

MATCH PROFILE: NIKKI AND JANIYAH

Date: December 26, 2020

We first met Janiyah when we were interviewing her brother to be a prospective Little in our program. At the time, Janiyah was a spunky 8-year-old who loved drawing, painting, baking, playing dress up, sports, being outside, and jumping on the trampoline. We knew that given her wide variety of interests, we would need to find her a Big Sister that could keep up!

Janiyah's mother wanted her daughter to have another person to talk to when she needed advice or support and someone to help her cultivate her already established leadership skills. Fortunately, prospective Big Sister Nikki had just moved to Charleston from Illinois, was eager to establish roots and give back to her new community, and had interests that were uncannily similar to Janiyah's. In March 2017, we knew we needed to make this match!

During their initial "match meeting," Janiyah was definitely shy and slow to warm up to her new Big Sister. However, Nikki was not discouraged and continued to show up and plan new experiences/outings. Over time, Janiyah came to trust Nikki and began to open up. Nikki now knows that even if Janiyah is quiet, she is still happy to be spending time with her.

The pair always stays busy going to the park, attending Big Brothers Big Sisters-sponsored activities, baking, going to outdoor festivals, watching movies, grabbing ice cream, and just hanging out together grab. During the strict spring COVID restrictions, they stayed in contact via Facetime, phone calls, and texting. Now the two are able to meet in person again abiding by the agency's safe in person match contact policies.

According to Janiyah's mother, "Since matching with Nikki, I have noticed that [Janiyah] communicates more with everyone and shares what she wants for herself instead of needing a 'go-between!'" When asked about what she has gained by mentoring her Little Sister of 3.5 years, Nikki replied, "I have gained patience and appreciation for quality time. I've learned from my time with Janiyah that deep, life-long, life-giving relationships take time and patience and develop overtime. I love watching the amazing young woman she's becoming."

