

Gabrielle Moore

'Big Sister,' Big Brothers Big Sisters, The Y in Central Maryland

DAVID STUCK



It only takes a little time to make a big impact in a child's life. **Gabrielle Moore**, senior collections coordinator at Cooley LLP, knows this impact firsthand. Through her involvement in the Big Brothers Big Sisters youth mentorship initiative with The Y in Central Maryland, Moore offers her "Little Sister" Caitlin the support and confidence she needs to achieve her potential.

Q: What motivated you to become an adult mentor?

A: My original motivation was my grandmother, who was adopted. Throughout my childhood, I listened to her tell her story of being handed through one car window to another, like a sack of potatoes, on a dark country road. The fact that her parents gave her away and her mother refused to admit that she was her daughter until the day she died broke my grandmother's heart. My grandmother taught me the idea that family can be much larger than our own blood relatives; she taught me how to offer my love to the world

around me. I grew up as an older sister to a younger brother and sister and knew that, while I was a naturally nurturing person, I did not want to have children of my own. I also wanted to share the loving nature my grandmother instilled to bring a beautiful being like Caitlin into my own family.

Q: Why is the need for mentors so great in our community?

A: I feel there are too many innocent babies brought into the world who have incredible potential but were not blessed with a home life to foster their

potential. Our community needs to make mentoring a standard part of life so that every child can look to a community resource for help. Big Brothers and Big Sisters at The Y in Central Maryland has been a tremendous asset through its partnerships with the community and event invitations that make it easy to care for your mentee. In the end, you create a community of mentors!

Q: How has your relationship with Caitlin positively impacted your life?

A: Many people tell me all the reasons why they don't believe they have time to mentor, but few could imagine how little time it actually takes and the impact it has. At first, I thought I was supposed to be so impressive and make some positive impact that I could see. Within the first year, Caitlin started to notice how shaky my hands were. She would point it out, and I was never sure how to respond. Caitlin wasn't confused, but she said, with the innocence of a child, "I think you drink too much coffee." After an experiment cutting back my coffee to two cups a day, I noticed my hands stopped shaking! This is one small example of the positive impact Caitlin has had in my life.

Q: How do you think being a mentor to Caitlin has enhanced her life?

A: I took Caitlin to "Bring Your Daughter to Work Day" at my old law firm, and she got the opportunity to tour the firm inside and out. I hope that our time together has helped her find ideas of how she would like to construct a life for herself. She told me flat out she wants an office with privacy and a quiet work environment. My hope and dream is that showing her that this reality exists for her will assist her in manifesting her own path forward. □

—MICHAEL VYSKOCIL