

## Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central MA: Rich and Joel

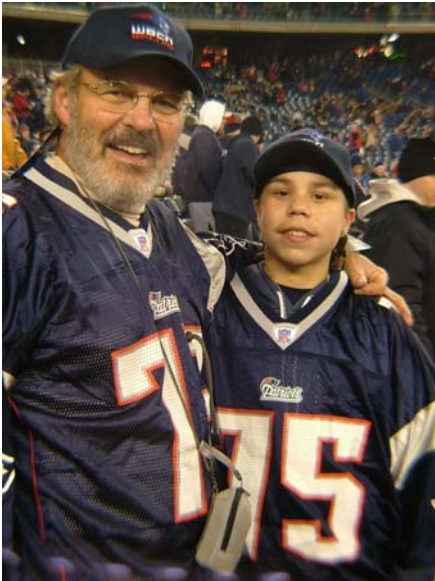
In response to 9/11, Rich applied to become a Big Brother and two years ago was matched to Joel. At the time Joel met Rich, Joel was living with his aunt and sister in Great Brook Valley. Before Rich came into his life, Joel did not have much direction in terms of where he wanted to attend high school and his grades needed improvement.

Rich stepped in as an advocate for Joel regarding his education. Rich met with Joel's guidance counselor and together they felt Joel would thrive at the local vocational school...and thrive he did! Now Joel is getting mostly all A's on his report card. He is taking up either health care or culinary arts at the school and has also joined the high school freshman basketball team.



Rich and Joel with Bianca Wilfork at the Patriots Playoff Victory

Rich also got Joel involved in baseball and now he plays for the Worcester Babe Ruth league. Rich says that, "all [Joel] needed was a little push in the right direction." Joel has made big strides in the past 2 years having Rich as his Big Brother. It has been a great match. Joel is now 14 years old. The two have become close friends and Rich has welcomed Joel as a part of his own family.



This past year Joel and Rich wanted to give back to BBBSCM so other children in the community could have mentors. Together they rode in the Rodman Ride for Kids and raised close to \$1500 for the agency.

Rich said he and Joel are life long friends and will always be involved each other's lives. Both Rich and Joel feel lucky to have each other.