

Be a Mentor Make a Difference

What a Mentor is:

The word mentor is defined as a trusted friend, counselor, or guide. Mentoring is a structured and trusting relationship that brings young people together with caring individuals who offer guidance, support and encouragement aimed at developing the competence and character needed for a successful future.

Mentors are good listeners, people who care and people who want to help. All children have the potential to succeed in life and contribute to society by not all children have the support they need to recognize their own strengths.

Why we not only need mentors but also partners.

Our one to one mentoring programs are proven to be effective and it is only with the support of people like you—that we can continue to be successful. Big Brothers Big Sisters uses the funds that we raise to match some of the community's most vulnerable kids, like those of single, low-income, or incarcerated parents, with carefully screened mentors. We provide ongoing support to our volunteers (Bigs) our children (Littles) and our Littles' families throughout the entire duration of the match—hopefully until the Littles graduate from high school. If you are already a partner we thank you. If you are not, we invite you to get in touch with us to find out how you can make a difference right here in our own community

Research has shown that Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring programs have a significant impact, not only on the lives of the children and youth we serve, but also on our community as a whole.

Under the National umbrella of Big Brothers Big Sisters Of Canada the local agency runs the following mentoring programs.

Community-based Mentoring is the traditional Big Brothers Big Sisters relationship.

It's all about one-on-one time spent with the volunteer and the young person doing things they enjoy — three to four hours once a week, for a minimum of a year, filled with shared interests and activities like:

- Shooting hoops
- Playing a board game
- Sharing a pizza
- Taking a walk in the park, or just hanging out and talking.

The schedule can be flexible to meet the needs of mentors and young people in different kinds of situations. Some Bigs meet their Littles on the weekend or in the evening. 74 boys and 36 girls received service from this program in 2009.

Over 30 children were accepted onto our waiting list program received our "Kids in the Know" program which is about safety issues such as bullying, strangers, computer safety, good and bad touches and sexual abuse.

Couples Mentoring is a match between a couple. Couples for Kids is a flexible program that gives you and your partner an opportunity to have fun together while bringing magic into the life of a child. The program matches couples with a child and provides acceptance, guidance and support.

The agency strives to match each couple with a child whose needs correspond with the couple's abilities, interests, and preferences. After a match has been made, the caseworker will keep in touch and offer on-going support and guidance. Three children received support in 2009.

In-School Mentoring is not a classroom program, and it's not tutoring. In-School Mentoring is one-to-one mentoring that takes place in the schools. Of course, some students do talk with their mentors about class, or do homework, or read together, but it's really all about friendship and guidance. You can play or jump rope or shoot hoops — whatever you and the student enjoy. You don't need any special training or certification

Kids enjoy In-School Mentoring. And parents know what a difference it makes. But some of the biggest supporters of In-School Mentoring are actually teachers. They see students come back from their one hour a week mentoring sessions with confident smiles, ready to learn and ready to succeed. 47 children received service in this program in 2009. We delivered the program in up to 20 schools

The Go Girls! program centers on creating a positive environment where active living, balanced eating, body image, self-esteem, relationships, and social situations can be discussed and explored through fun games and activities. Go Girls! mentors act as consistent, positive female role models for girls aged twelve to fourteen who will benefit from a small group experience focused on teambuilding and healthy living. Mentors participate in a two day training course which enables them to facilitate the Go Girls! program. Two mentors lead a group of eight girls for one and half hours per week after school. The length of the program is seven weeks. The program was delivered to 47 girls in 2009.

Over 348 of our members were referred to other services in 2009. Those included camp sponsorship, holiday basket referrals, tickets to community events and subsidized recreation activities.