

BIG SISTER LEAGUE OF SAN DIEGO, INC.

Serving women and girls in San Diego County for over 60 years

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2004

BIG AND LITTLE SISTER NEWS

New Faces at the Office

There are two new interns working in the office. If you have called recently, you have had the pleasure of speaking with one of them.

On Tuesday or Wednesday, you will speak with Marissa Smith. She is a senior at Point Loma Nazarene University majoring in psychology. Along with being a student, Marissa works part time at Westfield Shoppingtown where she works in the kiosk assisting shoppers. Marissa has had lots of experience working with young people as summer camp counselor and youth leader.

After graduation in May, 2004, Marissa and Nate, her husband, will relocate to Sacramento where Nate will attend Law School.

A call to the office on Thursday or Friday will find Kalicia Hill on duty. Most of the Big Sisters have already talked with Kalicia because her major project has been contacting each of them to do an "oral follow-up". Kalicia is a junior at University of San Diego where she is studying communication with a minor in Leadership.

Kalicia has no spare time! She works part time in the campus book store, is President of the Black Student Union and has been a campus ambassador of the Alcalá Club since her freshmen year. After her internship, Kalicia plans to continue to volunteer in the mentor program office and hopes to become a Big Sister when she is finished with school.

Being a Big Sister is a Stretching Exercise

I like my little sister. I would like her even if she were not my little sister. When I am with her, unexercised parts of my brain, body, and emotions get stretched. My brain has to wrestle with questions. Some questions are easy, like, "Why don't people on the other side of the world fall off?" Other questions are hard, like, "Why does skin dry so fast when hair doesn't?" My body feels long-forgotten sensations. Like, dizziness, when trying to make it through the revolving barrel at the Fair. Like distaste, when finishing her B-B-Q lunch, a flavor I avoid. Like fatigue, when swimming alongside her too long. Like warmth, from a full-body hug and a damp kiss. My emotions are tied to responsibility for someone else's well-being. I drive extra watchfully knowing she is precious cargo. I suggest we do things I love-like picnicking in a dry river bed in the forest-hoping she will love them, too, and we can share in the pleasure together. All this brain, body, and emotion stretching makes me a bigger person, I hope, and I am grateful for that.



Joan Azar

*Please visit us on the web at www.bigsisterleague.org
where you can find information about upcoming events, mentor training,
and programs sponsored by the **Big Sister League of San Diego***

We Need You!

If you or a woman you know would like to be a Big Sister, please refer to our website at www.bigsisterleague.org or call 619.297.1135.

***Be a Mentor!
Be a Big Sister!***

Newsletter Contributors

Joan Azar, Marien Kissling, Lydia Lewis,
Marissa Smith & Laura Tetlow

**If you would like to receive this
newsletter by email, please contact
lydia@bigsisterleague.org**

HOLIDAY PARTY



The Holiday Party venue has been changed. Big Sisters, Little Sisters, and Board Members, please join us for our annual holiday celebration.

***The party will be held in Old Town, on Sunday
December 14th 1:00 – 4:00 PM
at Pizza Bella
2707 Congress Street, San Diego, CA 92110
619-692-4333***

At the party, we will have: A book for every girl, books donated by the Altrusa Society of San Diego; gifts for all the Little Sisters, gifts donated by the La Jolla Executive Tower; Holiday Bash; Pizzas donated by Pizza Bella; with games and door prizes. Please join us for this fun event!

RSVP by December 10th to the League office
telephone – 619-297-1135 or e-mail – bigsister619@cox.net

A Testimonial: Julie's Story

I would like to dedicate my story to people who continue to wrestle with the beast of mental illnesses on a daily basis and are not able to see the light at the end of their tunnel. I hope my story encourages you. Life definitely gives you a second chance. Hang in there and succeed one step at a time.

My recovery encompasses a period of twenty some years. It definitely did not happen over night. In the past, I lived in countless board and cares all over San Diego. Most people in the mental health system end up at these "places" eventually. I have noticed a common misconception that board and cares offer people help, assistance and care. False! If you're lucky enough you might find one that feeds you decently, but I wouldn't be surprised if you don't.

I first became ill when I was 22 years old. At the time, I was working for San Diego Trust and Savings Bank as a clerk typist. The stress on the job combined with personal problems caused me to crack. I became delusional, out of touch, and heard voices. I ended up hospitalized at the "old" County Mental Health behind the UCSD Medical Center in Hillcrest. Remember that place? If you've ever been there as a patient I am sure you will never forget it. Fortunately, it has been shut down and the new County Mental Health facility is now in Point Loma.

I was first diagnosed with bipolar illness and prescribed mega doses of lithium which made me very sick. For many years I was in and out of the hospital countless times and prescribed many different medications. I could not seem to stabilize. I'm sure there were people out there who thought I was a totally hopeless case, including members of my own family. I was also in and out of several board and care homes. I had little ambition for the future and was resigned to live a simple life where no one expected much out of me.

Finally, in May 1993, I came to Big Sisters. It was after coming here that I began to make real

progress toward my recovery. Big Sisters is definitely the best group home I have ever lived in. I will even go as far as saying that it is probably the best group home in San Diego for women with mental health problems. I am constantly telling the other women residents who are new to group living, that Big Sisters is the best.

Big Sisters is a warm, caring and supportive living environment. The Housemothers cook and do light cleaning and they are always available to talk. We look up to them as mentors and they help us in different ways to stay on track. Money has gotten tighter and tighter at Big Sisters. We used to have a part time therapist and social worker etc. to assist the women, but these services had to be cut.

I have grown a lot at the Big Sisters over the years. Big Sisters is usually a peaceful, restful haven where women network together in a little community to help and support one another. I have been fortunate to be able to live in this wonderful, supportive environment for several years. When I first came here in 1993 I had no ambitions or goals. Little by little I began to recuperate from my illness and started to get interested in life again. I decided to go back to college and pursue a degree. I am currently working on getting my two year degree in Business Administration and after that I hope to transfer to a university and continue on for my Bachelors and Masters.

As a result of how much Big Sisters has helped me, I have tried to give back as often as possible. For four years I volunteered at the Redwood house doing clerical work and assisting the Housemothers. I worked one and a half years at the Attic Treasures Thrift store. Now I try to help the women at the homes by giving support and trying to be a positive, productive role model. I particularly try to encourage women to go back to school, because I believe that education is everything. There is definitely hope, health and happiness out there. Life really does give you a second chance! You just have to be brave enough to reach out and take it.

Thank you Big Sisters!

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Inspirational Luncheon at CREW Meeting

The San Diego Chapter of the Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) hosted a luncheon to present a gift to the Big Sister League and to honor the 2003 CREW Award winner and outgoing Board of Directors. 2004 Directors were introduced including President Lisa Lepore; First VPs Lisa Irvin and Misty Moore; Secretary Suzan Bramzon, and Treasurer (and recent BSL advocate) Jill Larsen. The luncheon was held at the La Jolla Radisson Hotel on November 13. Julianne, a resident at League who had a career in broadcasting, spoke to the audience of her dissociative disorder—and the underpinnings of her recovery—thanks to the guidance of Lydia Lewis, our Executive Director. Her courage was praised by the group. Elizabeth Goodgold, owner of DUH! Marketing was the luncheon's keynote speaker on branding in the service industry. Ms Goodgold advocated the use of common sense and imitation of corporate campaigns we admire. She revealed tips from her experiences and drew to a close by sharing the story of her career growth from the projects of New York. The parallel of Ms Goodgold's story to our own residents recovery program was well received. On October 20 CREW hosted a wine-tasting and raffle at Cuvee, organized by Jodi Carner, CREW's creative director. The proceeds from the annual fund raiser benefited the Big Sister League. CREW also sponsors a holiday party for our Big Sister/Little Sister participants. We are favored with their loyal support and thankful for their generous gift of \$2,000.00.

L. Tetlow, BOD

BSL's New Board Members

Holly Traube Cordova, is a real estate attorney at the law firm Luce, Forward, Hamilton and Scripps, where a large part of her work involves the development of low income, housing in Southern California. Holly went to college and law school at UCLA. She also provides volunteer legal services in the areas of children's rights, child care reform, homeless advocacy and disaster relief.

Holly joined the Big Sister League in September 2003, after learning about the wonderful services the League provides. She is currently one of the board's vice presidents. In addition, she is on the board of Nativity Prep Academy of San Diego and Promise Charter School.

Courtney Grant moved from Orange County to San Diego in the fall of 2001 to become an undergraduate, majoring in political science and sociology with a minor in philosophy, at the University of San Diego. She plans to graduate in May of 2004, to attend law school next fall, and eventually practice public service or family law. Since April of 2002, Courtney has worked as a marketing associate and account manager at Pivotpoint West, an extended systems and resource planning software provider. Her experience in marketing has proved to be valuable in efforts to spread the news about the Big Sister League.

Courtney first became involved with the Big Sister League in May of 2003 as a Big Sister to Krista. She feels blessed with the opportunity to share in Krista's life. The mission of the Big Sister League, and especially the mentoring program, is a top priority to Courtney. She devotes much time to nurturing her relationship with Krista, as well as helping to promote awareness about the organization within the community.

Theresa Jenny Fornaca was born and raised in Chicago. She moved to San Diego in 1979 after a record-breaking winter blizzard and

only goes back to visit occasionally. A single mom, Jenny raised her daughter Julia Claire who is now 22 and lives on Balboa Island. Jenny enjoys golfing in her spare time. She worked at QUALCOMM Inc. for the past 11 years and has just accepted a new program management position with Texas Instruments. Jenny first heard about the Big Sister League while working with Julie Wilkinson, our past board president. Julie's enthusiasm about the League enticed Jenny to join and help raise money for at risk girls and women of San Diego.

Megan Groover moved to San Diego four years ago after graduating from Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina. She works at Scripps Mercy Hospital in the Recruitment Department as the Workforce Specialist. Megan found the Big Sister League on the Internet and recently became a Big Sister for a 13 year old girl through the League. She loves being involved in women-helping-women environments, and was so impressed by the history and mission of the Big Sister League that she volunteered. Megan brings experience in event planning to help with fund-raising efforts.

Sandee Hackerson came to San Diego in 1988 and has lived in the downtown area for 13 years. She heard about Big Sisters through her neighbor and friend, Lydia. She has volunteered for many things, but it was this organization that touched her heart, so she chose to get involved. Sandee is Senior Vice President of First Associates Mortgage Corporation; her hobbies are writing, walking, and she is an avid reader. She donates her time to the Juvenile Diabetes Association, Bravo (for the Performing Arts), Mainly Mozart Festival, the Leukemia Foundation, and she donates most of her spare money to the Myasthenia Gravis Foundation because her daughter contracted the disease at the age of 30.

An afternoon of gratitude to the many supporters of the Big Sister League!



Alicia McLain, BSL board member
Mary Craig, graphic designer



Ellen Cutler Owens
CFO BoD
(left)



Cathy Kell,
Cynthia Deigert,
and Robin Behm
(right)



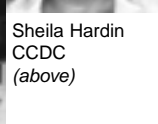
Julie Machado,
Rozelle Washburn,
Valerie Fontaine
(left)



Holly Cordova, VP BoD,
Judy Enns, President BoD



Arlie Parks, Lydia Lewis,
Sandee Hackerson
BoD (above)



Sheila Hardin
CCDC
(above)



Ida Hays Irvine
honored for 60
years of service
to BSL and
family members
(right)

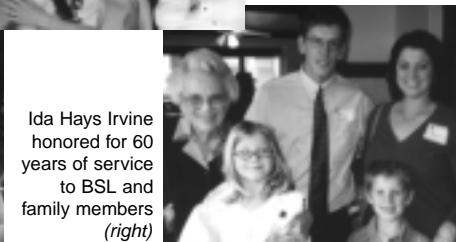


Tom Rutkowski
Recognition
award for
service to BSL
(left)

Marien Kissling,
Mentor Program
with Big Sister,
Geraldine
Adams
(right)



Diane Evans, (seated) Cheri Caviness,
60th Anniversary Committee,
Megan Groover, BoD



A time to thank and honor so many people for their leadership, guidance and dedicated service over the last 60 years. A special thank you to those who helped to make the 60th Anniversary celebration possible: Cheri Caviness, Michele Fabianes, Megan Groover, Cathy Kell, Alice Moore, Pat Moore, Tom Rutkowski and Beth Shamrock. Donations: My Favorite Bakery, Opera Patissierie, George's Wonderful World of Cakes, Cookie Lady, Michele Coulon Dessertier, A La Francaise, Cheesecake Factory, Atlas Flooring, Ralph's Supermarket and Starbuck's Coffee.

Buy Your Buick Invitational Tickets Now!

The Big Sister League of San Diego Inc. has been given the unique opportunity to sell Buick Invitational Tickets for a fraction of the cost of a regular admission ticket. The League keeps 100% of the proceeds. What a wonderful opportunity to enjoy defending champion Tiger Woods, Ernie Els, Sergio Garcia, Phil Mickelson* and many more! What a wonderful way to help the Big Sister League.

The Buick Invitational will be held at Torrey Pines Golf Course February 9-15, 2004.

- Tickets are only \$12.00 and can be used for the weekday or weekend.
(Regular admission is \$20.00 for weekday and \$25.00 for weekend)
- Your purchase is 100% tax deductible!

These tickets make great stocking stuffers, incentive awards, gifts for clients, and much much more!

GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

To reserve your tickets contact Marissa Smith at The Big Sister League of San Diego at msmith@ptloma.edu.

*the official player list has not yet been confirmed and players' attendance may possibly change



Contact Information:

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115 Redwood Street
San Diego, CA 92103

phone: 619.297.1172
fax: 619.297.3908
www.bigsisterleague.org

OUR MISSION: The Big Sister League assists women and girls in San Diego County by providing supervised transitional housing, volunteer mentor relationships and support services. The League programs are designed to encourage confidence, self-esteem and independence. The Big Sister League of San Diego, Inc. is supported by private donations, local businesses, grants, and United Way/Chad designations.

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BIG THANK YOUS!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank to each of you who have donated so generously to the Big Sister League.

We've made every effort to ensure the accuracies of all names. Please accept our apologies for any errors.

Big Sister League Donors

(donations from 7/03 through 12/03)

Raise the Roof Donors

(from 9/30 through 11/30)

WD - 40 Company
Walter Kamfonik - Atlas Flooring
Terri and Philip Sangiorgio
Linda Fleming

Bob Hope Signature Egg Campaign

Lisbeth Abramson
Andy & Diane Andrews
Alice May Anderson & Doug Lang
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Congratulations to Jenny Fornaca lucky winner of the Bob Hope Signature Egg!

Donations to the League Programs

Allstate Insurance Company - Claims
Betty Clarquist - Incentive Mgmt.
David & Theresa Hymer
Ida Hays Irvine
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Cathy Kell
City of SD Employee Share Program
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Murria & Frick Ins. Agency
Pacific Beach & Surf Club
Glenn & Anne Pillsbury
QUALCOMM Inc.
Nita Southern
San Diego Chapter NSDAR
World Reach, Inc. (Hewlett Packard)

Grants received in 2003

Bell Charitable Foundation
Cardinal Health Foundation
James S. Copley Foundation
Cush Automotive Charitable Foundation
San Diego County Employees' Charitable Organization
San Diego Foundation's Weingart - Price Fund (Price Charities Advisory Board)
United Way of San Diego

Capital improvements completed in 2002-2003 at the Frances Woods Home (Redwood Street)

- 2 bathrooms completely renovated
- Kitchen refurbished-new flooring, ventilation and lighting
- Exterior of home painted
- Upstairs hallway painted
- Living room and foyer painted
- Hardwood flooring refinished in foyer
- 4 bedrooms painted
- Landscaping from yard and patio cleanup

Capital improvement needed at the Frances Woods Home

- New roof - Redwood House
- Refurbish cottage, bathroom, 2 bedrooms, laundry room and roof
- Carpet for 8 bedrooms (5,000 sq. ft.)
- 26 window screens - upstairs bedrooms
- Repair heating system insulation and new hot water heater

Capital improvement completed at the Mary McAfee Residency (4th Avenue Home)

- New roof completed

Wish List

- Two new 27 or 28. cu. ft. refrigerators
- One new large capacity washing machine (industrial would be best)
- Three durable, long, gardening hoses
- Paper products- toilet paper, hand towels, napkins, paper plates, paper drinking cups (hot and cold)
- Plastic forks, spoons, knives
- Twin sheets, pillow cases, blankets
- Costco gift cards
- Food-non perishable can goods, boxed products

Fundraising Activities

Bob Hope Signature Egg Campaign 2003

\$10,561

Raise the Roof

Raised in 2003 - \$8,335

2003 Annual Campaign

Raised to Date - \$35,914

The Big Sister League of San Diego, Inc., publishes a newsletter three times a year. Our newsletter reaches 3,000 homes and business in the San Diego area. Advertising in our newsletter is a great way to reach new consumers; give your business a boost and help a worthwhile community based organization.

If you are interested in placing a business card size ad in our June issue please send your business card (black & white or color) along with a check for **\$50.00** to the **Big Sister League of San Diego, Inc., 115 Redwood Street, San Diego, CA 92103. Deadline: June 1, 2004.** For additional information call Becky Madrid, (619) 297-1172 ext. 103.

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