



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Jenn and Lewis Bear III named Honorary Chairs for The Big Gala 2019 benefiting Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida**

**PENSACOLA, Fla.** – Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida has named Jenn and Lewis Bear III as Honorary Chairs of the annual Big Gala.

Jenn Bear is an active volunteer in the community, serving on multiple boards and working with youth through several nonprofit organizations. Lewis Bear III is the Vice President of Lewis Bear Company and a current Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida board member. He previously served as the agency's Board Chair from 2012 to 2014. The Bears are a Big Duo to Little Brother Sam. A Big Duo is a pair of friends, a couple, or even family members who team up to mentor a child together.

Lewis has been matched with Sam since July of 2011 when Sam was 10 years old. After spending time with the two, Jenn decided to become a Big as well, joining in 2014. They often enjoy taking Sam out on their boat, watching movies, and having family dinners. They have supported Sam by watching his performances in the Pensacola Children's Chorus, and have modeled positive relationships to him. With the help of the Bears, Sam has grown into a responsible young man who is a successful high school student entering eleventh grade.

"Jenn and Lewis are amazing advocates for the community," said Paula Shell, President and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida. "With this being our 30<sup>th</sup> year, we felt it was important to have Honorary Chairs who exemplify that history. The Bear Family has been involved since the beginning. Belle and Lewis Bear Jr. were instrumental in bringing our services to Northwest Florida and serving on our board. Cindi Bear Bonner has also served on our board, and now Lewis Bear III currently serves. Our Littles are blessed by the service of this family."

"We are so happy to support Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida as they begin their 30<sup>th</sup> year," said Lewis. "We love our Little Brother Sam. We started this relationship to help Sam, but we have benefited far more than we imagined from having him in our lives," shared Jenn.

The Big Gala is Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida's signature fundraising event and will be held on January 11, 2019 at Skopelos at New World. The event will kick off the agency's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary serving kids in the Panhandle. To learn more about becoming a sponsor, visit [www.bbbsnwfl.org](http://www.bbbsnwfl.org) or call Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida at 850-433-5437.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida has been the area's leader in one-to-one mentoring for 29 years by serving children ages 6 to 18. Our mission is to provide children facing adversity with strong and enduring, one-to-one relationships that change their lives for the better, forever. Last year, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida served 616 children in Northwest Florida.

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Photos attached.