



# executive summary



Big Sisters  
of BC Lower Mainland

## Our Mission

Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland is committed to enhancing the confidence, self-esteem and well-being of girls through supportive relationships with female mentors.

## Our Agency

Since 1960, Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland has been providing girls with positive, female mentors. Big Sisters is an accredited member agency of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada, with strong commitments to mentoring and child safety.

Big Sisters has an operating budget of approximately \$1,100,000 and plans to provide at least 650 girls between the ages of

7 and 17 with a mentor in 2012. We are a volunteer-based organization with 18 full and part time staff and over 550 women who volunteer as mentors each year. We are also supported by a Board of Directors, Honourary Advisory Board, Education Advisory Committee, and committees that plan our match activities and fundraising events. Our volunteers contribute close to 100,000 hours annually to our organization.

**All of the girls referred to our programs are seeking a champion in their lives – a friend to trust and support them and to spend time with them on a weekly basis.**

## Our Little Sisters

We offer mentoring programs and services to Lower Mainland girls, ages 7-17, who are in need of a positive role model. Our mentoring programs are aimed at prevention and intervention as research has shown that a supportive relationship with a caring adult is a key factor in helping children overcome challenges in their lives. We believe that each Little Sister benefits immediately from the relationship formed with a caring, supportive mentor and benefits in the long term by gaining self-esteem and confidence to make positive life choices.

Girls are referred to our agency by parents, school personnel, social workers and other helping professionals. 68% of the girls in our programs come from a single parent family; 19% from a dual parent family; 7% from foster or group homes, and 6% do not report or are in transition.

Our Little Sisters represent a wide array of ethnicities and, while not all report their background, we estimate over 25% of our Little Sisters were born outside Canada, and we know that at least 23% are of First Nations heritage.

Approximately 20% of our Little Sisters are directly referred by the Ministry of Children and Family Development or mental health agencies, and an additional 10-20% have Ministry of Children and Family Development involvement.

Most of the girls we serve suffer from low self-esteem, social isolation, or a lack of enriching experiences as a result of poverty, family distress, recent immigration, or other life challenges. All of the girls referred to our programs are seeking a champion in their lives – a friend to trust and support them and to spend time with them on a weekly basis.



## OUR MENTORING PROGRAMS

### Big & Little Sister Program

The Big & Little Sister Program matches girls (ages 7-17) with a volunteer Big Sister in a one-to-one mentoring relationship. Each match meets once a week for 2 to 4 hours for a minimum of one year. Matches enjoy a wide range of activities, including making crafts, playing sports, watching movies, and just hanging out and talking. We anticipate serving over 325 Big & Little Sister matches in 2012. Our cost per match: \$2,000 per annum.

### Study Buddy Program

Our Study Buddy Program matches girls (ages 7-17) with volunteers who offer them educational support and academic assistance. For a minimum of six months, Study Buddies meet for one hour a week outside of school to work on school subjects and study skills. With the support of a Study Buddy, Little Sisters are encouraged and equipped to improve their educational performance and meet their academic goals, which contributes to their overall self-esteem. Big Sisters benefits from strong partnerships with the Vancouver School Board and Burnaby School District, as well as excellent relationships with other schools and districts throughout the Lower Mainland. We anticipate serving approximately 200 Study Buddy matches in 2012. Our cost per match: \$2,000 per annum.

### Go Girls! Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds Program

This group mentoring program encourages physical activity participation, healthy eating, and the development of a positive self-image among girls ages 11-14. In addition, the program strives to enhance the competence and self-confidence of girls and build the leadership and life skills of all program participants. This eight week, after school program is led by volunteer female mentors in our partner schools. According to a wide array of research, physical activity levels of young women significantly decline in adolescence. This age group often struggles with issues regarding healthy eating, body image and relationships. We anticipate serving 125 girls in this program in 2012. Currently running in five schools in Coquitlam, we plan on expanding the Go Girls! program to the Burnaby school district in 2012. Our cost per 8 week session: \$3,600.

**AREA SERVED** Vancouver, Surrey, Delta, Richmond, Burnaby, New Westminster, Coquitlam, Port Moody, Port Coquitlam, North Vancouver, West Vancouver

When girls **believe**  
**in themselves** and  
**reach their full potential,**  
**the community as a**  
**whole benefits.**

### Our Supporters

*We sincerely appreciate our supporters and are pleased to have a diversified funding base. Our Big Sisters Patrons' Circle honours individuals who donate \$1,000 or more to Big Sisters each year, and corporate donors, foundations and governments who contribute \$2,000 or more each year. Our Platinum Patrons' Circle honours individuals who donate \$10,000 or more annually, and corporate donors, foundations and governments who make a minimum annual contribution of \$25,000. Our Patrons are listed on our website and in the programs of our two annual fundraising events, and they receive our annual Patrons' Circle Photo Album. New Patrons are acknowledged in the Big Sisters newsletter (circulation 3,000) and e-newsletter (circulation 600).*



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34 E. 12th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5T 2G5

P: 604.873.4525 F: 604.873.2122

[www.bigsisters.bc.ca](http://www.bigsisters.bc.ca)

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