



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida Announces the 2020 Virginia Thomas Big of the Year

Pensacola, Fla. – Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida (BBBSNWFL) awards Cristen Hobbs with the the 2020 Virginia Thomas Big of the Year Award. Cristen shows a remarkable level of dedication and commitment to not only her Little Sister Tynetta, but also to her community. The staff of BBBSNWFL could not have chosen anyone better for the 2020 Virginia Thomas award.

Virginia Thomas was born in Birmingham, Alabama and lived there until she joined the United States Marine Corp in the very first group of women to join from Alabama. She moved to Panama City in 1965 and, with her husband Tommy, opened Tommy Thomas Chevrolet, which is now known as Bill Cramer Chevrolet Cadillac Buick GMC. Virginia Thomas was very involved in the Panama City community, serving on several different community boards. Her passion and heart were children, opening doors and opportunities they otherwise would never have. Virginia Thomas made a big impact on community and in the lives of so many children throughout her life. This award was established to honor Virginia Thomas and celebrate a Big who exemplifies the passion of serving others.

Cristen Hobbs, a mom of two boys and a full-time student had a full plate when she reached out to Big Brothers Big Sisters wanting to mentor a child in need. Cristen got matched with her Little Sister Tynetta in 2018. She has always been Tynetta’s biggest supporter. Like Cristen, Tynetta is very shy and reserved. Cristen helped Tynetta with not only her struggles of being reserved, but also with her schoolwork and reading. Tynetta went from being a D student to a B student in a short time.

Cristen and Tynetta were only matched for nine months when Panama City was devastated by Hurricane Michael. Like many other Bigs, Cristen was worried about how this would affect her relationship with her Little Sister. Cristen did everything she could to help Tynetta and her family during that challenging time. Tynetta’s mother said, “We will never find another friend like Ms. Cristen in the whole world. She has adopted my baby into her heart, home, and family. We love her, respect her, and cherish her. I am so grateful for the bond, not only my child has with her, but myself also. We have laughed and cried together. She goes over and beyond anything I have ever seen. It’s the little girl she never birthed but is raising as though she did. She is the epitome of the perfect being that God sculpted with his own bare hands. No one will ever know the lengths she has gone to make sure not just her Little was okay, but our entire family.”

Now, more than ever, our children need mentors. These children need someone to help ignite, defend, and empower their potential. To learn more about how to become a Defender of Potential visit bbbsnwfl.org.

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Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida has been the area’s leader in one-to-one mentoring for 30 years by serving children ages 5-18. Our mission is to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth. Last year, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida served 646 children in Northwest Florida.



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