

For Immediate Release: March 30, 2011      Contact: Jeanne Kraft, Public Information Officer, 903-737-7473

## **Binko named Regional Big Sister of the Year**

Big Brothers Big Sisters is proud to announce that Leslie Binko, a volunteer from Paris, was named Regional Big Sister of the Year. The award was presented to Leslie, a kindergarten teacher at Aikin Elementary School, on Thursday, February 23 during a surprise party in her classroom. Kaleigh, Leslie's Little Sister, had the honor of presenting the award.

This award recognizes extraordinary mentors in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program. All BBBS agencies nominate a Big Brother or Big Sister that has gone above and beyond and made a noticeable difference in a child's life. These nominations are sent to the Regional and National selection committees, where Regional and National Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the Year are chosen.



Leslie has been matched with her Little Sister, Kaleigh for nearly three years. Throughout their match they have overcome many obstacles and achieved goals together, including participating in two Paris Community Theater productions. They also enjoy spending time shopping and seeing movies. Kaleigh believes Leslie is "the best Big Sister in the world."

When asked the recognition for her commitment, Leslie said, "I was very surprised to receive the award! I enjoy spending time with children. I decided to sign up to be a Big Sister to help make a difference in a child's life. I hoped that I could make an impact and develop a relationship for years to come. I didn't realize how much I would get out of the relationship! It warmed my heart when Kaleigh told me that she wrote about me and our experiences on her TAKS test! It is very nice to be recognized but I have already received my award many times over! "

"We are very proud of Leslie and her dedication to her Little Sister," said Emily Neeley, Executive Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Texas. "She is a great example of how the Big Brothers and Big Sisters in our program can truly make a difference in a child's life."

If you are interested in becoming a Big Brother, Big Sister or Big Couple, visit [www.bbbstx.org](http://www.bbbstx.org) or call 888.887.2447.

Big Brothers Big Sisters provides an opportunity for children age 8-14 to form friendships with qualified adult volunteers. These friendships are one-to-one, supervised, developmental relationships that are proven to increase children's chances for success.