



**MENTORING YOUTH.
CHANGING FUTURES.**

Media Contact

Jade Terry
HKA, Inc.
714.426.0444
jade@hkamarcom.com

Big Brothers Big Sisters Announces Mentoring Initiative for Ages 18-25
*Expansion of Destination Future will help underserved
young adults achieve post-high school success*

SANTA ANA, Calif. (Jan 4, 2017) – [Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County and the Inland Empire](#) kicks off January's National Mentoring Month with the expansion of its Destination Future initiative, which will now support its young adult participants with mentoring relationships up to the age of 25. Known for making one-to-one matches between volunteers and youth ages 6 to 18, the local agency is the first of 15 affiliates in California to formally extend services to high school graduates as they transition to college or career.

Destination Future takes a proactive focus on education, employment or enlistment for its participants ages 18 to 25. As part of the initiative's programming, young adult mentees will also receive access to new workshops for career-building skills and financial literacy, competitive scholarships and apprenticeship opportunities with the agency's partner corporations.

"One-to-one mentoring is a cornerstone of our program and through Destination Future we are able to take the next step in ensuring the youth we serve complete college, enter into a productive career and earn a living wage by age 25," says Melissa Beck, chief executive officer of Big Brothers Big Sisters. "Our goal is to help them break negative cycles of poverty, achieve sustainable independence and raise healthier, more robust families that thrive and contribute back to our communities."

Since the 2013 launch of the original Destination Future for participants ages 14 to 18, Big Brothers Big Sisters has helped 160 youth obtain their high school diplomas with a current 99 percent graduation rate. The expanded initiative for young adults 18 and over builds on the nonprofit's success in addressing academic obstacles and aims to reduce the issue of postsecondary persistence among low-income, first generation college students facing family and financial challenges.

Beginning with the class of 2017, all of Big Brothers Big Sisters' graduating program participants will be eligible to participate in Destination Future regardless of GPA, post-high school plans or income level. The initiative, which encompasses college as well as alternative paths such as the military or vocational school, is being funded through a \$1 million commitment in grants awarded by partners including the Annenberg Foundation, PIMCO Foundation and Tarsadia Foundation, among others.

For more information about Big Brothers Big Sisters' one-to-one youth mentoring programs, visit ocbigs.org.

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About Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County and the Inland Empire

Big Brothers Big Sisters believes that with the support of a caring mentor, every child has the ability to achieve his or her full potential. It is the nation's largest donor- and volunteer-supported mentoring organization, serving a quarter-million children annually. Based in Santa Ana, Calif., the Orange County agency was incorporated in 1958 and works

as a local extension of the national effort to make professionally supported, one-to-one matches between mentors (“Bigs”) and children (“Littles”) facing adversity. Together with the Inland Empire agency, which opened its doors in 2013, the local organization annually serves more than 3,000 children through programs that improve the odds of youth performing better in school and avoiding violence and illegal activities. For more information visit ocbigs.org or follow Big Brothers Big Sisters on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

About National Mentoring Month

Launched in 2002 by MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership (MENTOR) and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, National Mentoring Month focuses national attention on the need for mentors, as well as how each of us—individuals, businesses, government agencies, schools, faith communities and nonprofits—can work together to increase the number of mentors to help ensure positive outcomes for our young people. The campaign celebrates mentoring and the positive effect it can have on young lives. Learn more at mentoring.org.