

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF THE LOWCOUNTRY: MATCH SUCCESS STORY



Michael & Leo

When Leo was facing challenges both at home and at school, his mother Natasha knew he needed extra support. Wanting him to have a positive male role model, especially in the absence of a father figure, she turned to Big Brothers Big Sisters. Since the start of the match, Natasha has seen remarkable changes in Leo — he's more respectful, well-mannered, and showing real improvement in school. "With Michael's help, Leo is doing awesome," she shared. "He doesn't have negative thoughts anymore. He's a much happier kid." Describing her son as outgoing, wild, and free-spirited, Natasha says Leo has always had a strong passion for basketball. Recently, though, he's developed new interests like baseball, fishing, hunting, and four-wheeling. Natasha is grateful for Michael's continued presence and is excited for what lies ahead for Leo.

Leo says he wanted a Big Brother because he was going through some tough times and needed someone to hang out with and learn from. Since being matched with Michael, the two have bonded over shared interests like basketball and fishing. "Michael has helped me a lot with studying and getting my schoolwork done. My grades have gotten better!" He's excited to try new activities with Michael and hopes they can go swimming together soon. One of his favorite memories is the day they went fishing and he caught a fish — and he was thrilled when Michael came to one of his basketball games to cheer him on.

For Michael, becoming a mentor has been deeply personal. "Mentoring played a huge role in my own success, both professionally and personally. Having someone to support you is so important to help you

grow and understand different life experiences.” He aims to be a consistent and supportive presence in Leo’s life, helping him build skills, grow confidence, and explore his interests. Recently, Michael has seen Leo become more engaged in school and more responsible at home. “His joy level has definitely gone up,” he said. “Leo is also extremely personable — he loves getting others involved. One time at the baseball field, he just jumped in with a group of kids already playing and made new friends on the spot.” Together, the two have made plenty of memories, from laser tag (a first for Michael!) to playing pickleball. Whether they’re trying something new or just hanging out, their bond continues to grow — one adventure at a time.