

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF THE LOWCOUNTRY SUCCESS STORY



"Kadedra and Ava"

Little Sister Ava enrolled in Big Brothers Big Sisters because her mom wanted her to have extra activities and Ava had heard about the program. Big Sister Kadedra decided to be a mentor because she remembers how impactful it was to have a Big Sister when she was growing up. "The times we spent together were memorable and they were times I really needed to feel more comfortable and like someone had my back. I wanted to do the same for someone else," said Kadedra.



The first time that Kadedra and Ava met was for lunch at McDonald's. They were both nervous but when Ava walked in wearing a Prince t-shirt, Kadedra (who is a die-hard Prince fan) knew that this match was meant to be. The first meeting went smoothly as they enjoyed lunch while getting to know each other. "Ava was very comfortable and that made me feel more comfortable and we were able to begin building a rapport right away," said Kadedra.

The time Ava has spent trying new things with Kadedra has helped her discover interests she did not know she had. "Something I have learned about myself is that I have an interest in golf. Kadedra takes me to play golf and it is really fun. At first, it was tricky, but I was able to get into it well. Kadedra is a pretty good golfer, so she set a high bar but it went smoothly. I just love experiencing new things with her," said Ava.

Ava believes that she and Kadedra are a good match because they "balance each other out and share strong opinions on the same things." "We have a lot of things in common. It's uncanny. We both skipped a grade in school, so we have been able to connect a lot on that topic: preparing to skip a grade and then the impact of that. That is just one example...I think that is why we are a great match," said Kadedra.

Kadedra and Ava say that the time they spend together is relaxed and not planned out. "When I first took this on, I thought that it would need to be more planned out and that I would need to be in control mode, but Ava makes it easy to just talk, vibe off each other, and see where the conversation goes. It is really fluid, comfortable, relaxing, and just very good," said Kadedra.

Ava said "I would 100% recommend Big Brothers Big Sisters. It is very fun and you get to experience all types of new things with amazing people. I think that the Bigs want it just as much as the Littles!" Kadedra's advice to those thinking about becoming a Big would be "don't

underestimate what you are capable of giving and what you are capable of doing in someone else's life. It doesn't take a ton of your time so don't shy away because of the yearlong commitment. Ava and I are completely flexible with one another, our schedules, and family demands. There is enough of you to go around!"

Ava said that since becoming a Little Sister she is more open and does not always put her feelings to the side anymore. "Since I have Kadedra, it is easier for me to open up because I know she is there to listen. She gives me great advice, offers a different perspective on things, and she is there for me in any possible way that she can be," said Ava.

Kadedra said that Ava has also been a positive influence on her life. "I have become more relaxed in how I interact with others. Being someone who is introverted, it has been fun and easy to relate to Ava. This is the first time I have approached a relationship this way: open and going with the flow. That is not normally my nature but to be honest, I kind of like it better," said Kadedra.

Kadedra's hope for Ava's future is that she reaches her FULL potential, and that she does so, "knowing that she has a network of people, including me, to be her cheerleader, to listen, to help and to do anything we can to help her be the best person that she can be. She is well on her way!"