



Big Brothers Big Sisters
of The Georgian Triangle

CASE FOR SUPPORT

Start something
BIG

“By transforming the lives of our youth, by brightening their days and broadening their sense of the world, [donors] are opening their minds to new perspectives and to everything that is possible.”

His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, 2015

WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF MENTORING WE ARE BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF THE GEORGIAN TRIANGLE

For almost 50 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters of The Georgian Triangle has given children a solid foundation that builds the confidence and self-esteem needed to succeed in life. We believe in the inherent right of children to live and grow with dignity.

Thousands of children have been matched with a friend, a mentor, a Big Brother or Big Sister. Someone to spend time with, to share laughs with and to learn valuable life lessons from. So many young lives have been enhanced by the experience.

Imagine a classroom where a young child doesn't fit in with the students sitting around him. Imagine that he has no one to eat lunch with or to play with in the yard at recess - that he is excluded. Imagine that he has no one to invite to his birthday party or that he even has a birthday party. This is the reality for many boys and girls in the Georgian Triangle area.

Signs of low self-esteem and a lack of social skills may not be readily visible as they quietly develop in children. We know about bullying and the horrible effects it has for kids. We help countless children avoid being bullied or, more importantly, we ensure they don't *become* a bully because someone believes in them. Someone makes time to be with them and cares enough to help them see that they are worthy of friendship. Someone who raises their self-esteem and invests in enhancing their social skills. That someone is a Big Brother or Big Sister.

Dignity and self-worth come when caring adults take the time to reach out to children and help them to see that they are important, they are fun and they are worthy! Every child has an inherent right to this feeling and you can help make this happen.

WHY BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS?

It's simple – we are the experts. We have been matching children with caring volunteers in this community for generations. For one hundred years, Big Brothers Big Sisters has been making a positive difference in the lives of our nation's youth by developing and implementing a wide range of mentoring programs. We offer one-to-one and group programs in school and outside of school.

Today, life is busy. The families in our program are diverse, from single parent, two parent families, grandparents raising their grandkids, families facing challenges and those



who do not have extended family living close by. The value of having a mentor who can devote time to a child and their interests is a wonderful thing and we thank families for sharing their children with us. Big Brothers Big Sisters is there for them. Our programs help the entire family and have a positive impact on every member of our community, including you.

Making the Big Brothers Big Sisters programs available in our community depends on you. Your donation helps kids in Collingwood, Wasaga Beach, Clearview Township, Town of Blue Mountains and Meaford. Your support allows our professional casework staff to do their job of protecting children and volunteers. Your donation sends kids to camp and other valuable group activities. It provides healthy snacks and space for homework clubs. It helps us to spread the word and recruit new volunteers into the program and allows us to screen, train and support every mentor in our program to make sure they have the best match possible – and all this is free for the child - this is what we do every day.

Witnessing the transition of a child into a confident, concerned and motivated young person is a remarkable thing. Helping them grow into a successful, responsible member of our community and society is even more satisfying.



ABOUT US

Volunteers and young people in our programs experience the magic of everyday moments that are shared through friendship.

We foster and support positive mentoring relationships within our community. Our pledge is to offer a quality mentoring experience to any child in our community who needs one.

Our vision is that every child in the Georgian Triangle, who needs a mentor, has a mentor!

We believe all children should have the opportunity to reach their full potential, as individuals and citizens – that by doing so, they will not only do well, they will



also do good. By changing the course of young lives, we change the course of a community's future. Reducing poverty and unemployment, creating safer schools and neighbourhoods, and inspiring renewed optimism for growth are all possible when we work with kids. By opening a child's eyes to what is, we open their minds to what can be.

We all know how important positive role models are for young people. Our volunteer mentors serve as role models. Teaching by example, they show kids the importance of giving and giving back, of staying in school, and of having respect for family, friends and community.



OUR PROGRAMS

Mentorship is the backbone of all of our programs. We believe it is the most effective way to create positive relationships with children.

The *Littles*, our kids, benefit from quality time spent with the adult mentor, the *Big*. For the mentor, it's a chance to have fun and feel like a kid again while making a significant difference in a child's life.

Successful mentoring relationships are supported by our highly qualified staff and:

- ❖ Recruiting great role models
- ❖ Training the *Big* and the *Little*
- ❖ Matching great *Bigs* with *Littles* from our waiting list
- ❖ Monitoring and supporting their friendship so that the impact is as strong as it can be.

Traditional One-to-One Mentoring: This is our most successful program. The relationships that are built are special and very meaningful for all involved. Life lessons are learned and have a long-term impact on the child's positive attitude, friendships, education and future aspirations.

In-School Mentoring: This program is geared towards those volunteers who cannot make the full time commitment of the traditional program but still want to be there for a child. Activities are designed and implemented to introduce and promote positive skills development and happens at school during the school day.

Our programs work!

We have a gift for "making the match" that is key to helping kids. The relationships our agency creates are special (positive interaction between a child and an adult), and very meaningful for those involved. Imagine how your donation can help us strengthen these relationships in our communities.

Working with others so that every child who needs a mentor, has a mentor

We are linked to other organizations and agencies in the community who understand the value of relationship building. They include elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools; Children's Aid Service; social service clubs; essential service organizations such as the police, hospital and fire department; and other community-based organizations and groups.

Starting something incredible

What often starts as an adult-child relationship often turns into a lifelong friendship.

Putting safety and well-being first

Nothing outweighs the safety of children. It is our highest priority. We involve the children's parents, which encourages positive relationship building. Staff has regular visits/contacts with the parents, child and volunteer throughout the relationship.

Our comprehensive system of checks ensures that we protect our kids and volunteers. Our volunteer screening process is thorough. We do police checks, reference checks, face-to-face interviews, home visits, and training.

Child safety is behind everything we do and it starts right with our kids. We teach them how to keep themselves safe. We show them that they are valuable and worthy and what to do if they don't feel safe. We talk to them about who they can trust and talk to and we give them the necessary tools to protect themselves. Teaching child safety to parents and *Bigs* is important too as they are major partners in the Big Brothers Big Sisters programs.

Changing outcomes

Our goal is to provide the children within our community with positive mentors, but also to introduce kids to alternative approaches to life's challenges. This means positive changes for their world and ours. Your support of our children today is an investment in our leaders of tomorrow.

Nationally, our *Little*s go on to graduate from high school at a rate 20 percent higher than the national average and more *Little*s graduate from college or university compared to others in their age group. It's rewarding to know that 78 percent of *Little*s who came from a social assistance background no longer rely on this form of income. We provide *Little*s with the support and encouragement they need to become leaders of tomorrow. Your donation means you contribute to these successes.



Whether it's in the form of **time** or **money**, there is no more important investment you can make than by helping children realize and share their full potential.

Increasing our impact

We need your support to reach more children. Our agency currently runs at an extremely high efficiency. However, we are ready to expand services by increasing our one-to-one matches. Why do we want to do this? The simple fact is we need to.

Experience tells us that kids want and need a mentor in their lives. Despite the success of our programs over the years, the one area that challenges our agency is the growing number of children waiting for service.

For every two children served, another child can spend up to a year or more waiting for a Big Brother or Sister. Think about the difference that can be made if this child is mentored sooner. The unfortunate reality is that our agency does not have the financial means to meet this very real need. With no guaranteed source of income, our agency relies on the ongoing financial support of our donors just to maintain our current services and programs..

Donations from people like you help us respond to the growing needs of our community.

Turning your support into action

Our goal is simple. Develop partnerships in our community so that we can provide more mentors to every child who needs one. To achieve this goal, we need the support of people like you in our community.

Your contribution of any amount makes a meaningful impact on our programs and services, but more importantly, you will make a meaningful impact in a child's life.

Some positive details may assist with your decision to support our agency.

- ❖ We have a balanced annual budget of around \$350,000.
- ❖ Our agency pulls in community donations to support programs, supplies, mentor recruitment, training and safety of our *little*s.
- ❖ We respond to the ongoing needs of our community by adjusting our programs regularly while staying true to our mandate to provide a **positive mentoring experience for any child in our area who needs one.**

Additional information, including our most recent audited financial statements, is available upon request.

Whether it's in the form of time or money, there is no more important investment you can make than helping children realize and share their full potential.

Currently, we serve about **348** children each year, yet many more need our help. Help us make a difference for kids who are still waiting for a mentor.



A Letter from one of our littles....

How is my life different since I received a mentor? Quite simply put, it's better.

I met my Big Sister, Susan, halfway through grade five and now I am in grade eight. Before my mentor, I was close to the shyest person in my school. I probably got the worst grades, too. I felt like I didn't fit in and had close to no friends. I felt unloved by teachers and students alike.

When I met my mentor, she seemed to be the only person who understood me. Big Brothers Big Sisters did an excellent job matching Susan and me, because we are very much alike and she is willing to listen. She was the first person who would listen to how I felt about myself and others.

We meet once a week at my school and we talk about things like food, cooking, bullying, schoolwork, volunteering, job possibilities, family, personal hygiene, current events and we read stories. I believe that, because of these things we talk about, I am more confident now.

I now bake brownies and peanut butter cookies for my friends and family. I've learned to endure the bullying at school. Because of this and more confidence, I have received honour roll five times, earning me a silver medal. I've learned to release my creative thoughts.

My hope is that Susan and I will continue to be together until grade twelve and in the years to come. She has inspired me to become a mentor someday, something I would do to help someone else like me. But I won't have to wait that long. Mentoring is helping others. It's teaching them, being friends.

I'm so glad I got a mentor. I almost failed grade five, and now I prevent others from failure. I have more friends than before and I am happy. I now believe I am smart, I am pretty, and I can do anything!

BECAUSE EVERY CHILD IS WORTHY

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*Thank you for helping start something **BIG** today!
With your donation, you are helping to sustain
the much needed mentoring services in our
communities.*

