

For over a week, protesters have taken to the streets around the country and around the world to demand social justice change after the murder of George Floyd and the tragic deaths of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and countless others. Images and videos have overflowed from our televisions and social media platforms. These images can be difficult to process and even more difficult to understand through the eyes of youth.

As an agency, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Arizona's mission is to ignite the potential of our youth, and we depend on the volunteerism and good will of people of all races to do that. The majority of children we serve are people of color and more than half of our volunteers are white. So in many cases we are matching middle class white men and women with black and brown children and many of those mentoring relationships are the most long-lasting in our program.

We believe relationships are powerful. Mentorship can bring two people from very different backgrounds together, and the beauty is that both benefit from the relationship. Both learn from the relationship. Both become more accepting of others who are different. Both become better because of the relationship.

Our mission has always been important and impactful, but it has become clearer to us that we need to become more intentional about this aspect of our work. It is our responsibility as mentors, parents, teachers, professionals, etc., to educate our youth not only about what is happening in our country, but how it affects them and how together we must all stand up against racism and social injustice. We want to provide more in-depth training and support to our volunteers and families, to help them understand the divisions that exist between two people. We want to be a place of healing and hope in our community.

Thank you for being involved with our program and for helping us change the world through the children we serve and the relationships we make. We know racism is a very complex and charged issue and it can be hard to know where to even begin; but we know that remaining silent is remaining complicit. We absolutely don't know all the answers, but we want to be a part of the solution. We have attached three short articles to assist in conversations with youth.

Together, we can make a better Arizona and a better world for all our children.

-The Big Brothers Big Sisters Family

- [Four Tips for Having Healthy Conversations with Mentees About Race](#)
- [Black Pain, Black Joy, and Racist Fear: Supporting Black Children In A Hostile World](#)
- [Talking To Children After Racial Incidents](#)

**TOGETHER, WE ARE DEFENDERS OF POTENTIAL**