



Big Brothers Big Sisters.
OF CEDAR RAPIDS & EAST CENTRAL IOWA

BIG NEWS: SUPPORTER EDITION

APRIL 2026



Letter from our President & CEO

Dear Supporters,

As we step into a new year and wrap up the first quarter, I'm excited to share that Big Brothers Big Sisters is already off to a strong and promising start, and it's all because of you.

From the very beginning of this year, we've seen incredible momentum across our programs. New volunteers are stepping forward, matches are being made, and youth are continuing to show growth in the areas that matter most: academically, socially, and emotionally. Your support ensures that every young person we serve has access to a consistent, caring adult who believes in their potential.

We also kicked off the year with a successful Bowl for Kids' Sake, bringing our community together in a fun and meaningful way to support local youth. The energy and enthusiasm around this event are always a powerful reminder of what's possible when people rally behind our mission.

Now, we're turning that momentum toward our upcoming **Big Magic Breakfast on May 7th**, and we are working hard to make it just as impactful. I'm especially excited for this event as it gives us the opportunity to share more about the difference you are making—and to hear directly from the young people and mentors whose lives are being changed through your support. Their stories are the heart of our work, and I know they will inspire everyone in the room.

If you haven't yet made plans to attend, I warmly invite you to join us. It's a meaningful way to connect more deeply with our mission and see firsthand the impact of your investment.

As we look ahead to the rest of the year, we remain focused on growth, quality, and deepening impact, supporting our current matches, expanding opportunities for youth on our waiting list, and continuing to build a strong, sustainable future through our Empowering Potential Campaign.

Thank you for helping us start this year strong. Your belief in our mission continues to open doors for young people across our community, and we are so grateful to have you alongside us.

With appreciation,
Stephanie Hartson
President & CEO

MISSION MOMENT



A Friendship That Lasts a Lifetime

When Tammy was named Big of the Year in 2024, it was clear she had made a meaningful impact. But what may be even more powerful is the story that continues to unfold today.

Tammy has been matched with Haley since 2017. Over the past nine and a half years, what began as a mentoring relationship has grown into a deep, lasting friendship. Through life's ups and downs, Tammy has been a steady presence—someone Haley could count on to listen, encourage, and simply show up. From everyday outings to life-changing moments, their time together helped Haley build confidence, discover her strengths, and begin to imagine what her future could hold.

This spring, that future came into focus. Haley, now a graduating senior, was awarded the Catherine McAuley Scholarship at Mount Mercy University—a full-ride opportunity that will allow her to pursue a degree in nursing. And while graduation often marks the end of a match, for Tammy and Haley, it's simply a new chapter.

When we connected with Tammy recently, she shared that they fully plan to continue spending time together for years to come. The bond they've built isn't ending—it's evolving. Even more, Tammy is already thinking about becoming a Big again, and she's encouraging Haley to one day do the same.

This is the power of mentorship.

Because of supporters like you, relationships like Tammy and Haley's don't just change a moment—they shape a lifetime, creating a ripple effect that will continue for generations to come.



WAITING LITTLE



Meet **Carter!**



URGENT!

Ready to be matched as of
12/11/2025

Carter is an active, sports-loving 8th grader who enjoys basketball, video games, and spending time with family. He's a bit shy at first but quickly warms up and loves connecting over shared interests. Carter is currently waiting for a Big Brother to spend time with, build confidence, and simply have fun. With the right mentor by his side, Carter has so much potential to grow and thrive.

Be Carter's Big!

QUARTERLY IMPACT

Lunch Buddy Program Growth:

- Goal Reached: 35 New Lunch Buddy Bigs have joined us this quarter!

Youth Success:

- 88% of young people said their mentor helped them build a sense of belonging.
- 58% of young people said their mentor helped support their mental health

CURRENT BBBS NEEDS

Youth Are Waiting for a Mentor

- **100+ youth** across Benton, Linn, and Jones Counties are **waiting for a Community-Based Big**
 - 👉 Get started at: www.BigCR.org
- **Financial Support**
 - Your financial support helps us **match youth with a caring adult** and ensure **every match is supported**.
 - **Give today** by scanning the QR code.

SCAN ME



UPCOMING BBBS EVENTS

Big Magic Breakfast

- Thursday, May 7 | 7:30–8:30 AM
- DoubleTree by Hilton Downtown Cedar Rapids
- FREE to attend
- Questions? GiannaH@BigCR.org
- <https://givebutter.com/CZyl3u>

Annual Party

- September 13th
- Rain Date: September 20th
- More details to come!

Big of the Year Celebration

- October 17

Looking Ahead:

- Bowl for Kids' Sake
- Feb 11 – 26, 2027



Big Brothers Big Sisters
OF CEDAR RAPIDS & EAST CENTRAL IOWA

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO
THE 21ST ANNUAL

Big Magic Breakfast

JOIN US OVER BREAKFAST AS WE
CELEBRATE OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS
AND LOOK TOWARDS THE FUTURE

DOUBLETREE CEDAR RAPIDS
350 1ST AVE NE, CEDAR RAPIDS, IA
52401

THURSDAY, MAY 7TH, 2026

7:30 - 8:30 AM

QUESTIONS? CALL: 319-377-8993
EMAIL: GIANNAH@BIGCR.ORG

SCAN THE
CODE TO
RSVP:

