



# PRESS RELEASE

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## Minor League Baseball to Honor Big Brothers Big Sisters of America Rising Star Students with College Stipends

*Twenty high school seniors receive funding in recognition of academic achievements, community involvement*

**ST. PETERSBURG, Fla.** — Minor League Baseball™ (MiLB™) and MiLB Charities today announced that 20 high school students nationwide will receive a \$500 college stipend as part of the Big Brothers Big Sisters Rising Star Students program. The award honors high-achieving students involved in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America mentorship program who are preparing for their “call-up” to college.

The Big Brothers Big Sisters Rising Star Students program further reinforces MiLB’s commitment to its communities and its charitable partners. In the third year of the program, MiLB is expanding its reach to even more deserving students and paving the way for future expansion. The 20 winners include high school seniors from 18 Big Brothers Big Sisters of America affiliates across 14 states.

Each honoree will receive a check and Minor League Baseball-themed prizes, and each participating Minor League Baseball team will honor its local winners during on-field ceremonies. This year’s winners, their nominating Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies and the local MiLB teams that will recognize them, are as follows:

- **Alexander Marcano**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Tampa Bay, Clearwater Threshers
- **Alexandra Capps**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oklahoma, Tulsa Drillers
- **Amaya Williams**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northeast Indiana, Fort Wayne TinCaps
- **Benjamin Schmiesing**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Miami Valley, Dayton Dragons
- **Briana Renee Alvarez**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Texas, Round Rock Express
- **Coby Bernharthorton**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Blair County, Altoona Curve
- **Daniel Rosenbloom**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Utah, Salt Lake Bees
- **Danielle Polion**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kentuckiana, Louisville Bats
- **Ivan Alexis Rodriguez Holguin**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central New Mexico, Albuquerque Isotopes
- **Jamir Jones**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio, Columbus Clippers
- **Katie Parks**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Middle Tennessee, Nashville Sounds
- **Kionnie Byrd**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Western North Carolina, Asheville Tourists
- **Maria Stephany De Leon**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Indiana, Indianapolis Indians
- **Marquavis Little**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Great Lakes Bay Region, Great Lakes Loons
- **Maya Le-Pedroza**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County, Inland Empire 66ers of San Bernardino
- **Nathan Scott Trovinger**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Capital Region, Harrisburg Senators
- **Romeo Gabrielson**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Mahoning Valley, Mahoning Valley Scrappers
- **Sophia Heying-Sullivan**, Big Brothers Big Sisters Columbia Northwest, Hillsboro Hops
- **Tyler Wetherell**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Great Lakes Bay Region, Great Lakes Loons
- **Yohanna Vasquez**, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Utah, Salt Lake Bees

Nominees were required to provide submissions describing their academic and personal achievements, college and career goals, and how their involvement in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program has impacted them. To be eligible, nominees were required to be “Bigs” or “Littles” in Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programs.

“This group of driven, hard-working students has demonstrated what it means to be a ‘Rising Star’ in their respective communities, and Minor League Baseball is honored to provide this stipend as they embark on the next level of their academic careers,” said Pat O’Conner, Minor League Baseball President & CEO.

“Big Brothers Big Sisters of America is so proud of these outstanding young people, and we are honored to partner with Minor League Baseball to celebrate their achievements in high school and help start them on the path to success in college,” said Big Brothers Big Sisters of America President and CEO Pam Iorio.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America has been an [MiLB Charity Partner](#) since the program’s inception in 2004. The mission of the Minor League Baseball Charity Partners Program is to provide national exposure for participating charities, expand current relationships between clubs and local chapters and to foster new relationships where none exist. In 2017, charitable giving by Minor League Baseball teams and MiLB Charities totaled nearly \$40 million.

**About Minor League Baseball**

Minor League Baseball, headquartered in St. Petersburg, Florida, is the governing body for all professional baseball teams in the United States, Canada and the Dominican Republic that are affiliated with Major League Baseball® clubs through their farm systems. Fans are coming out in unprecedented numbers to this one-of-a-kind experience that can only be found at Minor League Baseball ballparks. In 2017, Minor League Baseball attracted 41.8 million fans to its ballparks to see the future stars of the sport hone their skills. From the electricity in the stands to the excitement on the field, Minor League Baseball has provided affordable family-friendly entertainment to people of all ages since its founding in 1901. For more information visit [www.MiLB.com](http://www.MiLB.com).

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**About Big Brothers Big Sisters of America**

Big Brothers Big Sisters provides children facing adversity with strong, enduring, professionally supported one-to-one mentoring relationships that change their lives for the better, forever. Big Brothers Big Sisters ensures that the children in its program achieve measurable outcomes, including educational success, avoidance of risky behaviors, higher aspirations, greater confidence, and better relationships. This mission has been the cornerstone of the organization's 114-year history. With nearly 300 affiliates across the country, Big Brothers Big Sisters has served more than 2 million children ("Littles") in the past 10 years. Learn more at [www.bigbrothersbigsisters.org](http://www.bigbrothersbigsisters.org).