

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF THE LOWCOUNTRY SUCCESS STORY

"RJ and Bobby"



Growing up, Little Brother RJ's mother was a Little Sister in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program and wanted the same positive experience for her son. She enrolled him in our program in 2019 and RJ was thrilled to find a reliable and positive role model in his Big Brother, Bobby.

Bobby has a strong belief in the power of mentorship because he has been blessed with many mentors. "I had a strong father, coaches, teachers, and business mentors throughout my life from whom I have been able to learn. I wanted the opportunity to give back in that same capacity. I have a passion for mentorship and I felt that joining Big Brothers Big Sisters and becoming a mentor for RJ was the right thing to do," said Bobby.



Bobby and RJ first met four years ago and began having regular outings going out for meals and getting to know one another. Bobby worked with RJ and his mother to decide what RJ was interested in and what things they could do together that they would both enjoy. They quickly bonded over their love of sports and the outdoors. Over the years, they have collected memorable experiences at sporting events, fishing on Bobby's boat, exploring nature trails, trying new recipes, and visiting trampoline parks.

Bobby's most poignant memory is when he took RJ fishing for the very first time. They shared conversations about oceanic wildlife, ecosystems, and music. "We caught a lot of fish that day, but the most fun part was just jamming out to the stereo and seeing RJ with his hat on backward, bobbing his head to the music as we went through the Charleston Harbor. I will have a vivid image of that in my head for the rest of my life," said Bobby.

Since being matched with Bobby, RJ's mother has seen his behavior improve and his communication skills grow. He more easily completes homework, his math grades have improved, and he has been successful in connecting with his classmates at his new school. RJ's mother feels the match with Bobby has put RJ "on track to become a successful adult."

Throughout their time together, Bobby and RJ have had many conversations about personal values. "RJ has grown significantly from a 9-year-old boy to his entry into young adulthood. He has gained an understanding of what it means to be a man in a family and the maturity and responsibility that are needed. Being respectful, loving, working hard, and being honorable are values that he has begun to embrace," said Bobby.

Bobby has helped RJ grow his business acumen, explore entrepreneurship, and develop a strong work ethic. RJ's favorite memory is running a hot chocolate stand and a lemonade stand with Bobby's help. "I love doing the lemonade and hot chocolate stand in Bobby's neighborhood," RJ shared. "You can make money, talk to people, meet new people around the neighborhood, and I get to see Bobby's family. It has taught me to run a business and I like doing business with people."

RJ used the money that was made at the hot chocolate stand to buy Christmas gifts for his mother and siblings. Always generous and caring, RJ even asked Bobby if they could buy food for a homeless person they saw on the street. Bobby shared that RJ radiates curiosity, positivity, kindness, and graciousness. Seeing RJ's increasing empathy towards others has inspired Bobby and left him feeling incredibly proud of the young man RJ is becoming.

"Kindness and humility are everywhere if you look for them. And they go a long way if you recognize them. RJ is a great reflection of that. If I can model myself a little more like RJ and act the way that he does in kindness and humility, then I will be a better person and mentor. He has a big heart," said Bobby.

RJ loves having a Big Brother and someone whom he can go do things with. When asked his favorite thing about his Big Brother, he simply said, "I love everything about Bobby. He's cool."

Bobby hopes that RJ always feels comfortable in their relationship and continues turning to him for any guidance or questions. He hopes that RJ will someday be comfortable becoming a mentor himself and that he has a fruitful life as a provider and as a leader for his future family. With each passing day, they continue to inspire and uplift one another, proving that even small acts of kindness can have a tremendous impact on someone's life.