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Lacey Township Partners with Big Brothers Big Sisters for New Mentoring Program

LACEY TOWNSHIP, NJ — In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Lacey Township School District is partnering with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern New Jersey (BBBSCNNJ) to deliver a new virtual mentoring program for local students. The district recognized that youth are facing added stress, increased isolation and depression, and they reached out to BBBSCNNJ for assistance. Addressing the urgent need for kids to socialize, build friendships, and support one another, the new BBBSCNNJ School Based Mentoring Program facilitates connection and includes Lacey Township High School students serving as mentors to Mill Pond Elementary School students. The program kicked off on January 19, featuring a welcome from Superintendent Vanessa Clark, Ph.D. and fun ice breaker games. The 30 participating Bigs and Littles will continue to meet every other Tuesday on Zoom.

“I am so proud of the partnership that we have established with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal and Northern New Jersey,” said Vanessa P. Clark, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools, Lacey Township School District. “As we approach the one-year anniversary of the unprecedented action of the closing of public schools due to the pandemic, I can't think of a better time to implement a School Based Mentoring Program. Our mentees (Littles) at Mill Pond Elementary School have the benefit of connecting with our high school mentors (Bigs) at Lacey Township High School at a time when connecting has become imperative. While the sessions have been virtual, I have been a witness to the amazing conversations that have taken place during the first two sessions. My hope is that we'll eventually be able to meet in person, but in this virtual environment that we have found ourselves in, I am grateful that our students have the opportunity to engage in much-needed interaction and dialogue.”

William Salcedo, Executive Director of BBBSCNNJ, shared Dr. Clark's grateful sentiments. “We are proud to partner with Lacey Township to ensure their students are supported with quality mentoring relationships at this crucial time,” stated Salcedo. “We look forward to seeing Lacey Township youth develop resilience and achieve their full potential through this new after school program.”

BBBSCNNJ's mission is more critical than ever as the agency continues to serve 1,350 children with one-to-one mentoring throughout 10 counties in New Jersey. From emotional support to the joy of having a trusted friend in their corner, Bigs provide the stability that Littles need to achieve their full potential.

To learn more about BBBSCNNJ, apply to become a Big, or make a donation, visit mentornj.org and follow the agency on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

About BBBSCNNJ:

For the past 45 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern New Jersey has been making a positive difference in the lives of at-risk children through professionally supported, one-to-one mentoring relationships with adult volunteers. BBBSCNNJ empowers children to achieve their highest potential as they grow to become confident, competent, and caring individuals. For more information on becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister or to make a donation, visit: www.mentornj.org

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