



BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS
OF AMERICA®

The magazine of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America National Office

CORRESPONDENT

New York City match
Matt Sabena and Esteban

*The focus is on
the volunteer with*

brandnewthinking

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Our Work Is More Vital Now Than Ever Before

Like so many others, our organization suffered losses in the terrorist attacks of September 11. **Barbara Keating**, a former agency executive director from Framingham, Mass., was on American Airlines Flight 11. **Dwight D. Darcy**, a long-time board member of Catholic Big Brothers in New York City, was in the World Trade Center at the time of the attacks, as were Big Sister **Lindsey Morehouse**, Big Brother **Kenneth Cubas**, and [former] Little Sister **Yvette Moreno**, of Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City.

These men and women were part of the Big Brothers Big Sisters family, and our thoughts and prayers are with their families at this immensely difficult time. We mourn along with the rest of the nation.

During this time of grief and uncertainty, it has been heartening to see the overwhelming response from Americans when asked to lend a hand. In every corner of the country, men, women, and children did whatever they could to help ease our nation's collective pain.

Once again, we have proven ourselves to be a generous and selfless nation.

We also turned to each other for comfort and support. Relationships have never seemed so important or so valuable.

That is why, in the midst of such turmoil, it is important for all of us to remember and recommit to our essential mission: *bringing caring adult friends into the lives of children.*

Now more than ever, people want to do something meaningful, to know that they are having an impact in their communities. They want to make a difference in a child's life. They want to serve on boards and committees. They want to contribute funds and services. And they want to become involved with a group they know and trust.

That is why it is essential that we be responsive to those men and women as they seek to make positive connections with the young people in their areas. We need to offer potential Bigs choice of volunteering options, like site- and school-based mentoring.

We need to continue establishing and nurturing our relationships with volunteer-rich organizations, many of which are looking for ways to help their members become involved in their local communities.

We need to move forward with BrandNewThinking, our new initiative that celebrates the beauty of shared experiences between a Big and a Little. Getting the message out about Big Brothers Big Sisters is crucial.

And we need to continue seeking new and varied funding resources in light of the changing economic conditions. We are fortunate that, even in difficult times, people are willing to support established, respected organizations, like Big Brothers Big Sisters of America.

We were on the right track before September 11. And in the midst of such turmoil, it is vital that we stay the course and continue with our growth strategies. As author and psychologist Rollo May once wrote, "The most effective way to ensure the value of the future is to confront the present courageously and constructively."

We have all been moved by the quiet heroism of tens of millions of our friends and neighbors across the country. America's generosity of spirit has never before been so receptive to a call for help. In this time of reaching out and coming together, I am convinced that our work has never been more vital to our nation's future.

People from all walks of life want to become involved in something worthwhile, and Big Brothers Big Sisters can help make that magic happen.

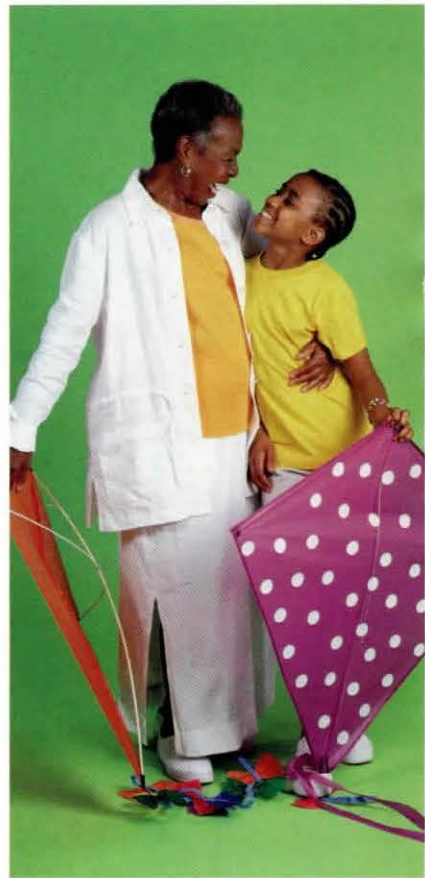


Judy Vredenburg

Judy Vredenburg
President & CEO
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

sending the

By understanding and responding to potential volunteers' **motivation**, Big Brothers Big Sisters is poised to achieve **significant growth goals**.



W

HAT MAKES SOMEBODY want to be a Big Brother or Big Sister?

In order to court hundreds of thousands of potential volunteers, we need to fully understand what moti-

vates these individuals and understand their perception of the Big Brothers Big Sisters brand. What do they know and like about us? What are some of the misconceptions they might have about the organization? And, perhaps most important, what is keeping them from signing on as a Big Brother or Big Sister?

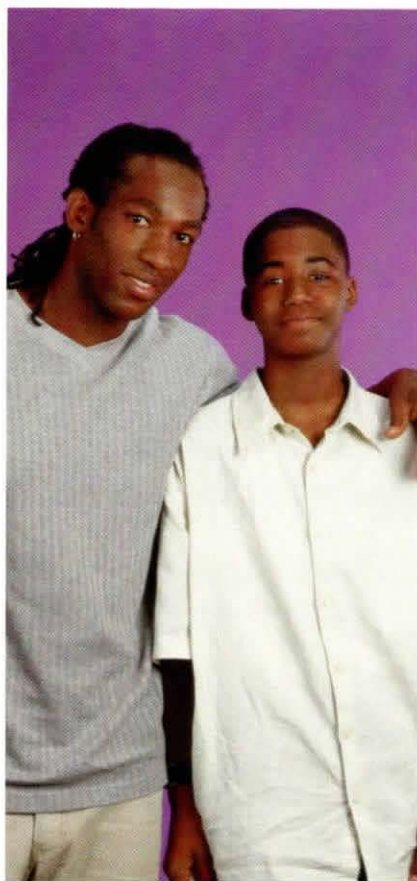
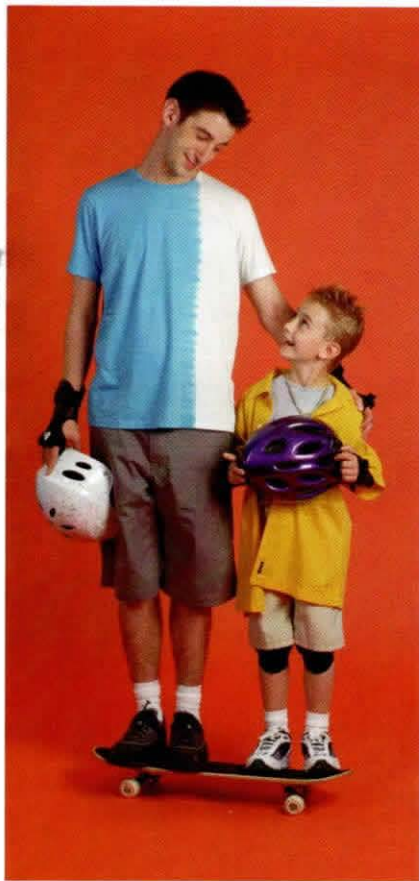
A core team of marketing professionals,

Big Brothers Big Sisters board members, and staff from the National Office and local agencies was convened. The team's mission was to help define the steps that we need to take in order to turn Big Brothers Big Sisters into a power brand that will appeal to the large number of volunteers needed to achieve our growth goals.

The Research

The first step was to conduct professional market research on the public's perceptions of, and misconceptions about, Big Brothers Big Sisters. We focused on four target audiences—seniors, college students, African

right message



Americans and Hispanics, and corporate-based candidates—because each of these groups has the potential to bring us together with tens of thousands of volunteers.

The research showed that Big Brothers Big Sisters enjoys a great deal of public awareness. Eighty-eight percent of Americans recognize the name Big Brothers Big Sisters. The public also understands the work we do and the role our volunteers play. The target audiences are also committed to working with children, and they have a high regard for the Big Brothers Big Sisters mission.

At the same time, these potential volunteers worry that they might be “too human”

to be a Big Brother or Big Sister. They believe that the children in the program may have severe needs that will require more of a time or emotional commitment than they are able to make. Some potential volunteers are also unclear as to what the actual “activity” of being a Big might entail; they are unclear as to the actual role they might play in the child’s life. And the target audiences also said that they are acutely wary of becoming a surrogate parent to their Little.

The Brand Strategy

Armed with the research, we then set out to formulate a way to reach more potential

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The photographs above were created to introduce BrandNewThinking to the leaders of BBBSA. The bright colors and use of playful elements help convey the feeling of energy, joy, and “magic” in our match relationships.

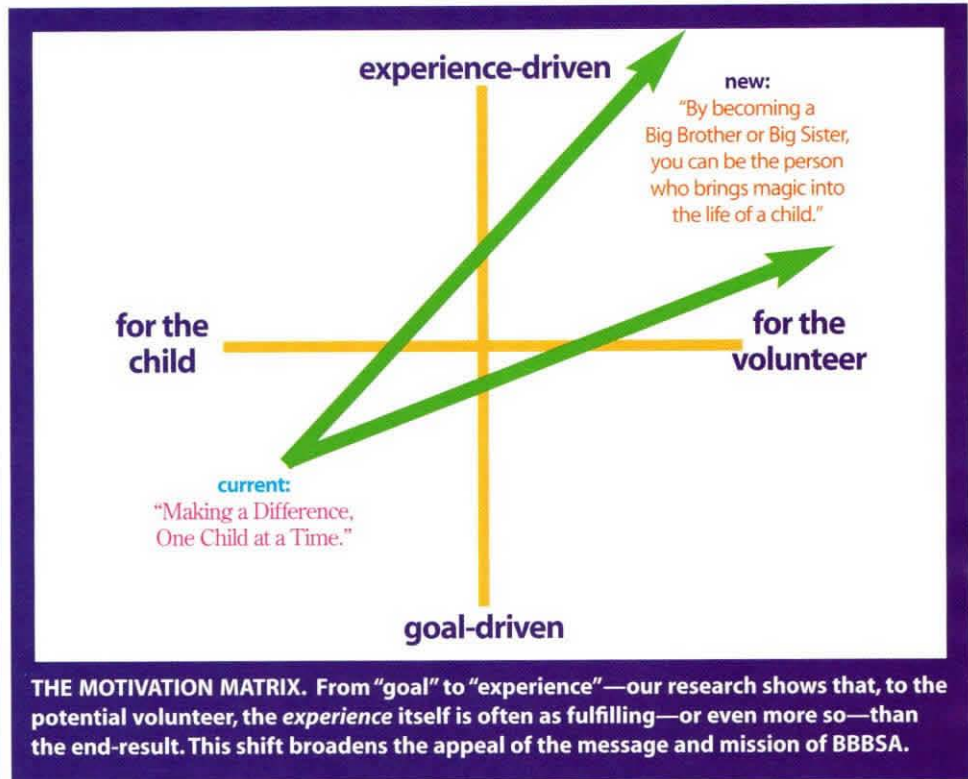
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volunteers by building upon the positive perceptions, while overcoming the barriers in the recruitment process. We looked for a way to reach potential volunteers and captivate them in a relevant, engaging way while dispelling some of their misperceptions about the kids we serve and expectations of our volunteers.

We looked for brand new thinking about what it means to be a Big Brother or Big Sister. And we found it by asking people one simple question: Who is the person who brought a little "magic" into your life? By asking potential volunteers to think back to those individuals who had transformed them by bringing a little magic into their lives, we discovered the universal chord that conveys what being a Big is really all about.

By recalling how they had benefited from those small magic moments, these men and women came to understand both the simplicity at the core of the relationship, and the effect that a relationship with a Big can have on a child. And they also realized that they were, indeed, capable of being the person to bring a little magic into a child's life. It made them want to be there when the magic happens, and to be the one who provides it.

We now see that it is crucial to create a new approach that redefines the role of the volunteer and celebrates what the volunteer derives from the entire experience of being a Big. In other words, telling a potential vol-



unteer how a kid's eyes light up the first time he or she walks into a baseball stadium or sees the ocean, and telling them that not only would they be there when it happened, but they would be the *reason* it happened, will get them to respond with passion.

That is what the concept of "bringing magic" embodies, and it is reflected in our new volunteer selling proposition: *In our*

own lives, each of us was touched by someone—other than our parents—who introduced us to new worlds and brought a little magic into our lives. By becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister, you can do the same for a child. And you will both be forever changed by the experience.

The Internal Launch

During the Leadership Summit in St. Louis, National Board President Bob Wood referred back to the previous conference, saying, "Last year, we made branding a priority for the organization. It has been a great subject of discussion for a long time." That priority was met, and the results have been unveiled, presented, and widely discussed.

The shift in thinking and language has been well received by people throughout the federation. They appreciate and understand the logic behind this new volunteer-focused attitude because people at every level of the federation know first-hand that, without *new* Big Brothers and Big Sisters, there is no Big Brothers Big Sisters.

The National Office has created several important communication pieces that agencies can use to explain "BrandNewThinking" to their board and staff members. *BrandNewThinking: How a New*

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new volunteer selling proposition:

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Who We Are

BrandNewThinking has helped us define the Big Brothers Big Sisters brand as:

Approachable

Human

Sincere

Fun

Spirited

Bright

Attainable

Inclusive

Pure in purpose

Volunteer-focused

Aspiring

Youthful

Diverse

Modern

Volunteer-driven

Delightful

Playful

Joyful

Honest

The joy of the moment

The relationship between Big and Little is:

Magic

Mutually rewarding

Gratifying

Emotionally fulfilling

Caring adult friend

Reciprocal

Process-focused

Community

Without socioeconomic associations

Universal

“Impactful”

Energetic

Rich in immediate experiences

Experience-sharing

Enabling transformation

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Look at Talking to Volunteers Will Bring Us Closer to One Million Matches is a four-color guide that details the volunteer research process.

Likewise, a video of the June presentation is a tool that has been distributed to all agencies which illustrates the discovery process, and incorporates the personality and the feeling of BrandNewThinking in a lively fashion.

Other new resources are available to help agencies effectively recruit and enroll groups of new volunteers: "I Love to Come to Work" is a tool kit to establish a site-based Big Brothers Big Sisters program with businesses in your local area; the booklet *High Volume, Quality Volunteer Enrollment* is designed to help agencies increase the quality and effectiveness of their enrollment system.

Additionally, BrandNewThinking materials are available on-line through the Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies Extranet (agencies.bbbsa.org), and others are scheduled for delivery in the coming months.

Consistency and clarity are key to successfully positioning the Big Brothers Big Sisters brand nationally. These and other tools will help ensure that we present a unified, national "voice" while recognizing each agency's need for local execution.

Reaching Out to Volunteers

We have established four key strategies to help us reach our growth goals. They are:

- **Adopting the brand platform;**
- **Building partnerships with volunteer-rich organizations;**
- **Offering volunteer choices, such as site- and school-based programs;**
- **Emphasizing excellent service to volunteers at every level of the organization.**

BrandNewThinking is a major step in repositioning Big Brothers Big Sisters as the volunteer-friendly, convenient, effective option for anyone who wants to rediscover the wonderful feelings that a friendship between a child and an adult can spark.

The next challenge will be getting our message out to the public. We know that there are hundreds of thousands of men and women in the United States who are ready to be the one to bring a little magic into the life of a child. Our job now is to convince them that the best way to do that is to be a Big Brother or Big Sister. ✱

“

Who is the person who brought a little 'magic' into your life, growing up? ”

”

That one simple question opened the floodgates: by thinking back to those who, in each of our lives, made the mundane special, who brought excitement to the everyday, who transformed us with little moments of "magic," we found the ideal positioning, the ideal descriptor, for the role of the Big Brothers Big Sisters volunteer in a child's life.

Faces of: Potential Volunteers?

To learn what people really think about Big Brothers Big Sisters, the National Office convened four separate focus groups, in different parts of the country. The groups were carefully selected to reflect our primary volunteer-rich target audiences: seniors, college students, African Americans and Hispanics, and corporate-based candidates. They were asked questions ranging from “tell me what you know

about Big Brothers Big Sisters” to “When you were growing up, who brought a little magic into your life?” The images below capture the intensity of their thoughts and responses. The most exciting moment? When an entire group shifted from “I couldn’t be a Big” to “Where do I sign up?” when they learned they, too, could each bring magic into a child’s life.

