

Brothers and sisters -- Big & Little -- lace up for Bowl for Kids' Sake



By Brock Weir

There was a sense of déjà vu experienced by Jordan Learmont when she sat down to have a deep and meaningful conversation with her little sister, but she couldn't quite figure out what it was.

?As soon as I said, ?I remember when I was your age ??? I thought, ?Oh, my God! Did I just say that?? she explains.

It might have been a bit disconcerting at first, but as those instances become more frequent, the more rewarding they become for the York Region resident.

The conversation did not happen between Learmont, 24, and her own flesh and blood, rather it was during a conversation with Rebecca, 16, her Little Sister matched up with her through Big Brothers Big Sisters of York (BBBSY).

?Bigs?, ?Littles?, community leaders, and residents at large are due to descend on Gateway Café and Lanes this weekend to lace up for the annual Big Brothers Big Sisters' Bowl for Kids' Sake. The annual fundraiser, which is held in several locations throughout the GTA over the winter, is a significant fundraiser for the organization which pairs adults with youngsters in need of mentorship, guidance, or just someone to relate to.

After completing her post-secondary education, Learmont was looking for a way to give back to her community, but had little discretionary income to make monetary contributions. Inspired by her close relationships with her own sisters, she decided volunteering with BBBSY might be the perfect outlet.

?Being able to grow up with [my younger sister], influencing her life and trying to make sure she didn't make the same mistakes I did was very impactful on me and made me feel good about myself,? she says.

With that in mind, she went online and filled out application forms. From there, she took an introductory course with the organization where she learned about their matching program, boys and girls clubs, and other programs before deciding the one-on-one factor in having a Little Sister was the best fit for her.

?Katie, the coordinator, would describe [my connection with Rebecca] as awesome because we instantly hit it off,? says Learmont. ?She said it was one of the quickest matches she has seen. As soon as we met, we realised we had tons of things in common, so I really have to give kudos to BBBSY.?

Both love fashion, both love makeup, both love photography and Snapchat.

?She was basically me when I was that age!? she says.

After this initial ?click? it was important to build on that connection and forge a relationship. It was important, says Learmont, to let her new Little Sister talk and build a level of trust. As she talked, the issue of boy trouble came up and sitting in the car with her they discussed Steve Harvey's book ?Think Like a Man, Act Like A Lady.? blasted Destiny's Child's ?Survivor? and they set a course of action to resolve the issue.

?It really empowered herself to decide she didn't need to have that in her life,? says Learmont of when she first found the journey truly rewarding. ?For me, it is just seeing someone grow and change, and know I can help her in a way that maybe her parents can't be there for her. It's not to say she wouldn't survive without me, she is a really strong person and is incredibly intelligent and creative, but helping her change her thinking has been huge.?

This change in thinking has been a two way street as well. The experience has provided growth and additional perspective.

?I have learned equally as much as she has learned from me,? says Learmont. ?I have learned from her things I wish I could have known at the time, like the way she looks at things and the way she sees people. She is so positive it brought me back to my youth and being that way. I have learned where I have started and where I have come. It is so rewarding to know you can help someone like that and see the change, the potential she has and hopefully help her grow into that potential.?

Aurora's Bowl for Kids Sake gets underway this Saturday, February 21, at Gateway Café and Lanes from 1 ? 3 p.m. For more information and to sign up, call 905-726-2149.