



Big Sisters  
OF BC LOWER MAINLAND

# UNLEASHING POTENTIAL

A Campaign for Mentorship



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### YOUR IMPACT

It's Time to Make a Difference

## Land Acknowledgement

As we share our plans for Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland's Unleashing Potential campaign, it's essential to recognize that the work we do takes place on the ancestral lands of the x məθk əy əm (Musqueam), S wx wú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish), səl ilw əta (Tsleil-Waututh), QayQayt First Nation, Kwantlen, q íc əy (Katzie), Semiahmoo, Tsawwassen First Nations, k ík ə əm (Kwkwetlem), and Stó:lō Nation.

In taking this next step forward and building a brighter future for the girls and gender-diverse youth in our programs, we strive to honour and advance the principals reconciliation in all that we do.





## Who We Are

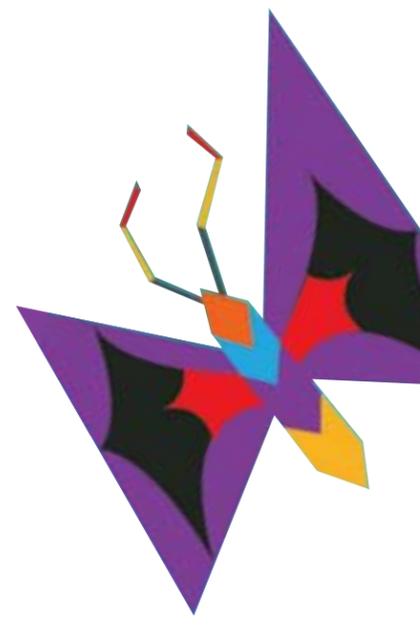
Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland harnesses the power of mentorship to ignite the potential of self-identifying girls, transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse youth, helping them to reach their full potential.

We are part of a network of 100 agencies developing and implementing best practices in youth mentoring for communities across Canada. We are relentless in championing the power of mentorship to change the trajectory for vulnerable youth. Our programs are proven to change lives and have a profoundly positive impact on families and communities.



With more than six decades of dedicated service to girls and gender-diverse youth, we have developed a comprehensive infrastructure to maximize the positive impacts of mentoring partnerships, including:

- Robust systems for selecting, approving, training, and supporting volunteers.
- Detailed legal screening of mentors to ensure child safety.
- A broad team of professional staff who work to maximize the impact of mentors and volunteers.
- A strong network of reciprocal referral relationships with other agencies to ensure the right services are offered to children and their families at the right time.



**ABOUT BIG SISTERS**



Our core programs currently include:

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Big Sisters</b></p> <p>Weekly 1:1 mentorship, with Bigs and Littles carefully matched for personality and aligning interests.</p> <p><b>93%</b></p> <p>Felt better about themselves since having a big sister.</p> | <p><b>Study Buddies</b></p> <p>Weekly 1:1 mentorship focused on providing academic support to bolster learning and raise confidence in school.</p> <p><b>88%</b></p> <p>Improved their grades after taking part in our program.</p> | <p><b>Go Girls!</b></p> <p>A 10-week group mentoring program for youth in grades 4-7 that promotes body positivity and healthy habits, while nurturing social connections and self-esteem.</p> <p><b>88%</b></p> <p>Could name 3 or more activities that make them feel active and happy.</p> |
|--|---|---|

**MENTORSHIP WORKS**

Girls and gender-diverse youth who have access to the support of a mentor are more likely to report positive mental health, education, and career outcomes than their peers who did not have a mentor.

|   |  |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| <p><b>2x</b></p> <p>More likely to have completed high school</p>                     | <p><b>90%</b></p> <p>More likely to become a mentor themselves</p> | <p><b>53%</b></p> <p>More likely to report good mental health than non-mentored youth</p>       | <p><b>75%</b></p> <p>More likely to have held a leadership position in a club or sports team</p>           | <p><b>70%</b></p> <p>Said their mentors influenced their hope and optimism for the future</p>                               |
| <p><b>2x</b></p> <p>More likely to feel like they belong in their local community</p> | <p><b>78%</b></p> <p>More likely to have an occupation</p>         | <p><b>95%</b></p> <p>More likely to have pursued post-secondary education after high school</p> | <p><b>67%</b></p> <p>Stated their mentors influenced their self-pride and ability to like who they are</p> | <p><b>58%</b></p> <p>Reported their mentor positively influenced their understanding of where they wanted to go in life</p> |

Sources: Mentor Canada

Mentoring helps create safer schools and communities. It's proven that youth who have a positive mentor are less likely to engage in destructive behaviours such as bullying, fighting, binge drinking, drug use, dropping out of school, and crime.

**MENTORSHIP MATTERS: NOW MORE THAN EVER**

Children and youth are experiencing mental health challenges at alarming rates, with studies indicating that the prevalence of mood swings, anxiety, or suicidal thoughts doubled during the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> Canadian studies have confirmed that girls, transgender, and non-binary teens report higher rates of symptoms of anxiety and depression than boys.<sup>2</sup> Girls are also three times more likely to engage in self-harming behaviours than their male counterparts.<sup>3</sup>

Recent research has revealed that 54% of young adults wish they had a mentor, with Canadian women being less likely to have a formal mentor than their male counterparts.<sup>4</sup>

We know that mentorship is the solution to overcome these devastating impacts. Girls and youth need support.



Now is the time to invest in Big Sisters' programs, people, and places to ensure future generation of self-identifying girls, transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse youth can fulfill their promise and potential in the years to come.

<sup>1</sup> Child and Youth Mental Health During a Pandemic, Dr. Quynh Doan, BC Children's Hospital  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/canadian-teens-mental-health-1.6759486>  
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/healthy-living/suicide-canada-key-statistics-infographic/ENG.pdf>  
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.mentoring.org/mentoring-impact/>



Carmen Thériault  
CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIR



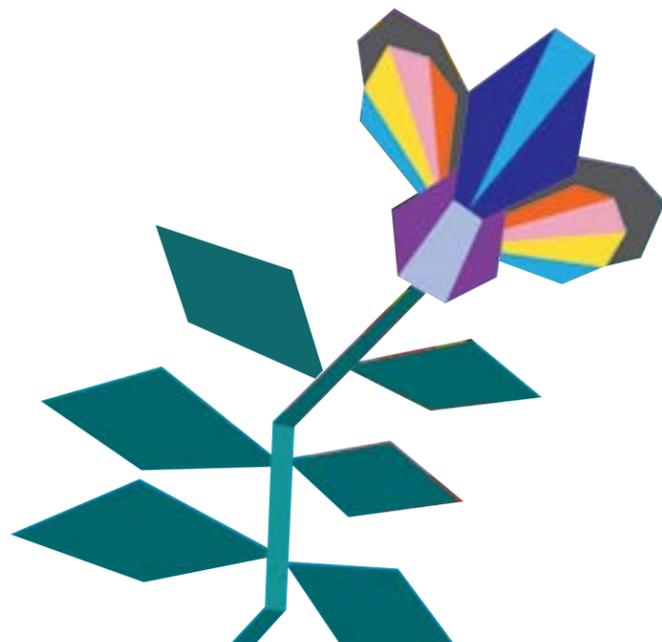
Hayley Woodin Hastings  
CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIR

## Message from our Campaign Co-Chairs

Big Sisters' Unleashing Potential Campaign focuses on building a brighter future for girls and youth across the Lower Mainland.

The need for mentorship has never been more evident. We know that the last few years have been challenging for everyone, and we have seen the negative impact it has had on girls, youth, and their families. With the help of our community we can redefine the landscape of mentorship in our region by creating a unique space where Bigs and Littles can connect. Your investment in the future of Big Sisters is a commitment to championing the potential of every Little Sister by giving them the support and opportunity to succeed.

Let's shape the next chapter for Big Sisters.

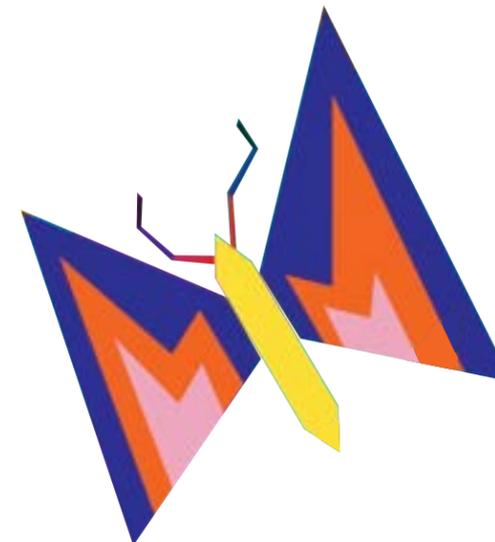


## Message from our CEO

It's time to provide the space and support that girls and youth deserve, so they can unleash their full potential.

Big Sisters Unleashing Potential Campaign is about creating an environment for self-identifying girls, non-binary, transgender, and gender-diverse youth to thrive. It is as bold, inspiring, and ambitious as the young people we serve, setting out three core areas of support: Big Sisters' **Hub for Mentorship**, the **Growth and Innovation** of our programs, and our forward-looking **Sustainability Fund**. Our vision is to create a bright and vibrant community space that allows us to grow our suite of mentorship programs with a long term, sustainable focus.

Join us as we build a future dedicated to igniting, inspiring and unleashing the power and potential of youth.



Chantelle Krish  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
BIG SISTERS OF BC  
LOWER MAINLAND



# Unleashing Potential

**Thanks to an anonymous transformational gift, Big Sisters has an unprecedented opportunity to design a new future for mentorship for the girls, and gender-diverse youth, we serve through our programs.**

In 2022, Big Sisters acquired a new, accessible, and significantly larger work space, centrally located on Joyce Street in Vancouver. Because of this generous gift, for the first time we can dream big. We have a unique opportunity to deepen our impact, grow, and scale in ways we never imagined would be possible, while setting the foundation for future sustainability.

To maximize this transformative opportunity, Big Sisters is launching a bold campaign to raise \$5 million

## THE CAMPAIGN

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Hub for Mentorship</b><br/>\$1,880,000 million</p> <p>Developing Greater Vancouver's first dedicated mentorship hub for girls and gender-diverse youth</p> | <p><b>Growth &amp; Innovation</b><br/>\$1,920,000 million</p> <p>Investing in program transformation and expansion to meet the evolving needs of girls and gender-diverse youth</p> | <p><b>Sustainability Fund</b><br/>\$1,200,000 million</p> <p>Securing funding to support sustainable growth and operations</p> |
|--|---|--|

**THE OBJECTIVE:**  
By 2029, enable 1,000\* girls and gender-diverse youth to unleash their potential annually with the support of Big Sisters.  
\*more than double the number served in 2022/2023 (469)

Your investment is everything. It means Big Sisters can ensure that girls and gender-diverse youth are not defined by the adversities they have faced, and can reach their full potential, as they so rightly deserve.

# 1. Hub for Mentorship (\$1.88M)

*"She has been an instrumental force in my life. She is someone I can rely on, someone that treats me with the respect that I am worthy of and gives me the love and kindness that I am worthy of. You need that. Children need that. And especially young girls really, really need that."*

**-Flynn, Little Sister**

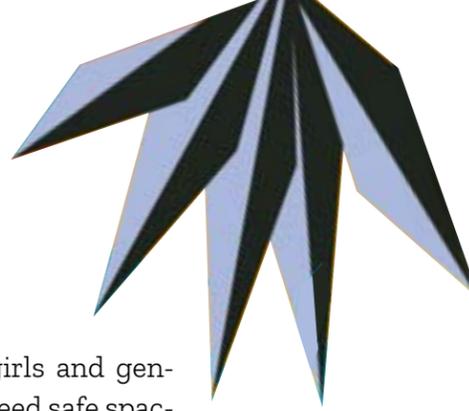


We know that all girls and gender-diverse youth need safe spaces where they are accepted and nurtured. There is tremendous untapped potential in our network of Bigs, Littles and dedicated supporters that we have not yet fully harnessed because we have not had the space to do so.

**We envision a vibrant community space, purpose built to maximize our impact and strengthen our programs in new ways. Our new space is conveniently located and accessible by multiple modes of public transit. Many social service providers are also located nearby for families to access. This is where our vision for growth and innovation will come to life.**

Our vision is to create an inclusive Hub for mentorship, a place where children, youth, and families will immediately experience the warmth, acceptance, and compassion they need. Utilizing the principles of trauma-informed design, the spaces will reflect the diversity of our community and evoke a feeling of welcome and belonging for all, no matter their journey into our programs.

We will no longer be limited by the absence of space to gather, share, grow, and nurture our community. For the first time, we can invite Littles to create supportive peer relationships in our own safe and welcoming environment, building on the success of our 1:1 and group mentorship programs.



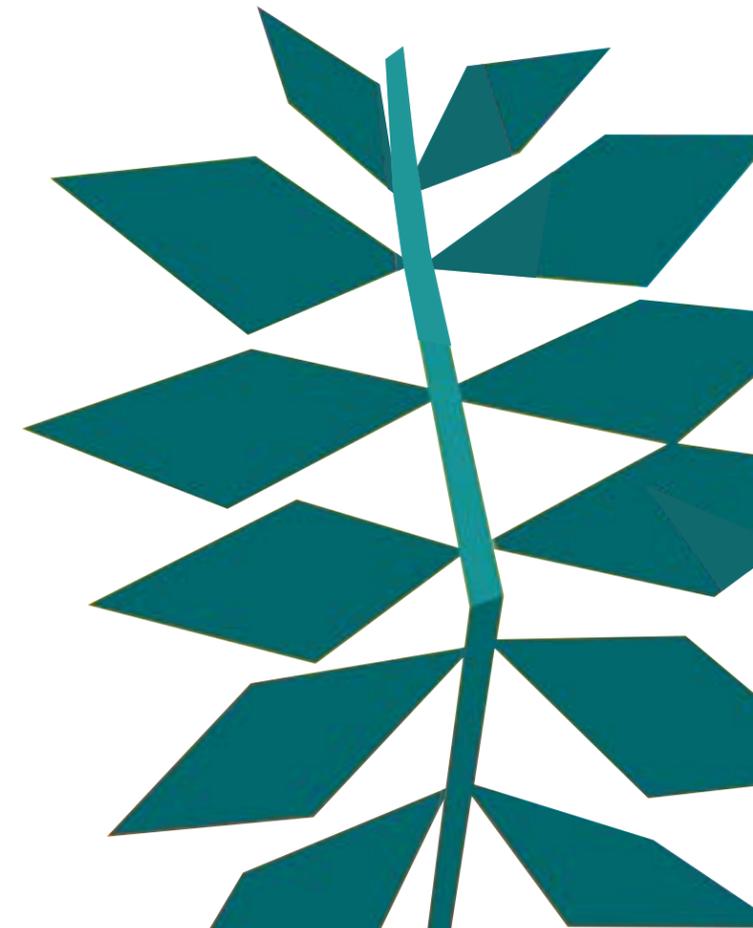
The Hub will showcase the creativity and potential of Littles—as a powerful reminder of the strength of youth and a visual reflection of our values, showcasing our diversity and commitment to championing potential. All youth, including Indigenous youth, will see their culture reflected through co-creation of creative arts, and the careful selection and placement of visual and spiritual elements.

Team spaces and work rooms will enable our caseworkers and volunteers to collaborate more effectively, collaboratively, and efficiently, maximizing the impact of their expertise and dedication in support of Littles.

## THE OUTCOME

A Hub that:

- Provides **limitless opportunities** to enrich the lives of Littles
- **Deepens our connections** to community
- **Extends the reach of our programs**, now and in the future



Bigs, Littles, their families, and community partners will thrive in thoughtful spaces, including:

### THE WELCOME SPACE

This comfortable, welcoming space will be the first place that families, volunteers, and partners experience when they arrive at the Hub. With soft seating and developmentally appropriate books and games, children and their families will be put at ease as we begin the intake process. Newly recruited volunteers will feel a warm welcome and immediately sense the ethos the organization strives to cultivate for youth.

### READING CORNER

A cozy spot for Littles and Bigs to connect through the shared experience of reading. We will provide a comfortable area with a range of reading materials to suit all ages and backgrounds, helping to encourage a life-long passion for reading and fostering connection between matches through an activity that will engage, inform, and inspire.

### THE RESOURCE ROOM

With workstations, games, books, and spacious areas for collaboration, this space will be a meeting place for 1:1 matches to study and connect. Youth will have access to computer terminals to complete schoolwork and apply for post-secondary education or scholarships. It will host group career explorations events, workshops for Bigs and Littles as well as volunteer and donor appreciation events.

### THE WELCOME ROOM

A quiet, confidential space flooded with natural light, this will be the place where caseworkers meet with children, families, and volunteers. Special care will be taken to create a calming environment with age-appropriate seating, developmentally appropriate books, toys, and soft floor coverings. It is critical that this first interaction with us is a positive one that evokes a feeling of warmth, acceptance, and support.

### COMMUNITY CAFÉ

Just as the kitchen is the heart of any home, the Community Café at the Hub will be a place where connection happens. With booth-style seating and access to healthy snacks and drinks, Littles and Bigs can nourish their bodies and souls in a comfortable and welcoming space. As food security is a growing concern, a community pantry program will also be available to our Littles and their families.

\*Room and space naming opportunities are for 20 years and available for donations over \$50,000.



### COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Community Café will open onto a spacious community garden with seating and raised garden beds where Bigs and Littles can grow vegetables and flowers together. This space will open conversations about healthy lifestyles by offering the opportunity for matches to be active together. Gardening can help relieve stress and increase one's sense of wellness, which improves overall physical and mental health. Bigs and Littles will also have the opportunity to learn and share knowledge on gardening, nature, and cooking with each other.

### LITTLES LOUNGE

Adjacent to the Community Café will be a multi-purpose space for 1:1 matches or weekly meetups to engage in activities that enhance social-emotional development and build relationships based on trust and common interests. Activities will centre around self-expression, the creative arts, mindfulness, educational workshops, and supportive dialogues to build Littles' resilience, confidence, and joy.

### LITTLE SISTERS ART WALL

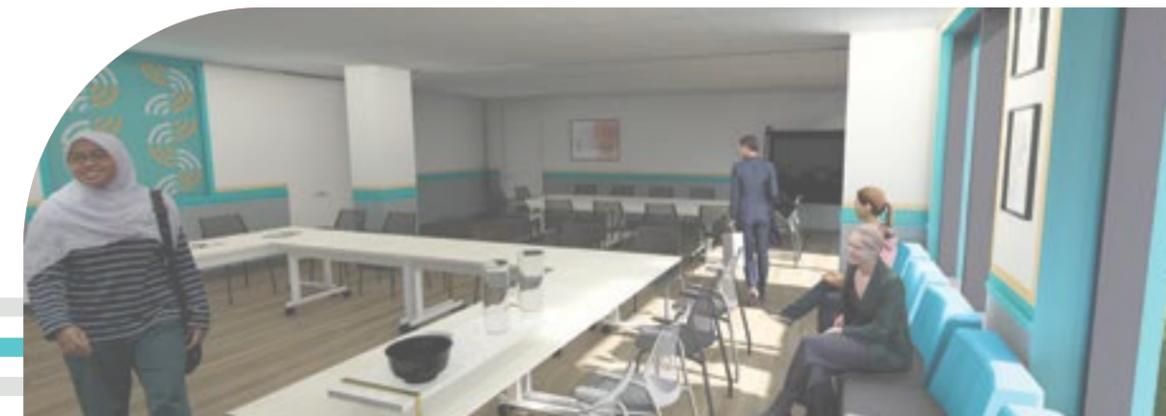
Art can be an integral part in many of the relationships that are fostered through Big Sisters' programs, allowing Bigs and Littles to deepen their connection through creative expression. The Little Sisters Art Wall will be a focal point and dedicated space at the Hub to display pieces created by the girls and gender-diverse youth we serve.

### INSPIRATION WALL

A space to not only encourage dreaming big, but also to showcase dreams that have come true. The Inspiration Wall will be regularly updated with aspirations and stories that our matches wish to share. They will be encouraged to share stories through different outputs—photos, written words, vision boards, or dream boards.

### THE CONFERENCE ROOM

This multi-purpose space will accommodate the necessary business functions of Big Sisters, providing space for meetings of the Board and Honorary Advisory Board, and the Big Sisters team. With an adjacent area where boardroom furniture can be quickly tucked away, this large space can also host on-site group programming and other events, such as Yoga for Littles, workshops and educational events, community partner meetings, and orientation and training programs.



## 2. Growth & Innovation (\$1.92M)

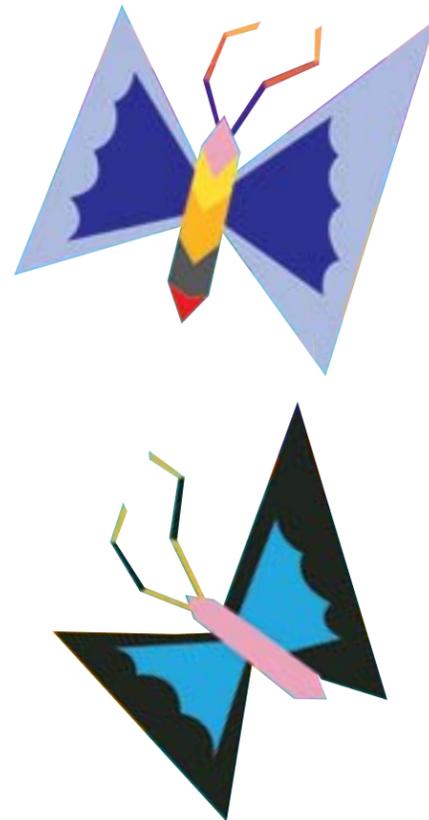
There is so much more we can do to help self-identifying girls, transgender, non-binary and gender-diverse youth in our communities. There are too many girls and gender-diverse youth who are waiting far too long to be welcomed into our programs at critical stages of their development.

Big Sisters encourages girls and gender-diverse youth to think big. Now it's time for us to apply that kind of limitless thinking to the way we can support them.

The plan is to power the sustainable growth of our current programs by underwriting the planning, people, and tools needed to deliver new programming that meets the needs identified by the community. The funding sought will fuel expansion and innovation, ensuring that Big Sisters has the resources to propel the organization forward for its next era of service to girls and gender-diverse youth. This will include ramping up efforts to reach out to underserved populations that have the most to gain from positive mentoring relationships.

### THE OUTCOME

- **Strong, bold, and sustainable programs** that will be there for girls and gender-diverse youth, now and in the future
- New programming, reaching out in **new ways to support** girls and gender-diverse youth with different needs and at different stages in their development
- Ability to **respond to unmet demand**, safeguarding the mental health of girls and gender-diverse youth when they need it most
- Four new program delivery staff over 5 years
- 1,000 girls and youth served each year\*  
\*more than double the number served in 2022/2023 (469)



## 3. The Sustainability Fund (\$1.2M)

Under the current economic climate, non-profit organizations are facing increasing fundraising challenges to support vital community programs and services. Big Sisters is fortunate to have strong support in the community with long standing donors and partners. The Sustainability Fund provides an opportunity to help ensure organizational stability and sustainability.

The total Sustainability Fund of \$3 million is Board-restricted with strict parameters around deployment. A portion will be allocated to the existing Big Sisters endowment fund held at Vancouver Foundation, and a portion will be placed in an investment portfolio with expectations to earn substantial returns and grow in value over time—all governed by Big Sisters' investment policy. The annual income generated will support ongoing operations.

### THE OUTCOME

- A **solid financial infrastructure**
- **Reliable funding** for a portion of annual operating costs
- Financial resources to **build workforce capacity**
- A **sustainable future** for Big Sisters





# YOUR IMPACT

## Your Impact

Unleashing Potential is a campaign where every gift enables transformative change, ensures Big Sisters can empower even more girls and gender-diverse youth, and creates a permanent Hub to power youth mentorship in our communities. Your investment will:

### IGNITE

#### Build Capacity to Respond

Ensuring our proven programs can meet current need and prepare for future demand while prioritizing sustainability

- Accelerate volunteer recruitment and retention
- Add resources to keep pace with referrals
- Overcome wait lists so Littles receive the help they need sooner
- Foster knowledge and connection within our community of Bigs, Littles, and families, growing self-empowerment.

### INSPIRE

#### Fuel Innovation

Maximizing the impacts of mentorship through new engagement opportunities for girls and gender-diverse youth

- Develop new and innovative programs to meet unmet demand
- Cultivate peer support: new programs where Littles can connect with each other
- Realize long-envisioned initiatives such as a Youth Advisory Council, Homework clubs, and 'Friday Friends' meetups for Littles
- Harness the strength of Big Sisters' Alumni network to help girls and gender-diverse youth.

### UNLEASH

#### Build a Safe Space

Opening Lower Mainland's first Hub for Mentorship, a place for girls and gender-diverse youth to transform

- Purpose-designed spaces where girls, gender-diverse youth and families can build confidence and resilience
- A permanent home for girls and gender-diverse youth to build healthy social connection, work on positive mental health, and foster educational attainment to achieve their personal and career goals



Alex Wilson  
SENIOR DIRECTOR,  
PHILANTHROPY AND  
CAMPAIGNS

## It's Time to Make a Difference

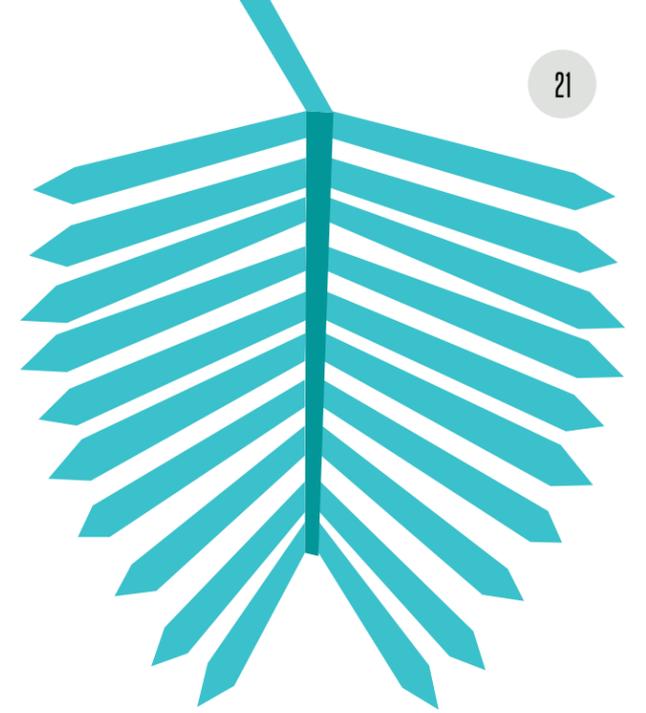
Every day, we are inspired by the stories of strength and resilience of the children, gender-diverse youth, and families we serve. But we know there is so much more to do.

Big Sisters' Unleashing Potential Campaign will provide the growth capital needed for Big Sisters to solidify the bright future of mentorship and forever change how we serve our community. This is a moment in time: with your help, we can redefine and fortify our organization **to ensure we leave no youth behind.**

Please join us as we write the next chapter in the story of Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland and prepare for our next era of service. Together, we will champion the potential of every Little Sister, and ignite the future of mentorship in our communities.

For more information contact Alex:  
[awilson@bigsisters.bc.ca](mailto:awilson@bigsisters.bc.ca)

"She's made me feel like I can do a lot more... and that makes me feel a lot more powerful than I have ever felt in my life."  
**- Maria, Little Sister**





**Big Sisters**  
OF BC LOWER MAINLAND

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