



**Big Brothers
Big Sisters**
OF ST. THOMAS-ELGIN

ANNUAL REPORT
2021



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Cover Photos

Featured on the front cover are four new volunteers who signed up to be mentors in 2021. With all the challenges and uncertainty Covid has presented, these individuals decided to make a difference in the lives of kids who have been waiting for that special friend. We are thankful to all our mentors who stepped up, stayed the course and made an impact. We are especially grateful to all the new volunteers who decided it was time to start igniting potential in our children and youth in 2021.





EXECUTIVE ADDRESS

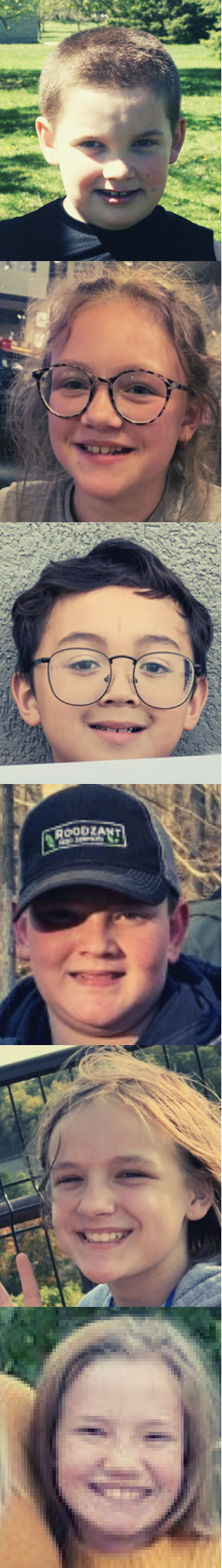
Reflecting back on 2021 a roller coaster comes to mind. No one could have predicted how severe the pandemic and its impact would be on our work, our communities and our families that we serve.

The global pandemic continued to amplify the critical need for our mentoring programs, increasing the need to stay connected with our children and their families. It was also critical for us to reach out and connect with some of the most vulnerable youth at a time when social interactions were restricted.

Regardless of the method of match connections, the agency was committed to providing young people support at a time when they needed it most. Throughout the year as restrictions and colours of safety were introduced to communities, our staff team and all members of the Board of Directors, rolled with the ebbs and flow with a sense of creativity, extra planning and an unwavering dedication to our programming efforts. To say our staff deserve a huge amount of credit for working endless hours, in office and remotely, to ensure that the pandemic did not interrupt the delivery of our programs, is an understatement. Not only were they faced with young people needing more support than ever, they found themselves providing additional support to caregivers and mentors who were also trying to navigate the new reality.

The financial resources needed to support our programs is a vital piece of our agencies success. Our marketing/fund development staff person showed a tremendous amount of determination to step up to the challenge of bringing the financial resources needed into the agency, in a year that we knew would be difficult to execute our regular fundraising events. Her creative fundraising ideas of our St.Patty's survivor virtual event and our Bake for Kids Sake events were both great additions and successes for our agency.





EXECUTIVE ADDRESS CON'T

Through close budget monitoring, grant writing and new, creative fundraising, the agency was able to continue without the requirement of cutting any programs.

Our mentors also deserve a standing ovation, as they stepped up to the challenge and realized that connecting to young people was more important now than it had ever been. We were able to connect with 270 children and youth throughout the year in all programming aspects and supports that our agency provided.

Donors, sponsors, mentors, volunteers and staff all came together to rally behind our youth and we are so very thankful for each and every one of you. Your efforts have ensured that Brothers Big Sisters of St. Thomas-Elgin will continue to be well positioned to play a transformative role for Elgin County children and youth by igniting their potential and empowering their success through mentorship.



Barb Matthews
Executive Director



Hank Zehr
President,
Board of Directors



OUR MISSION AND VISION

Our mission is to enable life-changing mentoring relationships to ignite the power and potential of all young people so they can realize their full potential.

THEORY OF CHANGE

In 2019, Big Brothers Big Sisters across Canada adopted a new look and launched a national Theory of Change that provided a clearer picture of our path to supporting young people and making change. We have been excited to move this work forward through our work in the community.

HOW DO WE IGNITE POTENTIAL?

- By intentionally recruiting based on the needs of our community's young people
- By matching young people with a professionally screened volunteer mentor
- By mentoring and supporting that match with a professional caseworker
- By training and supporting the mentor, the mentee and the family
- By building a Developmental Relationship between the mentor and the mentee that: Expresses Care; Challenges Growth; Provides Support; Shares Power; and Expands Possibilities
- By graduating the match relationship towards natural support

WHAT IS THE IMPACT?

Young people graduate our programs with measureable outcomes:

- Social Emotional Competence; relationship skills, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management and self-awareness
- Mental Health & Wellbeing; positive identity, mental wellness, and social inclusion & empowerment
- Educational Engagement & Employment Readiness: school connectedness, commitment to learning, and enhanced constructive use of time





WHO WE SERVE

270

Children & Youth

were served by our agency

67

Volunteers

mentored our youth in 1:1 programs as well as group programs

139

Youth

were served in 1:1 mentoring programs as well as school based and agency group programs

32

Friends of the Agency

supported the agency by serving on committees, assisting with events and fundraisers

2021 truly reflected a year of navigation and ongoing advocacy and support for our families. Many thanks to our volunteers who remained connected with our youth throughout a year of Covid-19 challenges.



OUR FEATURED PROGRAMS



The traditional Bigs mentoring programs provide youth between ages 6-18, with a role model to talk to and share the experiences of growing up with. Through regular outings, a relationship is developed between the mentor and the mentee built on trust and common interests, and is supported by our experienced case-workers. The Bigs mentoring program usually requires a regularly scheduled outing once a week for 1-3 hours each and a minimum of a one year commitment.



The In-School mentoring program provides youth from grades 1-8 with a role model and a friend to talk to and share the experiences of growing up within school grounds. For one hour a week, mentors meet with their mentee and engage in activities such as board games, crafts or just hang out on school grounds.



Go Girls! Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds is a mentor-lead, seven session program for female identifying participants between ages 10-14 that incorporates fun, educational games and activities designed to stimulate self-reflection and group discussion. Each session addresses the topics of active living, balanced eating, and feeling good.



OUR FEATURED PROGRAMS CON'T



Game On! Eat Smart, Play Smart, Live Smart is a 7-week group mentoring program for male identifying participants between ages 10-14. Through non-traditional physical activities, complemented with healthy eating support, participants are engaged in life skills, communication, and emotional health discussions designed to engage participants in the pursuit of life-long healthy lifestyles.



The BBBS Big G mentorship program aims to create and strengthen intergenerational relationships through a one-to-one community-based program. A mentee aged 6-18 is matched with a mentor aged 55+ based on mutual experiences and shared interests. The pair meet for 4-8 hours per month in the community and build a healthy, caring relationship. This grandparent/child type relationship will also give you the opportunity to expand your network, increase your social connections and explore the community all while influencing the next generation to be the best they can be.

In 2021 equity, diversity and inclusivity were acknowledged as a priority as we worked to share with our community that we are a safe space for kids to feel seen and heard.

The challenges of Covid kept us pivoting from in-person to virtual platforms to connect and keep our families and Bigs safe and engaged.



OUR FUNDERS & DONORS

We are very thankful for the continued support of our major donors and community partners. It is only through the generosity of our caring community that we are able to serve so many at-risk children and youth in St. Thomas and Elgin County, with life-changing mentoring programs.

COMMUNITY DONORS



Support provided by



An agency of the Government of Ontario



Ministry of Education



United Way
Elgin Middlesex



EVENT & AGENCY SUPPORTERS

Ainslee Tracey, Royal Lepage Triland Realty

Ansell's Awards and Specialties

The Auto Guys

Bookkeeping Plus

Canadale Nurseries

Caps Off Brewery

Care Chiropractic

Centennial Sports Club

Century Sound

Collier Homes

Crown of Jewels

Debbie Hamilton, The Co-operators

Dejardins, John Bruschetto,

Don & Hazel Williams Charitable Fnd

Doug Tarry Homes

Dowler Karn

Element Modern Timber Buildings

Entegrus Fibre

Establish Media

Ferguson Dimeo Law

Game Over Baby

Geerlinks Home Hardware

Giant Tiger

Grandma's Oven

Hayhoe Homes

The Ice Box

John Roberts Signature Homes

Manulife Securities, Brett Fox, Steve Malone

Masco Canada

MP Custom Homes

Mugford Shoes & Clothing

OMAC Mortgages

Pleasant Valley Trout Farm

Queen's Line Automotive

Reith & Associates

Reliance Home Comfort

Roy Inch & Sons

Shaw's Ice Cream

Smart Panda

Stay True Tattoo

Steelway Building Systems

St. Thomas Anglican Church

St. Thomas Elgin Home Builders Assoc.

St. Thomas Optimist Club

St. Thomas Police Assoc.

Yarmouth Group

2 Dogs Candles

Mentoring Matters to the people of Elgin County. Support of Big Brothers Big Sisters has allowed programs to continue to grow, evolve and expand to meet the needs of our community. While we are not able to recognize all donors, sponsors, and supporters here, we are incredibly thankful for each and every one of you. You continue to provide a foundation that allows our agency to be able to focus on our mission and vision.



2021 EVENTS

CURL FOR KIDS 2021 MARCH 2021 - CANCELLED

Wendy's restaurants hosted a lunch for our curlers who showed up in a BIG way with their pledged support for our agency.



ST. PATTY'S SURVIVOR MARCH 2021

With Curl for Kids cancelled due to Covid we had to move quickly to find a virtual fundraiser. St. Patty's Survivor was a fun 10 day entirely virtual elimination draw in partnership with Caps Off Brewery. 34 teams of 4 players hoped they would be the one final survivor winning the cash prize & growlers from Caps Off Brewery.



GRADUATION 2021 JUNE 2021

As Covid cancelled graduation ceremonies again, the staff at BBBS rallied to give our kids a grad to remember. Each graduate received a parade past their home, a sign for their lawn, balloons, and cupcakes for the family.



2021 EVENTS CONT'D

GOLF FOR KIDS SAKE

AUGUST 2021

We were back together outdoors for the first time since Covid began for our annual Golf for Kids Sake at Kettle Creek Golf and Country Club. 73 golfers and lots of volunteers came out to play some golf, win some prizes and support our programs.



CRAFTS IN THE PARK

AUGUST 2021

Our first in person event in over a year happened in early August at Pinafore park. Staff, volunteers and some very happy kids painted, flew kites and enjoyed some much needed time outside with friends.

BIG BALL DROP

SEPTEMBER 2021

16 Host Businesses sold just over 1100 tickets to help support our annual Big Ball Drop at Pleasant Valley Trout Farm. The event was completely virtual and was broadcast on Facebook Live from the 94.1 MyFM facebook page. A special thank you to Bob Bishop, from Yarmouth Group and the Pleasant Valley Trout Farm for his continued support.



2021 EVENTS CONT'D



CANDLES FOR A CAUSE OCTOBER 2021

2 Dogs Candles, a local entrepreneur, teamed with our agency and gave \$1 from the sale of every candle for 6 weeks from October to mid November. 500 candles were sold in support of our kids

DOUG TARRY HOMES BAKE FOR KIDS SAKE NOVEMBER 2021

Local bakeries came together with a lot of gifted community members to showcase their talents in our 1st annual gingerbread house competition.

Doug Tarry Homes, our title sponsor, along with several area home builders showcased their skills in cookie house construction as well. The support was overwhelming!



HOLIDAY PARTY AT TIMBERNOOK DECEMBER 2021

Lightened restrictions allowed us to have our first outdoor Christmas party at Timbernook in Port Stanley. The kids roasted marshmallows and played in the forest with friends they hadn't seen in almost 2 years..





OUR BOARD

2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We couldn't do it without our BIGGEST champions!

Hank Zehr

Board President

Warren Melhuish

Past President

Mike Butler

Director

Angela Cooley

Director

Brady Ideson

Vice President

Kim Herridge

Treasurer

Vanessa Holmes-Bell

Outgoing Director

Nikki Johnson

Outgoing Director

Nikki Johnson

Outgoing Director

Nikki Johnson – Mentor with BBBS from 2013 – 2016, when her mentee aged out of the program. Nikki continued her involvement with the agency as a member of our Board of Directors from 2016 – 2021.

Nikki's dedication and support given to the agency for the past 8 years has been unwavering. When asked why she wanted to be involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters Board of Directors,

Nikki shared the following 'as a past Big Sister I see the value of this organization as a whole – the impact it makes on not only the community but the participants; Bigs and Littles. It is so crucial to have an agency like BBBS within the community to assist in the betterment of the future of young lives. I find joy in mentoring and making a difference in the lives of others'.



OUR BOARD & STAFF



Warren Melhuish

Past President

Warren Allen Melhuish – Mentor with BBBS from 1992 – 2001 as well as a Board member from 1991 – 1995 and returned to the Board of Directors in 2014 and ending his tenure in the role of past President, which included a 4 year term as President of the Board. Warren’s leadership and dedication to our agency will be missed.

Warren made a significant contribution in leading our agency through the process of creating the SouthWest collaboration of Big Brother Big Sister agencies who continue to work together for the betterment of all children and youth across our Southwest Region. Warren’s leadership significantly helped with fundraising for many years as his radio voice became a constant with promotional ads and MC role for all of our events.

We recognize and thank Warren today for his dedication and service to the Board of Directors as he officially closes out his term with Big Brothers Big Sisters of St. Thomas-Elgin.



STAFF

Barb Matthews

Executive Director

Carly Enns

Community Based
Mentoring Co-ordinator

Kara Lynds

In-School
Mentoring Co-ordinator

Carolyn Johnson

Marketing and Fund Development



OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Old friendships flourished

Marlina is a new mom and a full time Trial Coordinator who finds time for her long time Little Michiala. These two have shared lots of adventures over the past 5 years but Marlina says "it's the little things" that stand out for her. She has watched Michiala develop from a child of 10 into a high school student who still loves getting to ride in the front seat of the car, sing-alongs and pit stops for ice cream. These things may seem small but Marlina will tell you her favourite part of being a Big is simply "getting to know her(little) and watching her grow."



New friendships grew

Sarah works in the mental health field and knows the importance of being connected especially in the uncertain times Covid has created. She recognized that BBBS could be a great place to find a connection and be of service in the life of a child. She chose her mentee Nicholas last summer because they had similar interests like crafts, walks and painting their nails. Covid created several obstacles for this new match but with the support of staff they were able to work through them.

Sarah has found value in being part of our community and she is very happy she chose Big Brothers Big Sisters of St. Thomas Elgin.



TREASURER'S REPORT

During a time of such uncertainty, Big Brothers Big Sisters of St. Thomas-Elgin ended our fiscal year in a very healthy financial position. We are grateful for the government support we received in response to the pandemic, as well as the continued generosity of both longstanding financial supporters as well as new donors who stepped up in a 'Big' way to support many of our new fundraising initiatives. With a keen eye to stay within our budget the agency can continue to focus on amplifying our voice throughout our community so more children and youth can experience the benefits of having a mentor in their lives.

Kim Herridge....Treasurer

**BIG BROTHERS/BIG SISTERS OF ST. THOMAS-ELGIN
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2021**

ASSETS		
	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 250,391	\$ 240,669
Accounts receivable	3,140	2,243
HST receivable	4,241	2,203
Prepaid expenses	<u>1,664</u>	<u>1,664</u>
	259,436	246,779
CAPITAL ASSETS	<u>90,000</u>	<u>90,000</u>
	<u>\$ 349,436</u>	<u>\$ 336,779</u>
LIABILITIES AND UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 7,531	\$ 12,014
Deferred revenue (Note 4)	<u>149,477</u>	<u>176,995</u>
	157,008	189,009
Canadian Emergency Business Account (Note 6)	<u>30,000</u>	<u>10,000</u>
	187,008	199,009
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	<u>162,428</u>	<u>137,770</u>
	<u>\$ 349,436</u>	<u>\$ 336,779</u>

APPROVED ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:

_____ Director

_____ Director