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Select writing samples from Big Brothers Big Sisters Los Angeles GALA Fundraisers

1. CHARLES SHAUGHNESSY Opening

In this town, it seems the busier you are, the more everyone wants something from you. Endorsements, awards shows, charities and there's just the drama of getting through rush hour traffic to the airport or home to see your family. There's never enough time.

So here you are. Welcome. Relax. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles really wants to thank you all for coming. Now this charity isn't exactly flashy or dramatic – our stories don't usually fit neatly into a made-for-TV movie, they're not really that short. There are no big scores and, usually, no dramatic endings ... these story arcs unfold over a lifetime. And our tales are subtle, as they take place quietly in the hearts and minds of needy children. But each story begins the same way: with a simple introduction as a sweet little child looks up into the eyes of his or her new Big Brother or Big Sister. And this happens thousands of times right here in our community.

So that is why we're here: to raise a some money and celebrate the work of a few people who have brought goofy grins to less fortunate children, whether it be through their work with Big Brothers Big Sisters or simply by setting extraordinary examples in their own lives.

2. FRED WILLARD Opening

Hello busy people of Los Angeles and the Inland Empire. Thanks for coming. We have a diverse crowd tonight with a variety of life styles, dietary restrictions and receding hairlines. Yet we are all for the same reason: we share a great love and concern for needy children. We know how precious this time is for development of a human being. Your childhood brought you here today... obviously someone did something right.

Tonight, we celebrate the disadvantaged kids who somehow found their way to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Los Angeles. I'm especially grateful to be your host because I learned through my wife Mary what a long lasting effect one-on-one mentorship can have on the life of an underprivileged child.

Not everyone can spare the time it takes to become a big brother or big sister, but any amount of volunteering or contribution will help bring love where it is so greatly needed. Later this evening, you'll witness first hand the results of that love.

My background is improvisation, built upon the premise that one must listen and react, following the "yes and" rule to move story forward. Tonight we encourage you to help move a child's life forward. Please don't be afraid to say "yes and." Your actions are guaranteed to make the world a better place.

Tonight we will show you how a new best friend can change a child's life forever. It starts as a very carefully arranged meeting between strangers: a grownup and a child... After a few baseball games, movies or simple conversations, an underprivileged child is exposed to a brighter future and new possibilities. This is the work of a Big Brother or Sister. You are our extended family. But don't worry, I promise not to show up unannounced for Thanksgiving dinner. Here's a little family video.

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