



Before she got her Big Sister,

Taja had never watched a sunset, gone camping or to a baseball game.



CeCe was there every step of the way— eighth grade graduation, Taja's induction into the National Honor Society, class day, getting ready for prom, and finally, high school graduation, where Taja was valedictorian.

Dear Friend,

Taja is an incredible young woman. She is a great example of the life-changing experience children can have when they sign up for the Big Brother Big Sister mentoring program. They're the reason we need your donation.

There were few people in her life with whom Taja could share her dreams about school and a better life. But with her Big Sister, CeCe, as a role model and mentor, Taja became valedictorian of her class at East High School in Buffalo and is now majoring in criminal justice at Buffalo State College.

"She showed me I didn't have to be stuck forever," Taja said of her Big Sister. "CeCe came from the same economic background as me and she's doing great."

Why does a volunteer program need donations? Because making a match takes a lot of work.

First, we must do background checks to make sure the volunteers working with our kids are dependable and trustworthy.

Next, we need to make the right match—that's critical in forming lasting relationships. We use trained professionals to make matches in order to ensure the best fit. Once matched, our volunteer mentors are supported by professionals on our staff.

By participating in our youth mentoring programs, Little Brothers and Sisters are:

- ✦ More confident in their schoolwork performance
- ✦ Able to get along better with their families
- ✦ 46% less likely to begin using illegal drugs
- ✦ 52% less likely to skip school.

All of that effort takes money, but after almost 40 years as the premier mentoring organization in Western New York, we know that's what is needed to create relationships that have a lasting impact and change the life of a young person like Taja.

"I probably wouldn't have experienced as many things as I have if it weren't for CeCe," said Taja. "I'm open to more stuff

(over)



Be-A-Friend Program, Inc. / Big Brothers Big Sisters of Erie County

85 River Rock Dr., Suite 107 • Buffalo, New York 14207 • (716) 873.5833 • www.beafriend.org

Yes, I want to help kids like Taja expand their horizons!

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other \$ _____

Please find my check enclosed (made payable to **Big Brothers Big Sisters**) **or**

Please donate online, safely and securely, at www.beafriend.org and click "Donate Online" **or**

Please charge my credit card: MasterCard Visa

 Card Number

 Security Code

 Exp. Date

 Signature

 Phone

 E-mail Address

If you wish to make your tax deductible donation in honor or in memory of someone, please see reverse side.



now. She helped me grow as a person."

Taja was 10 when she was matched with CeCe. They would make crafts at CeCe's house, or take CeCe's dog for a walk in the park and take pictures.

"We talked about school and stuff—school was my passion," Taja said. Other than her mother, CeCe was the only person Taja could talk to about that. "My friends didn't really care—They were barely passing. I liked to excel."

CeCe listened to Taja and encouraged her. She was there every step of the way—eighth grade graduation, Taja's induction into the National Honor Society, class day, getting ready for prom, and finally, high school graduation, where Taja was valedictorian.

As Taja was contemplating whether to live on campus or commute to Buffalo State College, CeCe encouraged her to try the on-campus experience. Taja is glad for that nudge.

"I love living on campus," she said. "I love my friends here. If I had just stayed in my circle, I wouldn't have been as open. I have friends from all over now—China, the Caribbean, Japan."

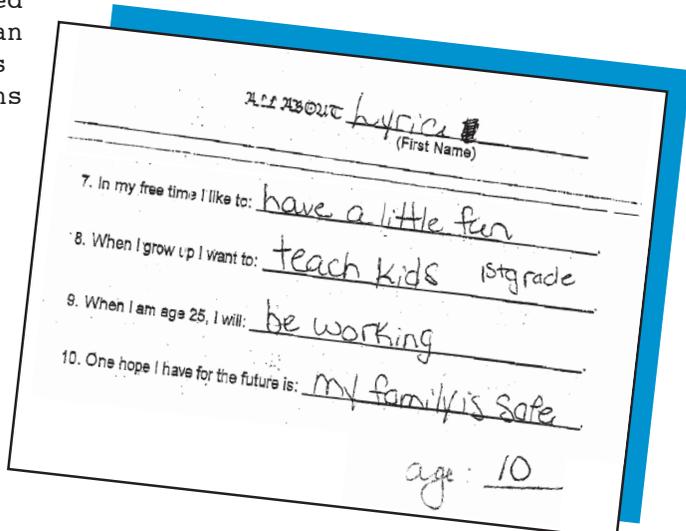
In addition to spending one-on-one time together, Taja and CeCe also enjoyed group activities with other Bigs and Littles, including the circus, holiday dinners and sporting events. Your gift helps us provide these exciting enrichment activities that are not only entertaining, but expose young people to new, positive ways to have fun.

After eight incredible years together, Taja said, "I love CeCe like she's family." Now that she's 18, Taja is no longer officially a Little Sister, but CeCe is still a great source of friendship, advice, and trust.

While we help over 700 young people every year, we have hundreds still on our waiting list and the number is growing. I need your help to make sure more kids like Taja can live their dreams. By supporting Big Brothers Big Sisters, you can help broaden the horizons of another child from our waiting list. [Please give today to help us change lives.](#)

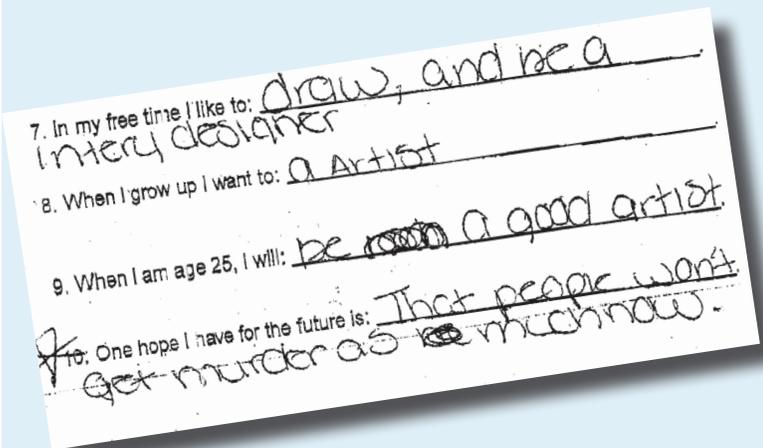
Sincerely,

Robert F. Moss
 Founder and CEO
 Big Brothers Big Sisters of Erie County



PS: Recently, Taja's younger sister Janyia, was matched with a Big Sister. Janyia has the same spark that Taja has. With your gift and the guidance and friendship and experiences of a Big Sister, **who knows what she can become?**

So many kids are waiting, like Jernisa, who enjoys art and hopes that "people won't get murder (sic) as much now." **Won't you help?**



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My employer matches my charitable gifts.

Please contact me regarding a gift through my will, trust or life insurance policy.

Phone: (_____) _____