

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF THE LOWCOUNTRY SUCCESS STORY

“Ryan & Joe”



During the unstable year of 2020, Little Brother Joe was navigating some of life’s turbulent waters without the steady presence of a male figure. The challenges he faced were beginning to steer him towards an uncertain path, as he began to find himself drawn to the wrong crowd adrift in a sea of adversity. His mother’s foresight led her to enroll Joe in the Big Brothers of the Lowcountry program, a decision that would forever change his path.

Enter Big Brother Ryan, a compassionate and driven attorney with a commitment to making a positive impact in the community. As the world grappled with the upheaval of Covid, Ryan witnessed a lot of people talking about making a difference without taking any real action. In his frustration, and embracing his personal values, Ryan decided to become a Big Brother.

Ryan and Joe first met during the height of the pandemic, and their early interactions were masked and limited.

Their first public outing was at Brittlebank Park, an excursion that provided them the opportunity to break down some barriers and set the stage for their evolving relationship. Initially, Joe was quiet and antisocial, but as Ryan continued to show up for him, Joe’s trust in him grew. The turning point arrived during an outing to Sky Zone Trampoline Park. “Joe had an opportunity to see me acting silly, just jumping around and acting like a kid. That’s when he realized we aren’t that different. He saw that we were both just people and that I wanted to help him. That’s when he started to trust me,” said Ryan. A week later, Joe called Ryan asking for help for the first time, needing advice on his Harry Potter homework assignment. Ryan, a self-proclaimed Harry Potter fanatic, was happy to lend his knowledge to his Little Brother.

Over the course of three years, Ryan has witnessed Joe’s remarkable transformation. From a reserved and soft-spoken young boy, Joe has blossomed into a confident, friendly, and outspoken young man. Their shared experiences have taught both Joe and Ryan essential life lessons. Joe’s determination and unyielding pursuit of a better life – balancing part-time employment, attending welding school, earning his driver’s permit, all while keeping up with his high school studies – have inspired Ryan and allowed him to push himself further in his own life.

Ryan’s role in his Little Brother’s life has transcended that of a mentor; he has become a true friend, brother, and role model, providing a shining example for Joe of responsible adulthood and



family devotion. Joe marveled at Ryan's ability to gracefully manage his responsibilities while still making time for their bond. "Ryan really handles his business as a man and I never saw that growing up without a male figure in my life. I see him take care of his family while still having time for me and I really look up to that. It's amazing," said Joe.

As their journey continues, Joe and Ryan continue to embody the essence of success within the Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Lowcountry program and their story exemplifies the program's mission to provide guidance, support, and friendship, ultimately shaping a brighter future for both mentor and mentee.