

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Big Brothers Big Sisters Program in Santa Fe County**

**Big Brothers Big Sisters recognizes Bigs, Volunteer, and Partner of the Year at festive Cinco de Mayo event.**

*May 5, 2015 – Santa Fe, NM – Big Brothers Big Sisters Mountain Region (BBBS) honors adult mentors as Bigs of the Year at their festive Cinco de Mayo celebration. Awards were given to the Big Sister of the Year, Big Brother of the Year, School-based Big of the Year, and Partner of the Year. The award for Partner of the Year was given to the local Aaron's, Inc. store, for their extreme generosity and reliable partnership with BBBS.*

BBBS, in celebration of the close of their Capacity Campaign, had colorful soir e at the Hotel Santa Fe on Cinco de Mayo. Filled with great food, a live Mariachi Band, and campaign donors, it was the perfect opportunity to honor the people who remind us why we are all here – Bigs and Littles (adult mentors and their mentees).

Alyssa Wilder arrived with her Little, now 18 years old, to accept her award as Big Sister of the Year. Kristina has been a Little to Alyssa for approximately five years. As she accepted her award, Alyssa told us that she felt as if she was another member of Kristina's family. Kristina nodded in agreement by her side. Kristina explained later, "Alyssa and I met every Friday, and each week I used to chant 'Get here Friday!' because I couldn't wait to see her." They both shone with pride as Alyssa explained, "Kristina is a super artist... no matter what she does with her career, art is something she will always be able to fall back on." Alyssa knows that as Kristina enters adulthood they will not be spending as much time together, "I don't want her to feel guilty about that, but I will always be there for her."

Rick Adesso and his Little Emmet were present to accept Rick's award as Big Brother of the Year. Rick said that Emmet was very shy when they met, "but you can't be shy around me!" he explained. "I met Emmet almost 6 years ago, a fairly quiet, somewhat withdrawn kid. He's now a confident 14-year-old, does well in school, and plays soccer. It has been a real joy watching him grow into the confident kid he is now. We always enjoy our time together and we definitely laugh a lot."

BBBS also announced its School-Based Big of the Year, Katrina Huffaker. Katrina beamed with pride as she stood by her Little, Genesis. "I feel very fortunate to be a part of Big Brothers Big Sisters. Genesis and I are a perfect match. We have fun and love spending time together." In fact, they love their time

together so much that they have extended their relationship into a Community-Based match so that they can see each other more often and through the summer. Genesis brought along her whole family and they were all very proud of their involvement with Big Brothers Big Sisters. Katrina says the relationship benefits her just as much as it does her Little. “Genesis is not only beautiful, but very smart, kind, and brave.” Katrina continues, “She asked me if I would always be her Big Sister and I told her ‘yes, until she grew up and went to college.’ She took my hand and we skipped down the hall.”

BBBS was very excited to have local representatives from Aaron’s, Inc, a national leader in the sales and lease ownership and specialty retailing, in attendance to accept their award as Partner of the Year. BBBS Event Coordinator, Ron Ruybal, says that the folks at Aaron’s are “always there when I need them. Whether it’s to donate TVs for Bowl for Kids’ Sake or just to lend a helping hand, I always know I can count on the local Aaron’s stores.”

Everyone around BBBS likes to say there is a reason Pringle rhymes with Kringle (could it be a secret identity?). That is because Greg Pringle, recognized as Volunteer of the Year is the annual Santa Claus at the BBBS Christmas Party. Party Coordinator, Tashima Wildrose, says it’s because “he shows so much kindness to each and every child that waits to see him.” In fact, she notes, “often the line can take hours because of Greg’s patience and gentle demeanor, but it is always worth the wait.”

### ***About Big Brothers Big Sisters Mountain Region***

*Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) has been the leader in one-to-one youth service for over a century, with proven success in creating positive friendships that benefit children, volunteers, families, neighborhoods and communities. Research has shown positive relationships between adult mentors and at-risk children have a direct and measurable impact on children's lives. Youth in the program perform better in school, get along better with their families, and are less likely to use drugs or alcohol. In 2015 BBBS of Southwestern New Mexico merged with BBBS of Northern New Mexico to form BBBS Mountain Region. BBBS Mountain Region currently serves nearly 1,100 local youngsters and their families in Dona Ana, Grants, Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Taos, Colfax, McKinley, San Miguel, and Mora Counties.*

**PHOTOS, INTERVIEWS AND FURTHER INFORMATION AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**