

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Wisconsin
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Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Wisconsin (BBBSCW) is continuing to change the lives of children enrolled at Madison Elementary School in Stevens Point, Wis. As of March 2014, there are 25 matches meeting at the school. Of these, two are Little Brother/Big Brother matches and twenty five are Little Sister/Big Sister. There are ten children waiting to be matched (7 girls and 3 boys). Program staff are also contacting UW-SP professors and students to recruit additional Bigs. In addition, one match is on hold as the Big Sister is participating in a semester abroad. While the Big Sister is gone, program staff are connecting with the little girl, reassuring her that her Big Sister is only gone temporarily and helping her to find ways to stay in touch and express her feelings

The BBBSCW program has a strong presence at Madison Elementary school, and staff work closely with teachers to meet the needs of children. One example shared by BBBSCW involves "Jill", a third grader, who was referred for services because of constant disruptive behavior at the school. Program staff approached her teacher to see if she thought the girl might benefit from a mentor. The teacher shared that Jill was disrespectful in the classroom, challenged boundaries, sought attention and lacked social skills. Jill is from a single parent household, and during the interview, the parent shared that she was doing the best she could with Jill, but was feeling very overwhelmed and frustrated. In March 2013, Jill was matched with "Lori", a UW-SP student who had previous experience as a Big Sister (in her hometown) with a Little very similar to Jill. Staff met with teachers and Lori and explained why Lori's role was to be Jill's friend and mentor, not a disciplinarian. This allowed Lori and Jill to develop trust and friendship. As the match developed, Lori provided positive reinforcement whenever Jill demonstrated healthy socialization and friendship skills. As a result, Jill's mother and teacher have seen changes in Jill. She is more respectful to others and is developing skills to calm herself down rather than be disruptive. In addition, program staff have provided support to the parent. She can call a Match Specialist just to talk things over or discuss different parenting techniques.