

MEET TESSA & LILLY

UNITED WE FIGHT.
UNITED WE WIN.

LIVE UNITED®

Lilly is a spunky nine-year-old girl. She and her single, working mom, Monica, live in La Crosse. When Monica heard about Big Brothers Big Sisters of the 7 Rivers Region (BBBS), a local nonprofit that facilitates one-on-one mentoring for local youth, from a friend a few years ago, she signed Lilly up to be a Little.

Tessa is a 23-year-old 2019 Central High School grad. She has always enjoyed helping others, and she pursues this passion in her personal time as a volunteer, as well as for a living. When Tessa learned that BBBS had a long list of kids waiting for mentors, she signed up to be a Big.

Tessa and Lilly were introduced in February 2023. According to Alivia, a member of the BBBS team who gets the rewarding job of matching Bigs and Littles, it was very obvious that Tessa and Lilly would get along. Among other shared interests, they are both creative and enjoy arts and crafts.

Tessa and Lilly get together about every other week. In the 18 months since they were introduced, they have gone to local events like baseball games and movies in the park. They

even took a day trip to Henry Vilas Zoo! These are new and exciting opportunities that Lilly would not have otherwise had.

In addition to all of the fun, Tessa is someone Lilly can turn to for advice when times get tough. Monica is glad that her pre-teen daughter has a trusted adult to provide a second opinion, joking that "nobody always wants to listen to mom!"

According to Alivia, it's easy to see the positive impact that mentoring has not only on Littles, but on Bigs, as well. She says Lilly's confidence has blossomed. The time she and Lilly spend together allows Tessa to de-stress and not worry about her other responsibilities.

"I don't even see it as a volunteering thing," Tessa said. "She's just become part of my life, part of my family. And as the relationship has gone on and grows, I've definitely noticed that I'm making an impact in her life."

Mentoring is one of the many resources your gift to Great Rivers United Way supports. You can make a BIG impact on local lives right here in the Coulee Region. Please give now and help us foster mental wellbeing.

91%

of Littles report a strong sense of belonging among peers and feel listened to when approaching their Big with problems.

Source: <https://www.bbbs.org/youth-safety-well-being/youth-mental-health-wellness>



Great Rivers United Way