

CORPORATE BIG HIGHLIGHT: THE AMERICAN EQUITY UNDERWRITERS - DONNA BROWDER



Mentoring means providing critical guidance, support, and encouragement to a young person on his or her path to success. As a mentor, you help them boost their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance, and become the person they want to be. As a Big Sister, I have strived to effectively mentor the five Littles I've matched with over the past 10 years.

My first Little and I were only together for a short time before she had to move. My second match was Tchinania, whom I had the pleasure of mentoring for a couple of years before she had to move. She loved to talk and play games.

My next Little was Temple, who I matched with in the community-based program. We enjoyed spending time together for three years, and she seemed to benefit from the program. Unfortunately, once she reached high school, she had less time to put into the BBBS program and decided to opt-out. While I was disappointed to lose her as my Little Sister, I was proud of her decision because I knew it would be better for her in the long run.

My next Little was Kenya, a sixth grader. After a couple of years, we transitioned to a community-based match. We stayed together until she graduated from high school, and we continue to keep in touch. Now a certified nursing assistant (CNA), she works at a hospital and will soon return to school to earn her LPN designation. I am so proud of the young lady and mother she has become.

I was recently matched with my current Little, Karmora, a fourth grader. She is smart, funny, and loves to talk. I look forward to getting to know her more and our many adventures in the next few years. I can't wait to watch her grow and expand her horizons.

While growing up, I watched my parents foster more than 23 children, impacting many lives. That experience made me want to be like them and find a way to give back. The Big Brother Big Sister program has allowed me to do this and so much more in ways I never imagined. I am honored and proud to be part of a program that gives so much to young people in our community, allowing them to reach their dreams and beyond.

If you are not a part of the Big Brother Big Sister program, I encourage you to explore how you can get involved. This fantastic program provides opportunities for everyone to help empower our youth by becoming a Big, a volunteer, or a donor. Contributions from our community, coupled with BBBS's unique brand of one-to-one mentoring, provide a pathway to success for so many children. My time as a Big Sister has been the most rewarding experience of my life. It has not only allowed me to give back but also taught me how to be a better "me" and helped me grow as a person.

Thanks so much for choosing me as the AEU Big of the Year. It truly is an honor to be a part of such an awesome program.

-Donna Browder

To learn more about our elite Corporate Big Program that The American Equity Underwriters is a proud member of, please visit www.bbbssa.org.

DO YOU THINK YOUR COMPANY WOULD BE A GOOD FIT? The Corporate Big Program is a flexible School-based mentoring opportunity that measurably impacts the lives of the children we serve but also your company culture and the lives of our mentors, your employees. We pair each company with their own school in close proximity and the company allows those who want to participate and who qualify to leave work one hour a week for the duration of the school year to meet with their mentee at school, during school hours. Research shows employees-even those that don't volunteer-feel greater pride and loyalty toward an employer that supports a respected cause like Big Brothers Big Sisters and encourages employees to get involved. If you think this flexible volunteer opportunity that has a measurable impact would be a great fit for your company, visit our website to see a list of our current outstanding Corporate Big partners and call or email Aimee at 251-454-2233 or aimee@bbbssa.org for more information.