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PRESS CONFERENCE

– Announcing the NJ Big Brother & Big Sister of the Year –



Ms. Dorothy Perry speaks about her son's recent murder at a press conference honoring the NJ Big Brother & Big Sister of the Year as BBBS CEO Carlos Lejnieks, Newark Mayor Cory Booker and Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah Healy look on. Ms. Perry's younger son Jaleel is matched with the NJ Big Brother of the Year, Joel Ruffin through Big Brothers of Essex, Hudson & Union Counties.

May 25, 2010 (Newark, NJ) – Big Brothers Big Sisters hosted a press conference to honor the 2010 Big Brother and Big Sister of the Year for the State of New Jersey, Joel Ruffin & Angela Rodriguez. Mr. Ruffin & Ms. Rodriguez were honored by BBBS CEO Carlos Lejnieks, Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah Healy, Newark Mayor Cory Booker and Senator Frank Lautenberg.

Ms. Perry's Statement:

“Good Afternoon Everyone;

My name is Dorothy Perry and I am the mother of 8 children. One of my children Jaleel is a little brother in the Big brother / Big sister program matched with Mr. Joel Ruffin who is being honored here today.

I have a son, Alterik, who was murdered 5 months ago in a vicious act of street violence. Alterik was an all around athlete doing positive things when his life was taken away so suddenly. **I personally think that if maybe the young man who killed him had had a big brother or a mentor then maybe my son Alterik would be alive today!**

Mr. Joel has had a profound effect on Jaleel's life, not only Jaleel's life but also my entire family's life.

When Mr. Joel first came into our lives I had no idea of how important he would soon become. It was as if he was pre-destined to be a part of what was about to happen, for the tragedy that would come about. When I called to inform Mr. Joel of my son's death he said, "if you need anything Miss Perry we are here for you. And how is Jaleel and may I speak to him?" and from that day on Mr. Joel has kept his word he and his family had been here for Jaleel and my family every since then.

Jaleel lives in an environment where everyday life is a challenge. Jaleel and Mr. Joel are great together they talk, laugh go to the movies and other events. Mr. Joel has been a blessing to know him and his family. Although Jaleel has his father, sisters, brothers, family and myself he still needs someone like **Mr. Joel to help show him that life isn't just about violence and gangs.** There are positive things and positive people who are willing to lend a helping hand. Since meeting Mr. Joel 9 months ago life for Jaleel and my family has been very promising. The Big brother/ Big sister program has impacted his life in several ways. This includes his personal, educational and social life.

Jaleel thinks of Mr. Joel as an all around cool guy! And he's great to spend time with. He is funny and outgoing and a man of his word. Since the tragedy of my son's death it had brought Jaleel and Mr. Joel closer together as well as the family.

Mr. Joel along with the staff Big brothers/ Big sisters has connected my family with many other services that can help us through our tragedy. The one thing I would hope to see come out of my tragedy is that another mother not have to go through what I went through; and for another child to lose a sibling like Jaleel has.

If everyone, who could signed up to be a mentor with Big brothers/ Big sisters or donate what they could to the cause; then we could recruit hundreds and thousands of Mr. Joel. Who could mentor hundreds of thousands of Jaleel's and truly change the way our youth grow up in our Inner cities.

Nothing will bring my son back, but the only way to get true retribution is by guiding other young men and woman to success through higher education and programs like Big brothers/ Big sisters program.