

EVERY CONNECTION COUNTS



Dear Big Sisters Community,

On behalf of all the youth we support, their families and our dedicated volunteers, I want to thank you so much for your incredible contributions over the last year. You came together during a second year of uncertainty and gave generously to help ignite potential.

This year, to date, we have supported almost 600 youth across our group, academic and community mentoring programs.

I am so proud of the Big Sisters team who were constantly innovating new ways to engage, support and inspire – including increasing check-ins to families, launching a virtual art mentoring group and creating new community partnerships.

All of this would not have been possible without our generous donors. As you will read more about in this newsletter, your commitment was evident at this year's Luminary Soirée, which raised an incredible \$750,000!

The end of the year is a good time to celebrate recent successes, but also to take a moment and reflect on our continuing work. In addition to continuing to support our existing matches, Big Sisters has also seen an increase in referrals which we look forward to supporting in the New Year.

I am deeply grateful to all in the community whose support allows us to be there for youth today and into the future.

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

Hanne Madson
Executive Director of Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland

MEET ASHLEY AND SHANIA



With the support of a Big Sister, anything is achievable.

Growing up, Big Sister Shania moved around multiple times with her family. As a timid child, she constantly had to face the challenge of adjusting to a new environment and making new friends. Luckily for her, she had older siblings to guide and support her. Eventually, Shania attended SFU to pursue a career in education. One day, her school was hosting a career and volunteer fair and Shania stumbled upon Big Sister of BC Lower Mainland's booth. She knew this was the perfect volunteer opportunity for her because as the youngest sister in her family, she understood what it felt like to be a Little Sister and have people to look up to. She knew this would be a great opportunity for her to build her leadership skills all while making a difference in a youth's life.

Little Sister Ashley joined the Study Buddy program in grade 6. After suffering from a concussion, Ashley lost all of her confidence and quickly retracted into her shell. As a freshman in middle school, Ashley cried every day. Moving into a new school is tough for any young girl and Ashley felt it was a big shift in her life. At the time, her family was experiencing

a financial crisis. Despite this, her mother was adamant in seeking out extracurricular activities to distract her daughter. Eventually, her mother came across a poster for Big Sisters and thought it would be a great opportunity for her child to improve her academics, meet new people, and build her confidence. The added benefit, it was all free! Little did she know; a simple tutoring service would ignite a new-found passion within her daughter.



Upon joining the program, Shania was matched with Ashley. Initially, the two would meet at the Coquitlam library to go over Ashley's homework. Shania recalls them both being extremely shy in the beginning of their Study Buddy relationship but as the weeks went on, deeper conversations were had and real connections were made. The quiet library that they spent their time in every week quickly became a safe space for them to connect. "It's more than just homework," Ashley says, "it's a place to meet a friend."

Over the years, Shania watched Ashley pursue her love for acting and evolve into a passionate, goal oriented, and charismatic young woman. Shania noticed the passion that was radiating from Ashley whenever she spoke about acting. Ashley's

ambition and enthusiasm inspired Shania to consider if she should take an acting class. Now as a substitute teacher, Shania says, "I can learn so much from her, just as much as she can learn from me."

The pair continued to grow their bond and Ashley could feel her confidence increase every day. "I feel like I would still be kind of lost [without Big Sisters]," Ashley said, "I would still be struggling with self-confidence." With the pandemic, the pair were unable to see each other as often as before but continue to stay connected via Skype.

5 years ago, the duo started out as complete strangers. They were quiet and unsure of what was in store. Today, they have a bond that they never would have imagined.



MEET US AT THE PUMPKIN PATCH!

This fall, our Activities Committee planned the first in-person match event since the start of the pandemic. Those who were comfortable with participating in-person attended a pumpkin patch to celebrate the season of autumn and enjoy the crisp fall air. Mentors, mentees, and volunteer staff alike were ecstatic to finally spend time in person together, rather than the now normal virtual meetups. Everyone enjoyed exploring the farm, boarding the hayrides, and picking their pumpkins.

It was certainly a GOURD time!



BIG SISTERS' LUMINARY SOIRÉE

Following last year's first-ever virtual and highly successful Luminary Soirée, the team at Big Sisters knew they were up for a challenge. With the health protocols constantly changing, everyone had to stay alert and remain hopeful for the event. Hours upon hours were invested into planning and replanning the gala, ultimately leading to the conclusion of dedicating a night to the power of mentorship at the first-ever hybrid event.

Not only was this hybrid event the first of Big Sisters' time, it was one of the first of its kind in Vancouver's non-profit events scene. Through numerous planning phases, trials, and errors, Big Sisters 7th annual Luminary Soirée carved a path to what may be the future of events and galas.

On the night of October 15th, in-person guests arrived to the Rocky Mountaineer station in glamorous gowns and sharp-looking suits while virtual guests tuned into the live studio event from the comfort of their own home galas. The safety of all attendees and staff were top priority to ensure an overall successful night. Words were exchanged, smiles were shared, and memories were made. It was a night to remember.

With the support of all of our sponsors, staff, volunteers, attendees (both in person and virtual), and donors, we are proud to announce that we surpassed our goal and successfully raised over \$750,000 for Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland. Thank you for believing in the power of mentorship. We couldn't do what we do without you.

VIEW THE IN-PERSON PHOTO GALLERY [HERE](#).

VIEW THE VIRTUAL PHOTOBOOTH GALLERY [HERE](#)



NEWS AND UPDATES



Win BIG and support children across BC with the Big BC Lotto!

Our Jackpot is currently at:

\$24,705

TICKETS FOR SALE UNTIL DEC 2

DRAW FOR WINNER ON
DEC 3RD AT 12:00PM PST

Half the pot could be yours!

Odds are 1 in 62,500!

1 FOR
\$10

5 FOR
\$25

60 FOR
\$25

[BUY TICKETS HERE!](#)

Know your limit play within it! Must be a resident of BC to enter. 19+



Thank



you



Aritzia!

We are so grateful for Aritzia's generous support over this 2021 holiday season. It has been another challenging year for everyone but particularly the youth and their families we support.

Last year Aritzia gifted 85 super trendy, Super Puff jackets to Big Sisters youth across the Lower Mainland. Our Mentees were THRILLED and so gracious.

This year they continue to ignite the potential as they have donated 1000 Super Puff jackets to all Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies to keep youth warm across Canada.

Thank you Aritzia for always showing that we are truly **BIGGER TOGETHER.**

HELP US MAINTAIN MENTORING IN THE LOWER MAINLAND.

We do not know what the future holds, but what we know is that the Littles we support will need our help and their Big Sisters as the world recovers. [Click here to make a donation!](#)