

City of New Orleans

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BIG SISTERS OF GREATER NEW ORLEANS: A Preliminary Impact Evaluation of a Volunteer Program

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MAYOR ERNEST N. MORIAL, Chairman

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VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Prepared by
The Mayor's Criminal Justice
Coordinating Council

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Big Sisters Program of Greater New Orleans has operated since 1975 to match girls in need of adult female companionship with Big Sister volunteers. In October 1978, the program received its first year of JJDP funding to augment its services with an additional 50 girls. Therefore, this preliminary impact evaluation covers the first 21 months of operation.

Until July 1980, the program was a part of St. Mark's Community Center and was under the joint direction of the St. Mark's Community Center and the Big Sister's Board of Directors. In July, 1980, because of a National Big Sister Organization evaluation that identified problems arising from the ambiguous relationship between the two boards, the program decided to sever its relationship with St. Mark's. The office was moved to another location and a three month grant was approved to complete the second year of operation under the direction of the Big Sisters Board. Furthermore, in June 1980, an ESAA grant which funded two counseling positions ended, thereby leaving only the program director as salaried program personnel.

During the first 21 months of grant operations, the program matched 45 Little Sisters with Big Sister volunteers, thereby exceeding the goal of 50 matches in 24 months on a prorated basis by 3%. During

the first year , recruiting of Big Sisters fell behind that of Little Sisters , and was reflected by the fact that the period between acceptance to match was 2 weeks longer for Little Sisters than for Big Sister volunteers . However , during the second year this pattern was reversed , with Big Sisters waiting over a month longer than Little Sisters between acceptance and match . This trend indicates that Big Sister recruitment is no longer delaying the match process .

The average length of a first match for first year participants was 216 days for terminated cases and 334 days for those still active . These match lengths are less than the anticipated twelve months and suggest that some inappropriate participants were being selected or that inappropriate training and/or matches were being made . As a result , the program has begun to accept more children from referral sources other than institutions and group homes , sources which may house children with problems too severe for a volunteer service . Additional analysis reveals that in the first evaluation period only 78% of the Big Sisters were formally trained before match , while in the second evaluation period this proportion increased to 100% .

Case folders documented 1.54 contacts per month between Big and Little Sisters , considerably less than the 4 contacts per month envisioned . In addition , the staff contacted at least one of the match participants an average of 2.07 times per month . A semi-annual

formal evaluation of each match was projected. However, such evaluations were not available for 16 of the 28 cases matched for over 6 months.

The impact of the Big Sisters program in improving academic performance and preventing delinquency in Little Sister participants is difficult to appraise. School data was available in only twelve of the folders to compare Little Sisters grades before and after match. In the case of arrest records, only 5 Little Sisters were found to have had contact with the juvenile police. To provide some information relative to program impact, two Big Sister volunteers, two parents, and two referring agencies involving a total of 12 matched Little Sisters were asked to comment on the program. From the responses, eight of the matches might subjectively be considered a success, with the remainder indicating mixed or negative results.

Based on these findings the following recommendations are made:

1. The major recommendation of this evaluation is that the Big Sisters Board of Directors and staff obtain a full-time counselor. This person is needed not only to screen Big and Little Sister applicants who have been pending through the summer, as well as those new applicants that will apply in the fall, but also to conduct training and orientation sessions and to monitor new matches. Without an additional position, the program will find it difficult, if not impossible

to maintain quality supervision while investing the amount of time necessary to develop additional recruitment sources.

2. It is further recommended that volunteer recruitment be expanded to include participants who, although they may not want to be a Big Sister with a close relationship to an individual child, may be interested in clerical, fund-raising, or group work. With the reduction in funds, finding persons who are willing to work on a voluntary basis will free the paid staff to screen and counsel directly the Little and Big Sister participants.
3. Because the prevention of delinquency in the Big Sisters Program is hard to demonstrate, in that there are so few prior police contacts to reduce, an alternative measurement of impact must be developed. Before the reduction in staff, research was done to select measures of delinquent and pre-delinquent attitudes for impact assessment. The Jesness Inventory and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem test had both been considered. While there are certainly questions regarding the validity of any sort of attitudinal questionnaire, either the Jesness Inventory or the Rosenberg Self-Esteem tests would be preferable to the present lack of objective measurable data. Therefore, it is recommended that all

currently matched Little Sisters and accepted applicants be given a pre-test to obtain the necessary baseline data as soon as a full-time counselor is employed.

4. Considerable searches in case files and other records were required to ascertain each participant's status for this evaluation. For this reason, it is recommended that all case folders be reviewed to insure that case status information on Big and Little Sisters control cards and in case folders agree. As a part of this update when a counselor is hired, formal evaluation of all match participants to determine match status in subjective as well as objective terms should be resumed. In order to effectively supervise matches, case folder and control card data must be continuously maintained to provide immediate case folder information.
5. To reflect comprehensive program activities complete attendance records for group events, rap sessions, training sessions and all other counseling contacts should be maintained in the case folders by the program.
6. Improvement in school performance is an important objective of the program and one of the two available behavioral measures of impact. As soon as possible, copies of all Little Sister's report cards from the 1979/80 school year should be obtained to provide the necessary impact data.

7. In view of the fact that this evaluation found that activities listed in the Big Sister Time Sheets added to the number of Big and Little Sister contacts by as much as twice those listed in the Case Narrative, Big Sister volunteers should continually be encouraged to return Time Sheets.
8. Finally, it is recommended that additional emphasis be placed on accurately completing referral cards. Part of the reason for changing locations was the fear that some potential participants were lost because the program did not have a separate telephone line or because they were confused by the programs relation to St. Mark's. Unless every inquiry is recorded, and information on the original source of information about the program carefully maintained, whether the caller is rejected over the telephone or whether the inquiry is from an agency, assessing the effects of the move and dealing with the probable changes in clientele will not be feasible.

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INTRODUCTION

The Big Sisters Program of Greater New Orleans has been operating since 1975 in order to match young girls in need of adult female companionship with qualified Big Sister volunteers. In some cases the girls accepted as participants come from single parent homes or troubled families in which the mother has not established a sound relationship with her daughter. Other girls are residents of group homes or institutions. In these cases, the personal attention a Big Sister offers is especially important.

Until July 1980, the Big Sisters program operated from St. Mark's Community Center under the shared direction of the St. Mark's Community Center and the Big Sisters Boards of Directors. When the program applied for full membership in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America in March 1980, a national Big Brothers/Big Sisters evaluator came to New Orleans to assess the local program. The evaluator identified problems arising from the ambiguous relationship between St. Mark's and Big Sisters, such as public confusion over clientele, name recognition, and conflicting areas of authority between the two boards, that led the program to reconsider its relationship with St. Marks. An additional personnel problem developed at the same time. In the second year of operation only the director

was paid through LEAA funds. The other two positions, both counselors, were paid by ESAA (Emergency School Aid Act) funds through a grant awarded to St. Mark's Community Center. In June, 1980, that grant ended leaving the Big Sisters program with only one staff person and an immediate need for additional funding. Because of these factors, the program severed its relationship with St. Mark's, moved the office to another location, and began an intense search for other funding sources.

On July 15, 1980, the program applied for a grant through the Big Sisters Board to finish its second year of funding, which was approved by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council's Executive Committee on August 1980. The grant with St. Mark's as operating agency was closed out on the same date. The third and final year of LEAA funding, to begin on October 15, 1980, will be applied for with Big Sisters acting as its own independent operating agency.

Throughout these changes in operating agency, location, and staff, the stability of the executive director has maintained continuity in the program. Nevertheless, the changes are reflected in the analysis. While in earlier years the matches were divided into LEAA and non-LEAA funded participants, this practice is irrelevant for activity since May 1980, because the latter category of participants no longer exists. Finally, since

the reduction in staff, new applications are not being processed until the program finds sufficient personnel to screen applicants and train volunteers. In summary, these contingencies have forced the program to emphasize servicing current matches and fund raising over other activities.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives as stated in the second year's grant are as follows:

Goal

To continue services to 21 girls currently matched and to match an additional 29 girls with adult female volunteers. These girls are being provided with guidance and affection which is lacking in their home environments. The Big Sister volunteers have weekly contact with their Little Sisters, involving them in activities geared to the development of self-esteem, trust, improved academic performances, and more acceptable behavior patterns.

Objectives

1. To continue the supervision and evaluation of at least 50 Big/Little Sister matches for an additional twelve months.
2. To continue counseling and referral services to at least 150 program participants (parent, child, volunteer) during the twelve month grant period.
3. To continue the improvement of academic performance of at least 50% of the Little Sisters as measured by school report cards.
4. To offer six recreational/social activities for all program participants during the twelve month grant period.

5. To provide in-service training programs for staff members to assist in the attainment of program objectives during the twelve month grant period.
6. To maintain case files and statistical data on each of the Big/Little Sister matches throughout the twelve month grant period.
7. To continue recruiting, screening, and training sufficient volunteers to replace those who have terminated from the program.

METHODOLOGY

Data for the second year evaluation of the Big Sisters program were gathered from project records, police records, and interviews with program participants. Control cards and case records provided information about the status of cases, including processing dates and screening decisions. In addition, the Big Sister Time Sheets and the Case Narrative recorded contact both between the Big and Little Sisters and between the staff and participants. The case folder also contained copies of available school report cards and evaluations of the match. A file box of cards held a record of the initial contact with potential participants and referral sources, and log books of groups activities, such as picnics and rap sessions, maintained attendance data on these events. Finally, the New Orleans Police Department Family Services Division acted as the official source on police contacts for matched cases.

Interviewing a sample of participants provided information on the progress and impact of matches. In these interviews two group homes, two parents, and two volunteers were contacted.

In order to make comparisons between the first grant year (10-15-78 to 10-15-79) and the second evaluation period (10-15-79 to 7-15-80) participants were divided into categories according to when

application was made. For all analyses, participants were designated "first year" if application was made before October 15, 1979, regardless of when matched, and "second year" if application was made after that date.

Unfortunately with the loss of staff and the change in location, some information was apparently either not recorded or not filed. The project director, together with volunteers, is currently updating those records. However, because missing information probably includes Big/Little Sister contacts, activity attendance logs, staff contacts with participants, and school reports, the analysis of those areas will most likely represent an undercount of actual case activity.

PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Goal 1 and Objective 7 mandate the recruiting, screening, training, and matching of 50 Big and Little Sisters during the first two years of the grant.

At the time of the first evaluation, Little Sisters were separated into LEAA funded and ESAA funded participants by the nature of the problem precipitating the referral. For example, most group home referrals were placed under the LEAA grant and most parental referrals were assigned to the ESAA grant. At that time, Big Sisters were not designated as LEAA participants until matched with one of the LEAA funded Little Sisters. However, the termination of the ESAA grant has required a change in these procedures. All matches made with Little Sisters initially designated ESAA and all ESAA Little Sisters and Big Sisters rejected before May 1980, are now placed into the non-LEAA category. On the other hand, all original LEAA matches, rejections made since May 1980, and all pending cases are currently counted as LEAA funded participants. These changes will limit comparisons that can be made with first year evaluation activities.

The program changed its Little Sister recruitment techniques upon the advice of the national Big Brothers/Sisters evaluator. That evaluation noted that the length of matches in New Orleans was comparatively shorter than in other cities. When the national

evaluator read the New Orleans case records, she noted that the Little Sisters accepted by this program had more serious problems than those accepted elsewhere. This seriousness probably prematurely discouraged many Big Sister volunteers. For this reason, the program has been recruiting more Little Sisters from schools and families than from group homes or other such agencies that deal with severely troubled families.

A brief explanation of the current methods of handling cases should make the analyses which follow more meaningful. When a potential Big Sister volunteer first contacts the agency, usually by telephone, the nature of the commitment she would be expected to make and the requirements of a Big Sister are explained. If she feels qualified, her name, address, telephone number, and source of referral are recorded on the referral cards. The staff person then advises her that she will be notified of the date of the next orientation session, one of which she must attend before her application can be further processed. At that orientation, the responsibilities and problems of being a Big Sister are explained and a film produced by the national organization is shown. If the potential volunteer is still interested, she is given an application which includes a request for character references. After her application is returned, she is given a code number. Her background, including her character

references and a check of police records, is investigated and she is interviewed. During this interview she is questioned about her interests and preferences in terms of her Little Sister's age, race, and other characteristics. If the investigation indicates she would be a suitable volunteer, she is accepted into the program.

Before she is matched with a Little Sister, she must attend a training session that introduces and suggests methods for handling the most common problems she will encounter. When the program finds a compatible child, based on mutual interests and preferences, the two are introduced. After this formal introduction, the pair are known as a match.

The application process for Little Sisters also usually begins with a telephone call. At that time, the staff person explains the requirements of a Little Sister, outlines the program, and sends an application to be completed by the parent or guardian. When it is returned, the Little Sister is assigned a case number. If the telephone call is from an agency or if the caller indicates referral from an agency, additional information is requested from the source of referral. If relevant, the counselor may also request school and medical records. The counselor then interviews both the guardian and the child. If the child is found to meet program guidelines, she is accepted. At that point the child becomes an unassigned

Little Sister and may participate in all group events. When a suitable Big Sister volunteer is found, the introduction is made.

To monitor the match, counselors contact both participants frequently. Big Sister volunteers are given Time Sheets to complete and return indicating their activity with Little Sisters. Guardians are also given forms on which to make assessments of the match.

In the first grant year, matches were required to undergo formal quarterly evaluations. During the second grant year, the interval between evaluations was increased to six months. If the match fails, either participant may be reassigned depending upon the reason for the failure.

As listed in the second year grant application the minimum requirements of a Big and Little Sister are as follows:

Minimum Requirements of a Big Sister Volunteer

1. Must be 18 years of age
2. Must volunteer to be in the program for at least one year
3. Must agree to spend at least 2 hours each week tutoring the Little Sister
4. Must spend at least one hour each week with the Little Sister involved in some recreational activity
5. Must be a mature, responsible person
6. Must agree to adhere to the requirements set forth by the agency for conditions of match
7. Must attend orientation and training
8. Must have a personal interview with staff

Minimum Requirements of a Little Sister

1. Must be 8-16 year of age*
2. Must have the consent of her parent(s) to participate in the program
3. Must have no severe emotional or behavioral problems
4. Must show a desire to be in the program
5. Must show some ability to relate to an adult female

There will be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, or creed.

*In some cases when special need is shown, a younger child is accepted.

DATA ANALYSIS

A demographic overview reveals that 15 black and 32 white Big Sisters having an average age of 25.6 years were matched. All of these had a high school education and 45 had at least some training beyond high school. Fifteen black and 29 white Little Sisters were matched. (Data were missing for one.) The average age was 10.8 years and the grade level ranged from kindergarten to the tenth grade.

Matches

In Tables 1 and 2, the status of all applications made since the first year of the grant are shown. Of 35 currently active Little Sister matches, 20 are LEAA funded. Of all 63 matches made, over one half are still active. As expected, the proportion of all matches made that are still active is higher for the matches made the second year of the grant. For example, 31% of the 32 LEAA Little Sisters matched in the first year, are still active, while 77% of 13 LEAA Little Sisters matched the second year are active.

Furthermore, Goal 1 stated that a total of 50 LEAA matches would be made over the first 24 months of the grant. On a prorated basis, this would require 43.75 Little Sisters to be matched in the first 21 months of operations. Table 2 discloses that during that period 45 Little Sisters have been matched, thereby exceeding the prorated

Table 1

Status of Big Sister Applicants

	<u>Total</u>	<u>First Year</u>	<u>Second Year</u>
Inquiries			
Total	713	481	232
LEAA Funded	--	--	--
Orientation and Application			
Total	152	95	57
LEAA Funded	93	48	45
Acceptances			
Total	87	57	30
LEAA Funded	72	44	28
Rejections, Terminations			
Total	47	36	11
LEAA Funded	3	2	1
Pending Acceptance			
Total	18	--	18
LEAA Funded	18	--	18
Matched			
Total	67*	55	12
LEAA Funded	47	37	10
Matches Closed			
Total	36	33	3
LEAA Funded	29	26	3
Rematched			
Total	6	5	1
LEAA Funded	5	4	1
Rematches Closed			
Total	3	3	0
LEAA Funded	3	3	0
Active Matches			
Total	34*	24	10
LEAA Funded	20	12	8

*Four of these matches were made with a Little Sister who applied before October 15, 1978.

**Number of active matches differs because one Big Sister has two Little Sisters.

Table 2

Status of Little Sister Applicants

	<u>Total</u>	<u>First Year</u>	<u>Second Year</u>
Inquiries			
Total	196	134	62
LEAA Funded	--	--	--
Applications			
Total	117	79	38
LEAA Funded	80	44	36
Acceptances			
Total	65	43	22
LEAA Funded	53	31	22
Rejections, Terminations			
Total	39	36	3
LEAA Funded	14	13	1
Pending Acceptance			
Total	13		13
LEAA Funded	13		13
Matched			
Total	63*	50	13
LEAA Funded	45	32	13
Matches Closed			
Total	36	32	4
LEAA Funded	30	26	4
Rematched			
Total	11	10	1
LEAA Funded	8	7	1
Rematches Closed			
Total	3	3	0
LEAA Funded	3	3	0
Active Matches			
Total	35**	25	10
LEAA Funded	20	10	10

*Four of these matches were made with a Little Sister who applied before October 15, 1978.

**Number of active matches differs because one Big Sister has two Little Sisters.

goal by 3%. Over the life of the program, 21 (45%) matched Big Sisters applied in the first nine months of the program; 16 (34%) applied in the last three months of the first year; and 10 (21%) applied in the first nine months of the second year. According to this analysis, the fall has been the busiest recruitment seasons for Big Sisters, and, if this pattern holds true for the second grant year, the program would exceed its goal of 50 matches by October 1980.

At the end of the previous evaluation period, 14 Little Sisters and 7 Big Sisters were pending acceptance. However, a year later, this trend is reversed, with 13 Little Sisters and 18 Big Sisters pending acceptance. These figures, coupled with the high number of matches made, demonstrate that the program is now recruiting enough Big Sisters to meet the match goal.

Screening

Tables 3 and 4 compare processing times for LEAA Big and Little Sisters. The data on time between acceptance and match reflect that Little Sisters are waiting less time to be matched. During the first grant period the waiting period from acceptance to match was almost two weeks longer for Little Sisters than for Big Sisters. During the current evaluation period the situation is reversed, with the Little Sisters' waiting period only approximately one month and the Big Sisters' two months.

Table 3
Processing Times *

Big Sisters

	<u>First Year</u> Average Days	N	<u>Second Year</u> Average Days	N
Referral to Orientation	24.32	31	19.29	31
Orientation to Decision	66.10	39	49.18	39
Orientation to Acceptance	66.10	39	49.56	39
Acceptance to Match	44.32	34	69.00	34
Match to Termination	216.31	26	81.33	26
Match to Current	334.18	11	112.71	11
Total Match	251.35	37	103.30	37
Termination to Rematch	37.50	4	35.00	4
Rematch to Termination	196.67	3	--	3
Rematch to Current	81.00	1	26.00	1
Total Rematch	167.75	4	26.00	4
Total Match & Rematch	243.19	41	96.27	41

*Processing times were not calculated when one of the necessary dates was missing.

Table 4
Processing Times*

Little Sisters

	<u>First Year</u> Average Days	N	<u>Second Year</u> Average Days	N
Application to Decision	24.66	33	24.47	15
Application to Acceptance	20.92	26	24.47	15
Acceptance to Match	57.87	31	29.18	11
Match to Termination	225.12	26	96.25	4
Match to Current Total	390.00 256.03	6 32	122.11 114.15	9 13
Termination to Rematch	47.57	7	7.0	1
Rematch to Termination	99.0	3	--	--
Rematch to Current Total	263.0 192.71	4 7	81.0 81.0	1 1
Total Match & Rematch Length	244.66	39	111.78	14

*Processing times were not calculated when one of the necessary dates was missing.

The pre-match screening time for both Big and Little Sisters has also accelerated in the second grant period. This acceleration may be due to the shorter time taken by the Police Department to check the Big Sisters' arrest records. In the first nine months of the grant, the average turn-around time for this check was 68 days. During the first twelve months, the average was 60 days, implying a decrease in turn-around in the last three months of the grant period. For the matched cases applying in the second evaluation period, the average turn-around time for police checks was 63 days but decreased to 49 days for unmatched cases. (However, in five matched cases and seven unmatched cases no date of police check could be found.)

Reasons for rejection of LEAA Big and Little Sisters before being matched clarify the program's screening decisions. Table 5 lists reasons for rejection of Big and Little Sisters before match. Because for most of the year Big Sisters were not designated as LEAA participants until matched, the number rejected is much smaller than that of the Little Sisters.

The length of first match for Little Sisters applying during the first grant period averaged 225 days for terminated cases and 390 days for those still matched, an average of 256 days overall. At this time not enough participants from the second grant period have terminated to make a meaningful comparison. Table 3 and 4 also show that

Table 5

Reasons for Rejection

Big Sisters

Not all references returned	2
Unknown	1
Total	3

Little Sisters

Need more information	3
Too old	3
Cannot set up interview	2
Little Sister not interested	2
Returned home	1
Moved	1
Guardian not interested	1
Total	13

when a match fails and a Little Sister is eligible for rematch, a second Big Sister is usually found within a month and a half. On an average, the Little Sister and Big Sister matches and rematches of the first grant period applicants, both current and terminated, have lasted approximately eight months. That average is less than the 12 months intended and suggests, as the national evaluator found, that either some inappropriate participants were selected or that they were inappropriately matched and supervised. Because of these short length of match averages, the program has been recruiting less troubled Little Sisters.

Recruitment

Tables 6 and 7 examines recruitment and referral sources for Big and Little Sisters. The recruitment source is operationally defined as the answer to the question, "Where did you hear about the program?" On the other hand, the referral source may be either the agency that first contacted the Big Sisters program or the agency that originally suggested that the guardian do so.

The sources of recruitment for Big Sisters show proportionally the largest increase in television and radio messages. The data also imply that recruitment from schools and colleges is most productive in the fall of the year, because all six accepted LEAA participants recruited through that source in the first grant year were recruited

Table 6

Sources of Recruitment

Big Sisters

	10-15-78 to 10-14-79				10-15-79 to 7-15-80			
	All	%	Accepted LEAA	%	All	%	Accepted LEAA	%
TV & Radio	224	47	9	20	117	50	13	46
Periodicals	40	8	6	13	3	1	0	0
Colleges & Schools	55	11	6	13	6	3	1	4
Friend	31	7	5	11	9	4	0	0
Big Bros/Big Sisters	18	4	5	11	46	20	5	18
Big Sister Staff	10	2	0	0	1	--	0	0
VIA	7	1	1	2	7	3	2	7
Brochure	3	1	0	0	2	1	0	0
Agency Served	7	1	0	0	5	2	1	4
Shopping Center	43	9	1	2	2	1	1	4
Other	19	4	1	2	11	5	2	7
Unknown	24	5	11	25	23	10	3	11
Total	481	100	45	99	232	100	28	101

Table 7
Sources of Referral

Little Sisters

	10-15-78 to 10-14-79				10-15-79 to 7-15-80			
	All	%	Accepted LEAA	%	All	%	Accepted LEAA	%
Family	64	48	1	3	6	10	2	9
Self	4	3	0	0	1	2	0	0
St. Elizabeth's	18	13	14	45	5	8	3	14
Group Home	11	8	4	13	4	6	1	5
Police, Probation, Courts	2	2	1	3	0	0	0	0
Schools	13	10	7	23	22	35	12	55
Social Agencies	16	12	4	13	14	23	4	18
Other	3	2	0	0	7	11	0	0
Unknown	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	134	100	31	100	62	100	22	101

after the evaluation was completed in mid-July of 1979. Table 7 marks the expected increase in school referrals and decrease in St. Elizabeth and group home referrals during the second evaluation period. The third year evaluation will determine if these children who have not been removed from their homes are more appropriate candidates for the volunteer service offered by the program.

Training

All Big Sister volunteers are required to attend a training session before being matched. This training includes techniques for dealing with Little Sisters' manipulative behavior, demands made by parents and guardians, sibling rivalry within the Little Sister's family, and the policies of institutions and group homes. Table 8 reports the occurrence of formalized training relative to the time the match was made. In the second evaluation period, the percentage trained increased from 78% to 100%, with 4 of those who applied after training was mandatory having no recorded training.

Supervision and Evaluation

Objective 1 requires that the Big/Little Sister matches be supervised and evaluated. Part of this supervision includes monitoring the frequency of contact between each Big and Little Sister. According to the goal, each Big Sister is required to contact her Little Sister weekly. Table 9 reports average personal contacts per month for each match and re-match over the grant period. The data in Table 9 were taken from

Table 8

Big Sister Training			
	<u>Total</u>	<u>1st Year</u>	<u>2nd Year</u>
Trained before match	34	24	10
Trained within one month of match	3*	3	0
Trained within two months of match	2*	2	0
Not trained	8**	8	0
Total	47	37	10

*Three of these applied before training was mandatory.

**Four of these applied before training was mandatory.

the Big Sister Time Sheets, and supplemented by a content analysis of the Case Narrative in which the counselor noted Big/Little Sister contacts.

Since the Big Sister's original commitment is for one year, "successful matches" could be considered those lasting over twelve months whether currently terminated or not. On the other hand, "unsuccessful matches" are at a minimum those terminated before the end of the twelve months period. Overall, as Table 9 shows, the average contacts per month for "successful matches" was 1.86 compared to 1.25 for "unsuccessful matches." The difference in contact times (2.55 to 1.13) seems to be greater in the first six months of the match.

However, all data reported in Table 9 are less than the four contacts per month intended. Reasons were noted in the case record for fewer contacts than expected, such as illness, travel, or disciplinary actions. However, it is likely that this represents a partial undercount of actual contacts. For example, of 53 matches or rematches, 22 of them had at least one Big Sister Time Sheet included in the case folder. Since these are an informal log of activities maintained by Big Sisters, they probably more accurately report contacts than do the Case Narrative which is one step removed from the actual experience. In 13 of the 22 cases, the number of Big/Little Sisters contact reported in the Time Sheets equals or exceeds those noted in the Case Narrative. In the remaining nine cases the Time-Sheets average 30% of the total number of contacts. Thus, having Big Sister volunteers complete the

Table 9

Average Big Sister/Little Sister Contacts Per Month

	N	MEAN
Total Matched Over 12 Mos.	10	1.86
Current Matches	4	1.67
Terminations	6	1.99
Total Matched 6 to 12 Mos.	18	1.35
Current Matches	6	1.28
Terminations	12	1.39
Total Matched 1 to 6 Mos.	23	1.69
Current Matches	9	2.55
Terminations	14	1.13
Total Terminated 1 to 12 Mos.	26	1.25
Total Matched over 12 Mos.	10	1.86
Total Matched 1 to 12 Mos.	51	1.60
Total	53	1.54
Standard Deviation		1.13

Time Sheets, seems to improve the accuracy of case monitoring and, in doing so, increases the reported contact frequencies.

A formal evaluation of each case was done once every three months during the first grant year and once every six months during the second evaluation period.* This evaluation includes an interview with both participants, the completion of a survey instrument, and a reassessment of match goals. Table 10 reports the occurrence of the evaluation forms in the case folders. One match of over 12 months and 15 matches between 6 and 12 months had no evaluation.

When a match is terminated, the reason is usually noted in the case folder. Table 11 displays the frequency of reasons for termination in matches ending before twelve months. The Big Sister more frequently initiates the termination, but the number of those simply losing interest is equal (5 each) for Big and Little Sisters. Since other reasons are beyond the program's control, an analysis of factors behind this loss of interest might benefit the staff in preventing future terminations.

Counseling and Referral

Objective 2 requires that counseling and referral services be offered to all program participants-Big Sister, Little Sister, and parents. In order to measure counseling effort, all contacts with Big Sisters and with other participants, which include guardians, parents, agencies, or Little Sisters, were tallied from those recorded in the Case

*A copy of the evaluation form can be found in the appendix.

Table 10

Occurrence of Evaluation

10-15-78 to 7-15-80

Matched over 12 mos.

Three evaluations	1
Two evaluations	3
One evaluation	5
No evaluations	1
Total	10

Matched 6 to 12 mos.

Two evaluations	1
One evaluation	2
No evaluation	15
Total	18

Table 11

Reasons for Terminations in Unsuccessful Matches

<u>Big Sister</u>	
Lost interest	5
Job problem	3
Personal problems,,change in situation	1
Family Changes	1
Illness	1
Moving to another city	1
Too busy	1
Too young	1
Total	14
<u>Little Sister</u>	
Lost interest	5
Moved to another city	2
Rejoined family	1
Family lacks interest	1
Total	9
<u>Both Big and Little Sister</u>	2
<u>Unknown</u>	1
Total	26

Narrative. Attendance at rap sessions and at planned group functions was calculated from the logs of these events. Table 12 displays frequency per month for each type of staff contact. On the average, the staff made two contacts per month with various participants of the match, slightly more contact than that reported between the Big Sisters and Little Sisters. Of these contacts, the bulk are between Big Sisters and staff. Sessions planned by the staff in which parents, Little Sisters or Big Sisters get together with similar participants to discuss problems, (rap sessions) are the least frequent form of contact.

At first glance, Table 12 reveals a questionable finding. In cases terminated before twelve months, the frequency of staff contact is higher than in more successful cases matched for over twelve months. A linear regression was done on all terminated cases to explore the correlation between Big/Little Sister frequency of contact per month and length of match and between total staff frequency of contact per month and length of match. The regression coefficient was a +0.24 for Big/Little Sister contacts and a -0.24 for staff contacts. While neither coefficient is large, the directional signs indicate that the more frequent the Big/Little Sister contact the longer the match, but the more frequent the staff contact with all participants the shorter the match. This finding is borne out by Tables 11 and 12.

However, a careful reading of the Case Narrative suggests an explanation for this negative relationship between staff contact

Table 12

Average Frequency Per Month of Staff Contact

	(N)	Staff/ Big Sister	Staff/ Other	Group Events	Rap Sessions	Total
Total Matched Over 12 Mos.	(10)	1.21	0.47	0.18	0.13	1.98
Current Matches	(4)	1.01	0.15	0.17	0.08	1.41
Terminations	(6)	1.34	0.68	0.18	0.16	2.36
Total Matched 6 to 12 Mos.	(18)	1.01	0.33	0.10	0.04	1.48
Current Matches	(6)	0.69	0.24	0.10	0	1.03
Terminations	(12)	1.17	0.37	0.10	0.06	1.71
Total Matched 1 to 6 Mos.	(23)	1.56	0.86	0.16	0.01	2.59
Current Matches	(9)	1.17	0.44	0.12	0	1.74
Terminations	(14)	1.81	1.13	0.18	0.02	3.14
Total Terminated 1-12 Mos.	(26)	1.52	0.78	0.15	0.03	2.48
Total Matched Over 12 Mos.	(10)	1.21	0.47	0.18	0.13	1.98
Total 1-Over 12 Months	(51)	1.30	0.60	0.14	0.04	2.08
Grand Total	(53)	1.27	0.60	0.14	0.04	2.07
Standard Deviation		0.75	0.77	0.13	0.08	1.47

frequentcy and length of match. In general, when the counselor suspects that a match is in trouble, contact increases with all participants to pinpoint the reason for the trouble and, when necessary, to terminate the match.

Group Events

Objective 4 seeks to provide six group social and recreational events over the second twelve month grant period. Table 13 lists four group events during the second evaluation period. An average of 12.75 LEAA participants attended each event.

Although this objective did not define the rap sessions as a group events, Table 14 displays the attendance at those conducted in 1979. (No rap sessions have been held in 1980.) Attendance at Big Sister rap sessions is almost twice as high as at the sessions for other participants. (Attendance at either kind of event--social recreational or rap session--was counted as staff contact in the preceding section.)

Staff Training

Objective 5 requires in-service training of staff persons. During this evaluation period, the staff attended two such workshops: a regional Big Brothers and Big Sisters meeting; and a workshop about citizen board development.

Table 13

Group Events

10-15-79 to 7-15-80

<u>Event</u>	<u>Total Big and Little Sisters</u>	<u>LEAA Participants</u>	<u>LEAA Matches</u>	<u>Unmatched LEAA Participan</u>
Skating Party	38	18	5	8
Movie	7	4	2	0
Jazz Game	24	4	2	0
Birthday Party	44	26	10	6

Table 14

Rap Sessions

Calendar Year 1979

	Number Held	Total Attendance*	LEAA* Attendance	Average Attendance
Parents Rap	4	13	4	3.25
Little Sisters Rap	4	14	3	3.50
Big Sisters Rap	6	36	20	6.00

*These figures include repeated attendance by the same participant.

Case Files and Statistical Data

Objective 6 calls for the maintenance of case files and statistical data. There are some informational areas in which file maintenance requires improvement, notably those related to match evaluations and school records. Other lapses in up-to-date status reports and attendance logs may be temporary and due to the loss of staff.

Impact

Three assessments of impact were attempted: school records, arrest records, and interviews with participants.

A. School Achievement

Objective 3 requires improved school performance in 50% of the matches. Of the 45 Little Sisters matched, only twelve case folders contained enough school information to compare grades from a school quarter before to a school quarter after the match. Of these twelve cases, five participants showed improvement. The ability to draw conclusions from so small a sample is limited.

B. Arrests

The juvenile police records were searched for all matched cases to determine if there were observable trends in delinquency history. Of the 45 matched Little Sisters, five had at least one police contact and were responsible for a total of seven separate incidents. Table 15 reports the nature of the police contact for the five girls. Of these contacts, six

occurred before the match. Of the remaining police contact, the run-away incident occurred after the termination of the match. However, these contacts are too small to draw a definite conclusion of impact.

C. Interview Findings

Because of the lack of quantifiable impact measures, a group of participants were selected to respond to questions about the progress of matches. This selection was not a random process, and was biased by the following considerations:

1. The Big Sisters staff was asked to select cases in which the match relationships would not be disturbed by such intervention.
2. Very short matches were excluded because enough time had not passed for impact to be noticed.
3. Some participants were excluded because they had relocated.
4. Some referral sources were excluded because they were found to have lost contact with participants or to have no one on the staff who was familiar with the participant's situation.

In all, six participants were interviewed by telephone and in person.

Those participants included two parents, two Big Sisters, and staff person from St. Elizabeth's Girls Home, and a Youth Alternative Group Home. These interviews involved twelve Little Sisters, over 25% of the matches made.

The first parent interviewed was very happy with the eight month match. She said that her daughter had been having trouble

Table 15

<u>Offense</u>	Nature of Police Contact	<u>Before Match</u>	<u>After Match</u>
Burglary		1	0
Theft		1	0
Shop Lifting		1	0
Runaway		3	1

with her school work and got into fights at school when other students called her names. Her Big Sister played games with the child that reinforced her school work and asked questions about her school day. The volunteer was able to suggest responses to the taunts that made the situation less serious. Because of this support and additional educational counseling and testing, the mother felt her daughter was doing better in school and was not fighting as much.

The second mother's response was less exhaustive, but she seemed well satisfied with the four month match. She said her daughter had been very shy, but because of her Big Sister, she was dressing better, acting her age, and accepting more responsibility.

The two Big Sisters' responses were mixed, and pointed out the problems in relating to some of these children. The first interviewed was a former Big Sister whose match had lasted over a year. She described a troubled family in which the Little Sister had taken on responsibilities beyond her years. Her specific ways of helping the child were to explain the situations of other family members, to take her out of the home and away from her duties, and to suggest that the family find someone else to do some of the babysitting for the younger children. The second Big Sister had only been matched for four months. She admitted that at times she did not like her Little Sister and found her spoiled. Nevertheless, the child seemed to like being with her. She felt overwhelmed by the girls "wildness,"

and doubted if she could help, but was determined to "stick out" the match.

At St. Elizabeth's Girls Home a staff member familiar with six Little Sisters commented on the match relationships. The first match has lasted seventeen months, and in this case, he felt the Big Sister helped the child to share and get along with people. The second match had been terminated after thirteen months. He described this Big Sister as weak because she had not talked to the Little Sister about the termination and had, in fact, refused to face her. However, he added that the Little Sister had so little faith in adults that she did not seem upset. He was pleased with the third Big Sister because her dependability, consistency, and cultural exposure were something he felt the child particularly needed. The fourth Little Sister has been matched with her second Big Sister for only four months. He found the termination of the first match well-handled and the child happy with her second Big Sister. The fifth Little Sister, matched for seven months, had been a challenge for the Big Sisters program. He said that she was so emotionally disturbed that at times she could not remember her Big Sister's name. He felt the program had done an excellent job of finding a volunteer who could accept this child as she is, and not be disappointed by her lack of response. The final match has lasted for eleven months. Although the pair initially had problems, he felt they now have a good relationship.

The only shortcoming was that the volunteer was a student and not in New Orleans for the summer .

In summary, he affirmed that St. Elizabeth's tried to match all their girls. Many of these children do not see their families and especially need an adult who will take their places, teach them "public" manners, give them exposure to different activities, and, in general, teach them about relationships outside the institution.

The last agency interviewed was a group home that housed two Little Sisters. The teaching parent was delighted with the first Big Sister. The volunteer had been able to "force" the Little Sister into social situations and become simply her friend without enmeshing her in another "therapeutic" relationship. For the sixteen months of the match, the Big Sister had coordinated her plans well with the group home's program. The second match lasted only four months and ended because of the jealousy of the Little Sister's family. However, while the match lasted, the Big Sister had cooperated with the group home and the termination was handled well. This group parent summarized her feelings about the Big Sisters program by saying that she wished she had more Big Sisters because they relieve some of the emotional pressure on the staff.

This brief survey describes subjective assessments of twelve matches by persons closely involved with them. While it is impossible to "measure" the levels of satisfaction, eight of them might be considered

a success, with the remainder having either mixed or unsatisfactory results.

Cost

Table 16 reports expenditures over the first 21 months of program operation. Allocating these costs per unit of service delivery yields \$664.64 of federal dollars spent for each of the 72 accepted LEAA Little Sisters. Furthermore, the allocation yields \$1,063.42 for each matched case.

Summary and Recommendations

In summary, the program is progressing well in many areas. It shows promise of exceeding its goal of 50 matches by the end of the grant year and has recruited enough Big Sister volunteers to keep the waiting period for Little Sisters brief. All processing times are faster in the second period evaluated than in the first and the program is responding to the problem of short match lengths by recruiting Little Sisters from different sources.

Nevertheless, problems exist in some areas. For example, the number of recorded contacts between Big and Little Sisters is less than two per month. Sixteen matches of over 6 months duration have no quarterly evaluations recorded. There are insufficient cases with enough school data to measure the impact of the program on school performance. And, finally, because of the small number of participants with police contacts, a quantifiable measure of impact

Table 16

Grant Title: St. Mark's Community Center
Big Sisters Program
Grant Number: 78-J09-0910-0189, 79-J09-0530-0213
Period Covered: 10-15-78 to 6-30-80

Date Report August 1980
Prepared: Glen J. Perret

Item	TOTAL GRANT FUNDS			LEAA CASH ONLY		
	Amount Budgeted	Total Expenditures	Balance	Amount Budgeted	Total Expenditures	Balance
Personnel	40,136.73	36,867.08	3,269.65	35,082.12	32,268.19	2,813.93
Fringe	5,228.20	4,852.55	3,375.65	4,809.81	4,367.30	442.51
Travel	1,241.22	1,223.29	17.93	1,216.22	1,200.01	16.21
Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supplies	5,044.80	3,793.28	1,251.52	4,859.80	3,718.11	1,141.69
Contractual	2,727.00	2,727.00	0	2,640.00	2,639.49	0.51
Construction	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Direct	2,551.05	2,304.03	247.02	2,488.05	2,257.01	231.04
Indirect	1,404.00	1,404.00	0	1,404.00	1,404.00	0
TOTAL	\$58,333.00	\$53,171.23	\$5,161.77	\$52,500.00	\$47,854.11	\$4,645.89

Note: Total grant funds includes both LEAA cash and City cash . match of 10%.
This report is based on unaudited figures.

on delinquency is lacking.

Overshadowing and contributing to these problems is the reduction in program staff. If additional staff positions are provided from other funding sources, the problems of collecting case folder and impact data may be solved. However, if funds are not located, more basic services will, of necessity, be curtailed.

In view of these findings the following recommendations are made.

1. The major recommendation of this evaluation is that the Big Sisters Board of Directors and staff obtain a full-time counselor. This person is needed not only to screen Big and Little Sister applicants who have been pending through the summer, as well as those new applicants that will apply in the fall, but also to conduct training and orientation sessions and to monitor new matches. Without an additional position, the program will find it difficult, if not impossible to maintain quality supervision while investing the amount of time necessary to develop additional recruitment sources.
2. It is further recommended that volunteer recruitment be expanded to include participants who, although they may not want to be a Big Sister with a close relationship to an individual child, may be interested in clerical, fund-raising, or group work. With the reduction in funds, finding persons who are willing to work on a voluntary

basis will free the paid staff to screen and counsel directly the Little and Big Sister participants.

3. Because the prevention of delinquency in the Big Sisters Program is hard to demonstrate, in that there are so few prior police contacts to reduce, an alternative measurement of impact must be developed. Before the reduction in staff, research was done to select measures of delinquent and pre-delinquent attitudes for impact assessment. The Jesness Inventory and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem test had both been considered. While there are certainly questions regarding the validity of any sort of attitudinal questionnaire, either the Jesness Inventory or the Rosenberg Self-Esteem tests would be preferable to the present lack of objective measurable data. Therefore, it is recommended that all currently matched Little Sisters and accepted applicants be given a pre-test to obtain the necessary baseline data as soon as a full-time counselor is employed.
4. Considerable searches in case files and other records were required to ascertain each participant's status for this evaluation. For this reason, it is recommended that all case folders be reviewed to insure that case status information on Big and Little Sisters control cards and in case folders

agree. As a part of this update when a counselor is hired, formal evaluation of all match participants to determine match status in subjective as well as objective terms should be resumed. In order to effectively supervise matches, case folder and control card data must be continuously maintained to provide immediate case information.

5. To reflect comprehensive program activities complete attendance records for group events, rap sessions, training sessions and all other counseling contacts should be maintained in the case folders by the program.
6. Improvement in school performance is an important objective of the program and one of the two available behavioral measures of impact. As soon as possible, copies of all Little Sister's report cards from the 1979/80 school year should be obtained to provide the necessary impact data.
7. In view of the fact that this evaluation found that activities listed in the Big Sister Time Sheets added to the number of Big and Little Sister contacts by as much as twice those listed in the Case Narrative, Big Sister volunteers should continually be encouraged to return Time Sheets.

8. Finally, it is recommended that additional emphasis be placed on accurately completing referral cards. Part of the reason for changing locations was the fear that some potential participants were lost because the program did not have a separate telephone line or because they were confused by the programs relation to St. Mark's. Unless every inquiry is recorded, and information on the original source of information about the program carefully maintained, whether the caller is rejected over the telephone or whether the inquiry is from an agency, assessing the effects of the move and dealing with the probable changes in clientele will not be feasible.

A P P E N D I X

Control Cards

B _____

Name _____
Last First Middle/Maiden

Home Address _____ Telephone _____
Zip _____

Employed at _____ Position _____

Address _____ Telephone _____
Zip _____

D.O.B. _____ Race _____ Contact _____

References sent _____ Received _____

Attended Orientation _____ Attended Training _____

First interview scheduled _____ Completed _____

Second interview scheduled _____ Completed _____

Decision _____ Date _____

Match _____ Date _____

Notes: _____

Reassignment _____ Date _____

Notes: _____

L _____

Name _____
Last First Middle

Address _____ Phone _____
Zip _____

D.O.B. _____ Race _____ Religion _____

Parent/Guardian _____

Employed at _____ Position _____

Work address _____ Work phone _____

Child referred by _____ School _____ Grade _____

Interview scheduled _____ Completed _____

Other info requested 1. _____ Received 1. _____

2. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 3. _____

Decision _____ Date _____

Match _____ Date _____

Reassignment _____ Date _____

Guardian Survey

I. School

1. My Daughter's grades are (A), (A-B), (B), (B-C), (C), (C-D), (D), (D-F), (F)

very good good fair poor don't know N/A

2. Her attitude toward school is

3. Her attitude toward her teachers is

4. Her attitude toward her classmates is

5. Her classmates attitude toward her is

yes no didn't know N/A

6. She participate in extra-curricular activities

7. She is an officer in a club or group

8. She has been suspended or expelled from school. How many times? _____

9. She does her homework

10. She has received awards or honors

All of the time Most of the time sometimes ac. nev.

11. She attend school regularly

II. Behavior

12. She can be trusted

13. She assumes responsibility the house

	ONCE	TWICE	+2	+3	NEVER
53. gone to the movies					
54. been to Lake Ponchartraine					
55. eaten in a fast food restaurant					
56. been to the Miss. River					
57. been to a park					
58. been to summer camp					
59. shopped for her clothes					
60. been in a play					

61. I feel she needs:

- a. to improve her personal hygiene
- b. to improve her eating habits
- c. to improve her relationships with people of other races
- d. to improve her speech
- e. to improve her color coordination of clothes
- f. to become exposed to new activities
- g. other _____

24. Self-Concept

	Most of the time	All of the time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
62. Her personal appearance is neat & clean					
63. She has confidence in herself					

Her relationship with _____

is good

82. Her family would try to help her if she got in trouble
83. She feels loving toward her family
84. She feels loved by her parents
85. Her parents understand her
86. She tries to be with people
87. She tends to join social organizations when she has the opportunity
88. She tries to be included in informal social activities
89. She tries to have close, personal relationships with people
90. She tries to include other people in her plans
91. She tries to have people around her
92. She tries to avoid being alone

ALL Most Some Seld Nev. N/

ALL	Most	Some	Seld	Nev.	N/

VI. Big Sister Relationships

93. She is able to talk to her Big Sister
94. Her Big Sister gets along with my family
95. I like the activities they do together
96. My daughter gets along with the Big Sister's family
97. The Big Sister listens to my suggestion, ideas,
98. We are able to work out difficulties

ALL	Most	Some	Seld	Nev.	N/

99. Has the Big Sister made a difference in your daughter's life?
100. How has she helped her the most?
101. What would you like her to help your daughter with?
102. What does your daughter enjoy doing the most?
103. What does she least enjoy?
104. What new interests, experiences has she developed?
105. Are you pleased with the Big Sister?
106. What problems have you had with the Big Sister?
107. Would you recommend Big Sisters to your friends?
108. Do you wish to continue in the program?
109. Do you enjoy the rap sessions?
110. What do you dislike about the rap sessions?
111. Do you enjoy the recreation activities?

QUARTERLY EVALUATION FORM

L _____

B _____

COUNSELOR _____

FROM _____

TO _____

PRESENT GOALS:

SUMMARY OF FOLLOW-UP CONTACTS BY PARENT:

SUMMARY OF FOLLOW-UP CONTACTS BY BIG SISTER:

EXISTING PROBLEMS, IF ANY:

REVISED OR NEW GOALS:

PARTICIPATION IN GROUP ACTIVITIES:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

DATE _____

SUPERVISORY HOURS _____

CONTACTS WITH BIG SISTER _____

END