

# The BIG Walk Made a BIG Impact

By Sha Buchanan, AmeriCorps VISTA

Big Brothers Big Sisters kicked off its second annual fundraising event, The BIG Walk on Saturday morning, May 7<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m. at the Bluegill restaurant.

Roughly, it had been a two-month fundraising period, which gave all of the mentors time to raise as much as possible before the day of the event. The CEO of BBBS, Aimee Risser, announced the successes of the event at the end of the day.

Overall, over \$70,000 was raised in funds, which is \$20,000 more than what was raised for the inaugural event, last year. Of that \$70,000, corporate Bigs alone raised \$54,000.

Recognition of the top five companies were announced followed by top five individuals. All winners were rewarded with prizes and complimentary BBBS blankets.

Top five companies were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – AEU (over \$25k) won a free lunch wherever and whenever courtesy of BBBS.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Southern Light (over 10k) won a free breakfast from Panini Petes courtesy of BBBS.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Hand Arendal (over \$6k) won a free game for six people at Breakout Mobile.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Place – Willis (over \$3k) won a free round for 15 people to Port City Mini Golf.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Place – Morgan Stanley (almost \$2k) won a free round for 10 people to Port City Mini Golf

Top five individuals were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Mike Lapeyrouse (\$6450) won a one-night stay at the Battle House Hotel plus a few miscellaneous gift cards

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Royce Ray (\$6000) won a one-night stay at the Battle House Hotel plus a couple of miscellaneous gift cards.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Jackie Wilson from AEU (over \$2235) won a Battle House Spa gift card.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Place – John McClelland, board member (\$2100) won a Battle House Spa gift card.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Place – Tim Finnorn from AEU (\$1600) won miscellaneous gift cards from local vendors.

Risser could not conclude the event without giving one award to the most creative individual. Alicia Steiner of Hand Arendal won a \$50 paint party gift card for two because she uniquely raised funds by selling garden eggs.

The causeway is where the actual walk took place, which is a one-mile walk down-and-back. Once concluded, a party was awaiting for all of the participants: a space walk obstacle course, face painting, live music and for the adults, an open Bloody Mary bar.

The BIG Walk appeared to be a successful, relaxing and fun event due to several participants posing for a quick photo-op and taking selfies throughout the festivities, with signs saying, #MentoringMatters, #I'maBig and #I'maLittle, to name a few.

The BIG Walk is a fundraising event that benefits all of the matches currently in our mentoring program and aids in supporting the 166 new minority boys that we strive to serve this year as well. Without the help of others, Big Brothers Big Sisters and its mentoring program would not be as successful as it is today. The organization would not be able to help and change as many young children's lives without the support of others.