

**For Immediate Release
June 2, 2016**

Local Dance Company Teaches Bachata to Little Sister Mentees!

Latin dance professionals bring smiles at Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Ocean State.

Cranston, RI— June 2, 2016 — Brandon Contreras of Paso Sensual Dance Company and three members of his dance team brought huge smiles to the faces of several teen mentees of Big Brother Big Sisters of the Ocean State (BBBSOS).

BBBSOS has a mission to help Rhode Island youth, affectionately referred to as “Littles” in the program, to learn how to make good decisions, avoid risky behavior and make a positive impact in their communities, with the help of their assigned mentors, or “Bigs.”

Heather Potter, Director of Outcomes and Engagement said, “We are grateful for Brandon and his team for taking the time to teach Latin dance to our Bigs and Littles. Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Ocean State is always looking for fun and educational experiences for our mentees. This was a hit!”

Contreras is passionate about Latin music, in part because he is a proud first generation American born in Providence to a family from Guatemala who loves to dance. His focus is on Bachata, a style of social dance and music originating in the Dominican Republic and now growing in popularity throughout New England. “We want to introduce everyone to this life-changing experience that is the world of dance,” says Contreras, speaking of his Paso Sensual Dance Team.

Bringing the Community Together

Karen Melo, a local professional with Baystate Financial, has been a Big Sister for the past six years to a teenage girl who is being raised by a single dad. Her goal is to serve as a role model for her Little Sister and to help her overcome some of the challenges she has faced in childhood. Melo also happens to be a member of the Latin dance community and was excited to share her love of Bachata with her teenage mentee.

“Many of the kids who participate in these youth programs have had a tough upbringing, often leaving them with social anxiety,” says Melo. “I was looking for ways to help my Little come out of her shell a bit. When my friend Brandon kindly offered to host a free class, I was delighted! My Little struggled to overcome her shyness at first, but ultimately she had a great time.”

To learn more about Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Ocean State, you may visit www.bbbsos.org. You may also find Paso Sensual Dance Company on Facebook to stay connected and be notified of upcoming dance events.

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