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Whether It's Turkey and Stuffing or Burgers and Fries, First Meals Help "Big" Time

SAN DIEGO - Back in 1621, the Plymouth colonists invited the Wampanoag Indians to share an autumn feast in the spirit of friendship. Today, sharing a meal is still one of the best ways for new friends to get acquainted. But turkey and stuffing don't have to be on the menu. In fact, for new friends matched through Big Brothers Big Sisters of America®, a burger and fries will do just fine. To help BBBSA matches get to know each other, The Jack in the Box Foundation has created the "First Meal" program, which offers new "Bigs" and "Littles" a free meal together at any Jack in the Box® restaurant.

Jim Sykora, 52, a new "Big Brother" matched to 12-year-old Jamie through Big Brothers & Sisters of San Diego County, said the pair's "First Meal" at a Jack in the Box restaurant in Escondido, Calif., helped break the ice.

"I was a little nervous before I met Jamie," said Sykora. "I'm used to dealing with adults, and my stepsons are in their 20s, so I'm rusty in the how-to-talk-to-kids department."

As it turned out, Sykora and Jamie found lots to talk about and lots to do - like fixing the four-month-old flat tire on Jamie's bike. An afternoon of trail bike riding and lunch helped the two new friends enjoy their first afternoon together. And Sykora intends to continue making meals a cornerstone of his friendship with Jamie.

"We plan on ending each of our outings with a meal," said Sykora. "Jamie and I made a list of activities we'd like to do in the future, and during lunch, we'll decide what we're going to do in the coming week."

Sykora also hopes to help Jamie open up through some casual lunchtime conversation. "I'm really looking forward to getting to know Jamie and helping him get through the often difficult times of growing up," said Sykora. "I fully believe kids need role models, people who can help raise their self-esteem and give them a headstart in life."

Like Sykora, Jamie said he too was anticipating their first encounter. After all, it was largely his idea to seek a Big Brother. Having never met his own father, Jamie didn't have an adult male in his life to whom he could turn. So whether they participate in activities that Jamie suggests, like fishing or rollerblading or one that Sykora recommends, like visiting the local science museum, Jamie said he's looking forward to doing things with his new Big Brother.

"I'm really glad to have somebody to get together and have fun with," Jamie said.

More and more children are benefiting from friendships created by BBBSA. A nationally recognized leader in youth mentoring for almost 100 years, BBBSA provides meaningful community and school-based mentoring relationships to millions of children through its more than 500 affiliated agencies reaching 5,000 communities. National research studies prove that children with a Big Brother or Big Sister are more likely to do well in school and less likely to use drugs and alcohol and exhibit violent behavior.

The Jack in the Box Foundation, a national BBBSA sponsor since 1998, has provided more than \$1 million in financial support and services through contributions from Jack in the Box Inc. and its employees, community fund-raising activities, and volunteer efforts. The Foundation recently announced its sponsorship of a national BBBSA school-based mentoring program that matches high school student "Bigs" with elementary school "Littles," and is being piloted in Houston, Dallas, St. Louis, Phoenix and Boise.

About Jack in the Box Inc.

Jack in the Box Inc. (NYSE: JBX) operates and franchises more than 1,630 quick-serve Jack in the Box restaurants in 15 states. With headquarters in San Diego, the company has 42,000 employees and systemwide sales of nearly \$2 billion.

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