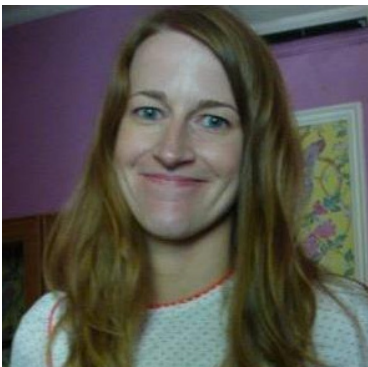


# Linked



## Mentoring – You Just Have To Be There.

*This post was written as part of the #Mentor series, which is tied to LinkedIn's student editorial calendar. Follow the stories or write your own.*



Angela Krasteva  
Senior Producer,  
Nickelodeon

When I first met Chelsea, she ran up to me yelling “sister, sister!” and gave me a huge hug and a drawing (the first of many) that she made just for me. Her mom gave me a big smile and I was in.

I had been in NYC for 10 years, and being a transplant from the Midwest – I had no family in the city. I felt the need to have people of other ages in my life, someone who could shake things up for me. I was so tired of going to the gym, countless music festivals, and brunch dates. I pretty much did whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted to. It was great, until it wasn't.

The first question people ask when they find out I'm a Big Sister is “how long have you done that?” Most expect an answer of a few months or maybe a year. When I say 7 years, most wonder how I deal with the commitment. Chelsea has never been a commitment to me. She is my sister and my friend. And like all the other important people in my life, making time for her is easy. We've had so much fun and the time has flown by so quickly. She's now 14, and starting to become a young woman. Watching her grow up, and being a part of her life has been a gift.

A few years back, when my older sister came to visit, I introduced my big sister to my little sister. I thought it would be good for Chelsea to see me as the little sister. All we did was go to the park and get frozen yogurt, but we had a blast. The 3 of us goofed-off, howled at the moon (which was nowhere in sight), and basically invented our own language. When we dropped her off with her mom we were saying things like “holla dolla everybody, alriiiiight” and “this little cutie is full of cutsies, okaaaay”. Don’t even ask me what any of it means for it was all done in the delirium of a good time.

Through my experience at BBBS, I gained more than a little sister. I also got a family. When I was single, Chelsea’s grandma would give me a hard time for wearing sweatpants. Her grandpa always welcomes me with a warm smile. Her mom talks to me like a friend, and gives me advice like a mother. And Chelsea, she is my little sister. Now that I am a mother, Chelsea and I don’t see each other as often as we used to, but we still make time for each other. Things change, but sisters will always be sisters.

It hasn’t all been perfect, there have been a few tears along the way, but all that just makes you closer. Chelsea and I have shared so much through the years and – like the time we hung out with my big sister – we’ve tried to explain to everyone why we had such a good time but at the end of the day, you just had to be there.

***Angela is a Big Sister at Big Brothers Big Sisters of New York City. To become a volunteer mentor or to learn more about Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC, log onto [www.bigsnyc.org/BeABig](http://www.bigsnyc.org/BeABig) or call 212-686-2042.***