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For Immediate Release

## **BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF COLORADO NAMED LARGE AGENCY OF THE YEAR AND BOARD OF THE YEAR**

*Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado honored with two national awards for their extraordinary commitment to collaboration and dedication to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.*

**Englewood, CO (June 28, 2022)** – Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA), the preeminent one-to-one youth mentoring organization in the United States, announced that the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado (BBBSC) achieved the rare honor of winning two awards at the 2022 *Bigger Together* celebration: the **Large Agency of the Year Award** and the **Large Agency Kommerstad Board of the Year Award**. Through these awards, BBBSA recognizes agencies whose dedication and achievements have significantly furthered its mission of inspiring young people's passions and empowering them to achieve success in their lives and careers, while also honoring their board's exceptional commitment to collaboration and dedication to fighting for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI).

Led by CEO Elycia R. Cook, BBBS of Colorado is leading the way in building out the agency's "Big Futures" framework for innovative and post-secondary readiness programming. Demonstrating an exceptional commitment to JEDI, the agency also created *Black Mentors United*, a wraparound service affinity group that supports Black "Littles" and their families during this critical time of understanding the history of race in the US. The agency staff also continues to show involvement in various JEDI initiatives across the BBBSA Network, including Mendy Evans, the agency's LGBTQ Champions representative, who is an active participant during Altria Group LGBTQ Champions' monthly meetings, and CEO Elycia Cook who has been a speaker at external national conferences, sharing Network initiatives and raising awareness of the organization's commitment to JEDI.

"Under the leadership of BBBSA CEO and President, Artis Stevens, we continue to rethink how we empower and support young people in Colorado. We dedicate this award to the memory of the five Littles we lost in 2021 to gun violence or depression. They are a constant reminder that our work is not finished. We celebrate their lives and continue to roll up our sleeves to support children in our community, says Cook."

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Additionally, BBBS Colorado Board Chair, Doug Dell, received the **Large Agency Kommerstad Board of the Year** award during the Conference, honoring him for his outstanding achievements over the last year, including his strategic development and planning tactics, hosting record-breaking gala events, in terms of both dollars raised and diversity of attendees, and his work towards hiring a Director of People Operations who has since helped to significantly combat turnover. The board also hired BBBS Colorado's first CEO of color, Elycia Cook. The Agency Kommerstad Awards are named in honor of longtime leader, philanthropist and former Big Brothers Big Sisters of America board chair, Robert Kommerstad.

"I couldn't be more appreciative of the recognition", says Dell. "We are one agency in a large network of great affiliates across the country, doing the critical work to help children realize their potential and plan for their futures. I am encouraged and I look forward seeing our community impact deepen."

The awards ceremony was held in Indianapolis, Indiana, during Big Brothers Big Sisters of America's annual 'Bigger Together' National Conference, supported by Comcast/NBCUniversal and Centene. Nearly 3,000 in-person and virtual attendees from across the country joined to celebrate this year's Agency of the Year awardees.

"It is my absolute pleasure to celebrate the many accomplishments of BBBS Colorado over the and I am honored to be able to recognize this Agency for two separate, stand-out awards this year," says Artis Stevens, President and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. "These awards truly signify BBBS Colorado's extraordinary dedication to not only the mission, but to also supporting their local communities."

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### **About Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado**

Since 1918, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado has operated under the belief that inherent in every child is incredible potential. As part of the nation's largest donor- and volunteer-supported mentoring network, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Colorado makes meaningful, monitored matches between adult volunteers ("Bigs") and children ("Littles"), ages nine through young adulthood in Colorado. By the end of 2022, BBBS will connect nearly 2000 matches in the Metro area, which supports youth with social emotional health, college and career readiness, and develops positive relationships that have a direct and lasting impact on their lives.

### **About Big Brothers Big Sisters of America**

Founded in 1904, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is the largest and most experienced youth mentoring organization in the United States. The mission of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth. Big Brothers Big Sisters' evidence-based approach is designed to create positive youth outcomes, including educational success, avoidance of risky behaviors, higher aspirations, greater confidence, and improved relationships. Big Brothers Big Sisters has over 230 local agencies serving more than 5,000 communities across all 50 states. For more information, visit: [www.bigbrothersbigsisters.org](http://www.bigbrothersbigsisters.org).