. Metro United Way is working to advance the common good by creating opportunities for a better life for all. For more information, volunteer opportunities or to make a donation, please visit us at metrounitedway.org or call 502.583.2821.