

Big Sister Shirley and Dwanna *Making Learning Fun*

We often hear stories from our volunteer Big Brothers and Sisters about how they try and make some of their time with their Littles an educational experience as well as an enjoyable outing.

Big Sister Shirley, a retired schoolteacher, has been executing such “sneaky learning” during her four year match with Dwanna, a bright and eager eleven year old. Early on, the two enjoyed cooking and baking together... learning about fractions and other math skills. Plus, Dwanna now has a supply of recipe cards from their culinary sessions for when she cooks for her own family.

A couple of years ago, the two discovered they each really enjoyed reading (Dwanna’s favorite subject in school today)... and they decided to spend thirty minutes of their weekly time together enjoying a new book. Soon their reading sessions really paid off as Dwanna received the highest TCAP score (Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program – the state’s standardized testing initiative) from all students at her elementary school... needless to say, a huge accomplishment.

Through her relationship with her Big Sister, Dwanna was able to shadow a dental hygienist on career day - and has a greater sense of geography from a license plate project the two enjoy.

And the academic opportunities continue as well... just this month, Dwanna was invited to attend Martin Luther King High School, a coveted academic magnetic school. Even at eleven years old, some college discussions have already started... Yale, Harvard, and Princeton to name a few she’s considering. She wants to be a teacher, a doctor, or a hair stylist – and we’re sure she’ll be terrific at whatever pursuit she follows.



When asked what she’d like people to know about her Big Sister Shirley, Dwanna replied, “We have a lot of fun together doing all kinds of things – and she’s somebody I can talk to about whatever I want to talk about.”

We’ve always known that the children of Big Brothers Big Sisters were “tops” with us, but in some cases they are truly “top of their class!”