

April 7, 2020

*Program Updates, Gratitude & Happy Spring!*

Dear Friends of BBBS,

From all of us at BBBS of Summit, Medina & Stark Counties, *we hope that you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy through this challenging time.*

As we all adjust to a new pace of life and work, it's an ideal time to take a breath and consider all we have to be grateful for...the first thing that comes to mind for us is how thankful we are for our BBBS friends, partners and supporters. Without YOU, we have no high-impact mentoring program for our youth – so thank you for all you do to keep our services going.

At this time, we're also wildly grateful for our talented BBBS staff members, whose caring and dedication is helping to keep our matches connected at this time through super creative support! They are reaching out to all Bigs, Littles and Littles' parents/guardians to facilitate phone call meet ups, text message communications, use of digital learning platforms and other technology-enabled engagement tools (that are pre-approved and follow safety protocols, of course). We're also encouraging letter writing – because who doesn't still love to get a card or note through snail mail?!

Due to required social distancing – and without continued, consistent mentoring from our Bigs – many of our Littles could see pre-existing issues worsen or escalate, such as anxiety, decreased self-confidence and other challenges they face every day as a result of societal barriers, opportunity gaps and more (e.g. poverty, trauma and identity-based discrimination). But having their mentors there for them, even remotely/virtually, can have a BIG impact! Continued mentoring means our Littles won't have to face this “new normal” alone; the positive relationships will continue to help them build the resilience to come out shining!

**Know that we are still processing Big and Little applications at this time!** We are here to start the process if you know an adult interested in helping a child in need (or a child in need of a caring adult guide and friend)! *Mentors are in high demand, as we have approximately 150 youth waiting for that special Big.* Visit [mentorwithme.org](http://mentorwithme.org) – or call us!

With each day we're seeing new challenges and obstacles to overcome, but we will weather this storm together. *Please reach out if there is anything we can do for you.*

With endless gratitude & wishes for a healthy, happy spring,



Raland Hatchett  
Executive Director



Lori Schoenfelder  
President, BBBS Board of Directors