



**Big Brothers Big Sisters  
of New York City**

THE POWER TO CHANGE LIVES®

## Numa my Mentor

*In this series, professionals thank those who helped them reach where they are today. Read the posts here, then write your own. Use #ThankYourMentor and @mention your mentor when sharing.*



I was in my early twenties, excited about the aspect of exploring the world, learning new languages and meeting people from other cultures. Living in Boise, Idaho, with my father was naturally only transitional. It was a period in my life that I used to save up money and choose the first country I was going to explore. I knew I wanted to travel to South America, so I decided to take Spanish classes. A few weeks into the classes, I met the person that would connect me to an Ecuadorian family in Ecuador.

A month later I said goodbye to my father and to my childhood nest.

When I first arrived to Ecuador I knew very little Spanish, had no friends and was clueless of the direction I wanted to take in life. Little did I know the impact that Numa—the father from the Ecuadorian family—would have in my life. Numa had an English Institute that needed teachers' support; in return for my help teaching in his Institute he offered me shelter, food, and love, allowing me to stay in his family's house.

As I taught English in Numa's English Institute, he made sure to talk to me only in Spanish so I could learn the language as fast as possible. He taught me the Spanish verb conjugation, Spanish idioms and sophisticated words that few people used. Aside from developing my Spanish skills, Numa invested his heart in me. He made me feel welcome and loved, and his family accepted me as their son. He taught me about the importance of patience in life, the value of goal-setting, and the gift of knowledge. Through numerous post-dinner motivational conversations with Numa, I felt emboldened to live life to its fullest. Because of Numa and his guidance I felt I finally had a direction in life. Because of Numa I decided to pursue my undergraduate degree in Ecuador. It is thanks to him that I made up my mind to dedicate my life to improving the lives of others.

It is Numa's mentoring that led me to work for Big Brothers Big Sisters of NYC. This was my way to support the creation of more Numas out there.

*Adam Schroeder is a current staff member of 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](http://www.bigsnyc.org) or call 212-686-2042.*