

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF THE LOWCOUNTRY SUCCESS STORY

"Lauren and Jayda"



Little Sister Jayda's mother, Keosha, enrolled her in Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Lowcountry when she recognized the potential benefits of having a mentor for Jayda to help her interact more with others. Jayda was matched with her Big Sister Lauren in 2017 and their match has exceeded their initial expectations.



For their first outing, Lauren took Jayda to the aquarium to see the sea otters and gifted her with her very own stuffed sea otter. "When I first met Jayda, she was quiet and in a shell. I had to pull her personality out and dig to find out what she liked and what she wanted to do. She didn't even know what her favorite music was! It was a learning experience to get her out of her comfort zone and to feel comfortable enough with me to express herself," said Lauren.

Lauren and Jayda initially bonded over shared interests like their love of reading, sports, and a passion for embracing new experiences. They began with lowkey outings like visiting the library and going to the movie theater before beginning to try more challenging outings, like playing putt-putt. Together, they have embarked on exciting adventures, exploring various books, activities, and even different cuisines! Their shared hobbies and openness to new experiences strengthened their bond early on in the relationship. With Lauren by her side, Jayda has been able to explore her hobbies further as well as experience many new things like trying oysters and visiting the Adventure Park where she conquered her fear of heights.

"I've seen her come out of her shell more, embrace her personality, and show more self-confidence," said Jayda's mother, Keosha.

Lauren holds Jayda in high regard and admires her as an incredible sister in her family. She appreciates Jayda's patience and her responsible approach to being an older sibling to her younger brothers and sisters. Jayda's open heart and willingness to try new things constantly inspire Lauren.

Jayda appreciates the consistent support and encouragement that she receives from Lauren. She values the fact that her Big Sister always pushes her to step outside of her comfort zone, which has led to Jayda discovering new activities and hobbies she now enjoys. "Lauren tries to get me to do new activities, and I am constantly finding new

things I like when we try that," said Jayda. "She inspires me to get out of my shell and try different things."

Jayda recently joined the school band and began to play the saxophone, the same instrument that Lauren played when she was in the band at Jayda's age. Inspired by Jayda, Lauren decided to pick the instrument back up and the two found an additional shared passion in music. They have even begun taking music lessons together to help to improve their playing.

When they were first matched, Lauren was 19 and Jayda was 8 years old. Now 25 and 13, these two have truly watched one another grow up and together, they have embarked on a journey of self-discovery and personal growth.

Jayda eagerly looks forward to their outings and embraces the opportunity to engage in new experiences alongside Lauren. Lauren's guidance and Jayda's eagerness to embrace new challenges have led to both personal and relational growth. As they continue their journey together, Jayda and Lauren look forward to creating lasting memories and experiencing even more exciting adventures together.