



Big Brother Big Sisters of the Bay Area

"When my son was 11 I didn't want him hanging out on the street corner and joining gangs. I wanted something better." - Little

Ricky's Mom

School and Site-based match stories



Tell him he could be more.

Johvanni, a senior in high school, says that being a Big Brother through the YMCA is one of the most important things he's ever done.

"I know what its like to grow up without a dad or a big brother," he says. "I grew up in South Richmond my whole life, I lost my best friend when I was young. We were playing and there was a drive by. I didn't want anyone to go through what I went through, so when they were asking for people to be Big Brothers, I had to say 'Yes.'"

He found he has a lot in common with his little, Jaylee.

"We both play baseball, so that was perfect for me," Johvanni said. "He wants to learn about computers, and I run a computer program here at the Y, so I can teach him about that. And we play with the other Big Brothers."

But for all the fun, he has a serious agenda.

"I want my Little Brother to know that there's more in the world than Richmond, that you can see and be more, that you don't have to be a stereotype."



Can a smart kid make it?

When she was in the fifth grade, Iyanna explained exactly why she wanted to be a Little Sister.

"I want a good influence. I want a roll model. I want someone to inspire me," she told Big Brothers Big Sisters staff. "I want to learn to be a girl - but I don't want to be too girly."

That's typical of Iyanna, according to her Big Sister, 10th grader Nyree.

"She's a good little kid - very smart, with something to say," says Nyree. "I just want her to know that there's always somebody there for her. Living in Richmond, it's kind of rough, it's easy to go wrong."

Nyree says that to stay on the right track, her Little Sister is going to need two things: Somebody she can always fall back on, and a lot of love.