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COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION  
*of Northeast Alabama*

*Your Community First Newsletter*

[www.yourcommunityfirst.org](http://www.yourcommunityfirst.org)

SEPTEMBER 2019

## Fund Spotlight

# Big Brothers Big Sisters

Since 1904 Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) has believed that inherent in every child is incredible potential. As the nation's largest donor- and volunteer-supported mentoring network, BBBS makes meaningful, monitored matches between adult volunteers ("Bigs") and children ("Littles"). Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Alabama serves youth ages 6 through 18. BBBS develops positive relationships that have a direct and lasting effect on the lives of young people.

One such example of a lasting effect is the story of Big Brother, Jason Lindell. Jason was matched with twin brothers, Chance and Chase Gaither when they were in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. When the opportunity came to mentor the brothers, Jason knew he would take both.

Chance shares, "Our match with Jason through the BBBS program has made a huge impact on the lives of me and my brother. I can't thank him enough for all he's done for us. He has helped us with so many things: school, sports, and life. His guidance has been invaluable. Jason has watched us grow up and become the young men we are today."

Chase says, "We waited a long time to be matched with a big brother. We were so excited Jason wanted us both. It was really great to have someone that liked everything we did and introduced new things to us. We immediately started doing stuff together."

Jason shares, "When my wife and I learned we were having twin boys in the fall of 2017, I realized it was Chance and Chase who had prepared me to raise them. They are good kids and are extremely smart. This has been such a rewarding experience for me. I have watched two young boys broaden their horizons and



*L to R: Chase, Jason and Chance with twins,  
William and Jacob.*

perspectives. Our time together has been wonderful. We have made so many memories together and I never want to forget any of them."

In 2013 Jason and the twins were honored as *Big Brother and Little Brothers Match of the Year*; in 2014 tickets from Alabama Power offered them the opportunity to attend a Baron's Game. In 2019 the brothers celebrated their high school graduation. This fall both will attend the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). Chance plans to become a pediatric dentist, and Chase will be joining the

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Reserved Officer Training Course (ROTC) and plans to pursue a career with the FBI.

The mission of BBBS has always been to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth. This is something Jason has been able to execute during his eight years with the boys. In an effort to ensure the long-term financial resources needed to carry out the organization's mission, BBBS has created an endowed fund with the Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama. Valerie Shannon, CEO, shares, "A gift to BBBS is not a one-time donation. It lasts for years and sometimes a lifetime." Donations can be accepted at [www.yourcommunityfirst.org](http://www.yourcommunityfirst.org) or by mail: Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama, 1130 Quintard Ave., Suite 100, Anniston, AL, 36201.



*L to R: Chance and Chase enjoy a meal with Jason at Waffle House*

## Collaborative Partnerships Improve Lives

The Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama (CFNEA) champions thriving communities and strives to improve lives through collaborative partnerships by awarding grants and scholarships. The 2015 Community Needs Assessment strongly indicated the need for breaking the cycle of poverty. Working with our partners throughout northeast Alabama, CFNEA created the E2 Program. Funded through the Stringfellow Health Fund, the E2 Program focuses on education, employment and a two-generational strategy to reduce the number of people living below the poverty level.



The E2 Program provides opportunities for education programs: Associate Degrees, Short- or Long-Term Certificates, and Skills Training through Gadsden State Community College. The E2 Program will also provide employment opportunities upon the completion of an education program through East AlabamaWorks and the Gadsden Career Center. Participating students are 18 years or older and have at least one child five years old or less.

### Collyn Roberts joins CFNEA as the Life Coach for the E2 Program



Collyn holds a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from Jacksonville State University and a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Alabama.

Prior to joining the Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama, Collyn worked as a Foster Care Case Worker at the Etowah County Department of Human

Resources. She also worked as an intern with the Family Success Center of Etowah County prior to graduation, where she was involved with many community outreach programs.

The E2 Program is located in the Family Success Center, 821 Broad Street, Gadsden, AL, 35903, 256-547-6888, ext. 112, [croberts@yourcommunityfirst.org](mailto:croberts@yourcommunityfirst.org)

### New Funds

**Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Alabama** - to support Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Alabama.

**OPAC - Alabama Children's Museum Fund** - to support the Oxford Performing Arts Center (OPAC) and the creation of an Alabama Children's Museum in Oxford, Alabama.

**The Church of The Good Shepherd, Presbyterian** - to support charitable activities as determined by the fund's donor advisor(s).

# Open Spaces Sacred Places®

In DeKalb County on July 29, 2019, the **Mentone Arts & Cultural Center** broke ground on the *Dr. Stephen Brewer Sculpture Garden*. Firesoul, Randy Grider, shared the vision for the garden and a large cutout of the Sequoyah sculpture that will be a feature in the garden. A lovely reception followed the groundbreaking where guests had the opportunity to meet Betsy Scott, wildlife artist and Carl McCleskey, sculpture artist. Guests viewed schematics of the garden and celebrated this wonderful addition to their community.



The *Dr. Stephen Brewer Sculpture Garden* is one of the fifteen Open Spaces Sacred Places® (OSSP) being established throughout the nine-county region served by CFNEA. These spaces are intended for the encouragement of community well-being and resilience of mind/body/spirit of both individuals and communities. These special places are conceived by an individual or organization inspired with the idea that access to nature can make a positive impact on the various community and personal challenges individuals and communities face. Behind each space is one or more “Firesouls”, individuals with a burning passion to design and develop an OSSP. “These greenspaces will function as places where our communities can enter, reflect and encourage good health and wellbeing,” said Fred Smith, Director of Stringfellow Health Fund Grants at the Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama.

The TKF Foundation originally conceived and created the first OSSP. The Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama chose the OSSP model to celebrate the generous legacy left to northeast Alabama by Susie Parker Stringfellow almost 100 years ago.

Ribbon cutting ceremonies will be held for each site throughout 2020.





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1130 Quintard Avenue, Suite 100  
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## Deborah J. Pfladderer promoted to Chief Financial Officer

Deborah (Deb) J. Pfladderer has been promoted to Chief Financial Officer for the Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama (CFNEA). Deb joined the staff of the CFNEA in February 2013 as Director of Accounting & Finance. Deb moved to Alabama from Northern Indiana where she was employed by the Marshall County Community Foundation and United Way of Marshall County in Plymouth, Indiana.

Deb graduated Magna Cum Laude from Indiana Wesleyan University with a Bachelor's of Science in Accounting and is currently pursuing her Masters in Finance from Columbia Southern University. Deb has over 24 years of accounting experience in manufacturing, retail and not-for-profit settings.

## East AlabamaWorks Adds Third Staff Member - Abby Minter Howle

Abby Minter Howle joins the East AlabamaWorks team as Workforce Program Coordinator. Abby comes to EAW from the Cleburne County District Attorney's Office where she served as a Victim's Service Officer. Prior to the DA's office, Abby was the Executive Director of the Cleburne County Chamber of Commerce from 2015-2018. Abby graduated cum laude from Jacksonville State University, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management. She is a native of Cleburne County and currently makes her home in Heflin.



As Workforce Program Coordinator, Abby will support Region 2 workforce development events, including the BEST Robotics program for East Alabama, and will work closely with middle school and high school students to offer presentations on preparing themselves for entering the workforce. The Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama serves as the fiscal sponsor for East AlabamaWorks – the regional workforce council for Region 2.