



# EVERY CONNECTION COUNTS



Since taking over the role of Executive Director in April 2018, I have been so inspired by our caring staff, dedicated volunteers and the resilience of the youth we serve.

As supporters and volunteers, you know better than anyone that our kids often face multiple and complex adversities. Pressures at home and at school can become overwhelming. Without a stable relationship with a caring adult, reaching your full potential can be impossible. We work every day to make sure all our girls feel loved and supported.

I am so pleased to share with you that, thanks to your support, last year, we were able to make a difference in the lives of over 760 vulnerable young people. That's over 47,000 volunteer hours spent mentoring!

2019 is already a busy and exciting year. We will be working to expand our Go Girls! group mentoring program into the Vancouver school district and focus on recruiting new volunteers in high-need areas like Surrey and Richmond.

*I am most grateful for your support and look forward to sharing more of our successes in the future*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hanne Madsen'.

**Hanne Madsen**  
**Executive Director**

## BIG IMPACT

- » **72%** of matches last longer than 1 year.
- » Girls with a Big Sister are **4X** less likely to bully, fight, lie or lose their temper
- » **92%** of adults who had a mentor as a child are more confident
- » Our Littles are **2X** less likely to be depressed.

» **Over 50,000** volunteer hours across our Big community



**Big Sisters**  
of BC Lower Mainland

# BRITTANY AND ANTONIO'S MATCH STORY

## Someone's dark times can help another get through their own.

**Big Sister mentors can often relate to the same struggles their Little Sisters face each day. They devote their time to helping the next generation navigate through the tough situations of life.** Little Antonio, at the time, was struggling with anxiety and self-acceptance. "I was socially awkward as a kid, always nervous. I really had a hard time talking to people."

Brittany saw in Antonio the confidence he couldn't see in himself. "I just knew he was such a cool person. He just needed someone to let him know how awesome he truly was." Brittany was able to help Antonio find his true self and was there for him as he moved from adolescence into adulthood. **"I think our match is special because I sort of pushed him to discover the person he was too shy to let out."**

Today, Antonio is proud of who he is and has become a strong, confident young adult. "She has taught me self-worth, confidence in myself, and shown me how to speak up for what I believe in. I am not awkward or shy anymore, and I'm able to say what I want to."

While Antonio has learned and grown a lot thanks to Brittany, she recognizes that through supporting him, she discovered a side to society she never really knew before. Hand in hand, they became heavily involved in the LGBTQ2+ scene, advocating for acceptance and love. "Antonio has brought me knowledge and awareness for a whole new scene I never knew much about."

**By becoming a Big Sister, she was able to walk**

**directly into Antonio's reality and look at life from his perspective.** As Antonio said, "I really feel like Brittany has become my actual Big Sister, I go to her for advice and she comes to me for mine. My way of seeing things helps her, and vice versa."

Brittany and Antonio grew together and gained a lot from each other's life experiences. "Overall, I don't think I would've come to accept myself as I am if I had not become a Little. Meeting Brittany was the connection I needed to make me feel like I have **purpose.**"



**'Today I call her my real Big Sister'**

**- Little, Antonio 17**

# MORE INCLUSION, LESS BULLYING

“When you bring girls together at such a crucial age, you create a strong bond and develop unique connections that create friendships.”

Kate became a volunteer mentor while in university. Having struggled herself as a young teen, she valued the opportunity to offer guidance to girls in need. “It’s such a tough age, and connections are really important,” she remembers. Through Go Girls! she was able to witness firsthand the positive impact that the program was having on its participants. “When the girls were brought together, they didn’t know each other. They really got to know each other through the activities. **I saw the girls build friendships over the course of 8 weeks.**”

Over her five terms, Kate was amazed to see that the participants, with little to no prior connections to each other, learned to accept each other’s differences and find value in each other’s stories. “I loved seeing the inclusion in the groups. The girls would just bypass any judgment and instantly form bonds through the fact that they were all Go Girls.”

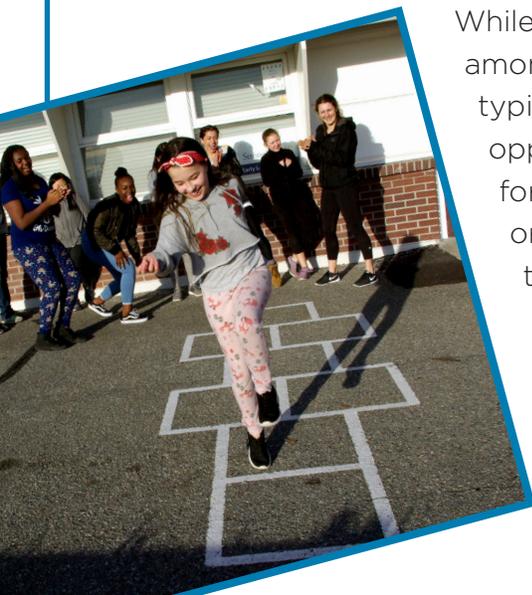
While differences among peers typically create opportunities for judgement or bullying, the inclusive environment that Go Girls! provides creates



opportunities for participants to bond over shared experiences. As Kate said, “The kids don’t even see cultural or personal differences; all they care about is that they are Go Girls! peers. **When you learn to know someone through a common experience, you are very unlikely to judge them.**”

One of Kate’s most meaningful experiences was when one of the participants explained to her that she was new to the school and struggling to make friends. But by the end of the 8-week long session, this new student felt that she had made one. “She came up to my co-mentor and I on the last day, and said that one of the other Go Girls! participants had said “Hi” to her in the hallway. **It was the first time she’d made a friend at the school.** Her story made me so happy, but it was her smile that said it all.”

Today, we have the chance to work alongside Kate who joined the Big Sisters Team in 2018 as our Go Girls! Program Coordinator!





## OTHER NEWS!

**SPRING LUNCH 2019** Was held Friday, June 7th, 2019 at the Fairmont Pacific Rim. We raised over \$120,000 that will directly help support 60 Little Sisters. It was a pleasure to host keynote speaker Susannah Pierce and hear her inspiring speech on the impact of mentoring. Thank you for your support!

**FUTURE YOU CAMP!** We believe that the future should be fun! From July 9th to 11th, we will be hosting a three-day, two-night Camp at SFU's Burnaby Campus. This immersive university experience will give girls 13+, and their Big Sisters, an opportunity to explore a wide range of career options, learn job-ready skills and hear how some of the most influential women in business got to where they are. Becoming an adult can be scary, but it doesn't have to be!

**BIG SISTERS' LUMINARY AWARD SOIRÉE**  
This year's Soirée will be held at The Westin Bayshore on Saturday, October 19th. With Luminary award recipients Christina Anthony and Tracey McVicar, it will be a time to celebrate the power of mentorship!

**BIGSISTERS.BC.CA/EVENTS**  
FOR DETAILS AND REGISTRATION

## WHAT WILL YOUR LEGACY BE?

### 3 MYTHS ABOUT PLANNED GIVING

#### MYTH #1 "MY ESTATE HAS TO BE LARGE TO MAKE AN IMPACT"

**Any amount makes a tremendous difference.** Leaving a gift in your will for a specific amount or a residual of your estate helps you offset taxes

#### MYTH #2 "ALL PLANNED GIFTS ARE DEFERRED"

**Save on taxes and make a difference.** By donating securities directly from your brokerage account into Big Sisters' account, you eliminate any capital gains tax and will receive a tax receipt based on the fair market value the day shares are received.

#### MYTH #3 "I'M TOO YOUNG... IT'S TOO COMPLICATED"

**You can become a philanthropist; simply plan ahead.** Planning your estate is an important step in your life. It can seem a little overwhelming, but by talking to your financial advisor, they can help you determine a strategy, teach you about different options and ensure your intentions are realized.

**Learn more about Planned Giving, contact Antonia Jennings - 604-873-4525 ext 316 or email at [akjennings@bigsisters.bc.ca](mailto:akjennings@bigsisters.bc.ca)**