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Newsletter Article
Mentoring Girls: What's in it for a busy woman like you?

January is National Mentoring Month. Have you ever thought about mentoring a girl? If you're like me, you thought about it, maybe felt guilty that it sounded like such a chore, then went on.

I thought about mentoring for years, and despite having very little experience around children and being worried about the time commitment, I became a Big Sister with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and the experience has been nothing short of wonderful.

What does a Big Sister or mentor do? My "little" and I have gone to the library, played basketball, and baked cookies. We've made soap, searched kid-friendly sites on the Internet, walked my dog, and attended concerts, plays, and the circus. We've painted, worked puzzles, and gone to the pet store.

In short, we've spent time together.

For busy professional women (and who isn't?), this may sound like quite a time investment. But the little things make a difference. One of the easiest ways to spend time with my little sister is to eat lunch with her at school. No, school food hasn't improved much since we were kids, but I get to meet her friends and teacher, find out what she's learning in class, open ketchup packets, and get a hug before I go back to work. She gets to feel special because she has a guest eating with her.

It is cliché to say about volunteering, "I get more out of it than I give," but this is certainly true of my experience as a Big Sister. I've built a special relationship with my little sister and her family, I've gained more appreciation for my upbringing and for the women who mentored me, and I've had fun! For busy professional women, this last benefit cannot be emphasized enough.

When was the last time you played basketball with a seven-year-old? Finger-painted? In this month of resolutions, it may be time for you to work on having fun again—and make a difference in the life of a girl.