



**\*\*\* MEDIA ALERT\*\*\***

## **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Louisiana Hosts 2024 Big Defender Luncheon**

**What:** [Big Brothers Big Sisters of SWLA](#) hosts annual **Big Defender Luncheon** and recognition ceremony.

**When:** Thursday, January 25 at 11:30am

**Where:** L'Auberge Casino Resort – L'Auberge Ballroom

**Why:** To highlight critical youth mentoring programs in Southwest Louisiana and recognize supporters

**What:**

On Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Louisiana (BBBS-SWLA) held their 2024 Big Defender Luncheon at the L'Auberge Casino Resort Lake Charles. The luncheon served to celebrate the organization's forty-fifth anniversary of serving the Southwest Louisiana area by providing mentoring programs that ignite the power and promise of youth since 1979, as well as to recognize outstanding mentors, investors, and donors.

This year, the newly named Fay Robinson Big Sister of the Year Award was presented to Hannah Veazey for her outstanding commitment to her Little Sister Brooklyn. This award has been renamed in honor of Fay, Big Sister to Shelli Benglis Broussard. Fay was nearly sixty years old when Matched with Shelli, then seven years old at the time. Fay continued to impact Shelli's life, becoming a mentor and family member to her husband and children as she grew and started her family. After Fay's passing in July of 2023, BBBS-SWLA wanted to honor her impact and contribution to mentorship by naming the award after her.

The Ben Terry Big Brother of the Year was presented to Travis Thomas for his dedication to the mentorship of his Little Brother Elijah. This newly named award serves as a tribute to Ben Terry, Southwest Louisiana's beloved meteorologist and Big Brother to Chris. Ben gave back to many organizations in the area, and one close to his heart was his involvement in youth mentorship through Big Brothers Big Sisters. Erin Davison, President and CEO of BBBS-SWLA, spoke about Ben's cancer journey, noting that he would always be a part of his Little's life and our organization's future.

The tribute awards for Big Brother and Big Sister of the Year, gifted to Ben Terry's family and Shelli Benglis Broussard's family, were created by local artist Candace Alexander, displaying a beautiful picture of Big Brother Ben with Little Brother Chris, and Big Sister Fay with Little Sister Shelli.

Awards of gratitude were presented to all our investors, sponsors, and donors who generously supported us in 2023.

Big Brothers Big Sisters is eagerly looking forward to all of their exciting events happening in 2024! The major event fundraiser dates for this year are set as follows:

- March 23, 2024 – Bags & Brew Cornhole Tournament at Crying Eagle Brewing Company – University Location
- August 17, 2024 – Bowl for Kids' Sake at Petro Bowl Lake Charles
- October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024 – Cornhole for Kids' Sake in DeRidder, benefitting our Northern Parish Region

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### **About Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Louisiana**

[Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southwest Louisiana](#) (BBBS SWLA) is celebrating 45 years (1979-2024) of facilitating meaningful, monitored matches between adult volunteers and children ages 6-18 in Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, Jeff Davis, and Vernon parishes. The region's largest donor and volunteer supported mentoring network has a proud history of defending the potential of marginalized youth by creating and growing innovative mentoring programs with a focus on justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI).

BBBS of SWLA believes that one-to-one mentoring relationships will ignite the power and promise of youth so they can achieve their full potential.