

Bigs with Badges is a one-to-one mentoring program that connects youth and those with badges in communities throughout Northwest Florida, building strong, trusting, lasting relationships.

## NEED

Tensions with police officers have disrupted communities and sparked protests around the country. But now a new program, launched by mentoring organization Big Brothers Big Sisters, aims to prevent children from seeing police officers as bad guys through one-on-one relationships.

“Right now, there is an identifiable problem with poor relations between police and communities,” said Pam Iorio, President and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. “This helps the police officer connect to the families they serve. They’re not going into a neighborhood to make an arrest; they’re going into a neighborhood to form a bond. It helps that young person see the police officers as a friend.”

Big Brothers Big Sisters’ nationwide initiative to recruit police officers as mentors for young people will pay dividends for the officers, the kids and the communities where they live and work. Known as “Bigs in Blue,” the new program is a well-timed response to increasing tension between law enforcement and the public. It is just the kind of grassroots effort the country needs to reset the adversarial dynamic. Here in Northwest Florida, the program will be called Bigs with Badges and will include fire, EMS, corrections, state and federal departments along with police departments.



Pensacola Police Officer and Big Brother, David Partrick and his Little Brother, Kamari

## HOW IT WORKS

- Littles are matched with volunteer Bigs with Badges (Police Departments, Sheriff’s Departments, Fire & EMS Departments, Corrections, State & Federal Departments)
- Bigs must be willing to provide a minimum of a one-year commitment.
- Bigs must commit to seeing their Little 4 hours a month (1 hour a week at school or a minimum of 2 times a month outside of school)

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