



Contact: Melanie Chasteen, Vice President, Marketing and Communications
Telephone: 512-807-3609 (o); 512-791-5110 (m)

Big Brothers Big Sisters Announces State “Bigs” of the Year

Austin residents Reva Gartzke and Ben Bufkin selected to receive statewide recognition

(Austin, TX) - Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) agencies and supporters from throughout Texas recently converged on the state Capitol to hear the announcement of the “Big Brother of the Year” and the “Big Sister of the Year” for the State of Texas. Mentors were nominated from each of the 10 BBBS agencies in Texas; each being recognized in their region for providing exceptional support to at-risk youth through mentoring. The two Texas Bigs of the Year volunteer with the Central Texas agency, located in Austin, and will go on to compete for the national Big Brother and Big Sister of the Year award presented by Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. Texas Railroad Commissioner and former BBBS Honorary State Chair Michael Williams recognized this year’s state winners, Reva Gartzke and Ben Bufkin, in the Lt. Governor’s Reception Room in the Capitol building.

Reva is a small business owner of two Edible Arrangements franchises. She has been a Big Sister for 12 years and is currently matched with her new Little Sister, Nacaya. She is actively involved with BBBS and is President of HelpingAustin.Org, a organization dedicated to raising money for BBBS. “I am unbelievably honored to be receiving an award from an organization that I hold so dear to my heart,” she said. “So many Texas children are in need of mentors so they can better achieve their aspirations and dreams. I only aspire to do more for Big Brothers Big Sisters.”

Ben Bufkin is part of the local commercial real estate industry in Austin. He is an Associate with Endeavor Real Estate Group where he is focused on the investment activity of the company. Ben is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin and continues to be a strong supporter of both the school and their athletics program. “I am honored to be recognized by the State of Texas and Big Brothers Big Sisters,” he said. “Big Brothers Big Sisters has provided me with an opportunity to invest in the human capital of our community. This opportunity for me and 1,500 other mentors would not be possible if it were not for the tireless efforts of the Central Texas agency.”

Big Brothers Big Sisters is a donor-supported volunteer organization that places caring adults in the lives of children in one-to-one mentoring relationships. The organization depends on donations to help recruit volunteers and reach more children. Funding is used to conduct screening on volunteers to ensure child safety; and provide on-going 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. For more information on BBBS, visit www.bigmentoring.org.

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