



IGNITING THE **POWER**  
AND **POTENTIAL**  
OF YOUNG PEOPLE

**2021**  
ANNUAL REPORT

**Big Brothers  
Big Sisters**  
OF NORTH AND WEST NIAGARA

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

- PAGE 3**    Message from our Board President
- PAGE 4**    2021 Board of Directors
- PAGE 5**    Message from our Executive Director
- PAGE 7**    Service Area and 2021 Impact
- PAGE 8**    Message from our Director of Services
- PAGE 10**    Message from our Director of Fund Development
- PAGE 11**    Event Highlights
- PAGE 12**    Message from our Board Treasurer
- PAGE 13**    Financial Highlights

# MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

It's an understatement to say the past couple of years have been challenging. All of our lives have changed dramatically. Our communities have changed, the families and the young people we support have all changed and our Agency has undergone big change. Despite these changes, Big Brothers Big Sisters of North & West Niagara remains an integral part of the community landscape, celebrating 85 years! We are committed to build a better future for our team, our families and our community through this year of recovery. And, moving forward we are embracing and prioritizing engagement, innovation and growth.

We said good-bye to two key members of our leadership team. 2021 marked the momentous occasion of retirement for both Dale J. Davis, CEO and Frances Lettieri, Director of Services. We are grateful for their tremendous years of service and leadership within the Big Brothers Big Sisters movement. So many families and community champions were touched by their work. We remember and appreciate their contributions and we wish them every happiness in this exciting new chapter of their lives.

In February 2022, we welcomed Erin Graybiel, our new Executive Director. After nearly 20 years of experience serving children and youth in Niagara, we were fortunate to welcome Erin to the agency in the role of Executive Director. Not only does she bring a wealth of knowledge and leadership expertise, there is a fabulous alignment on passion for community-based youth programs. I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to key players on the Board of Directors that worked to support our hiring, recruitment and media initiatives. Incoming President Gynette Smith, Bryan MacCulloch, Laura Lee-Blake and Ashleigh Myers. Their support and guidance was instrumental.

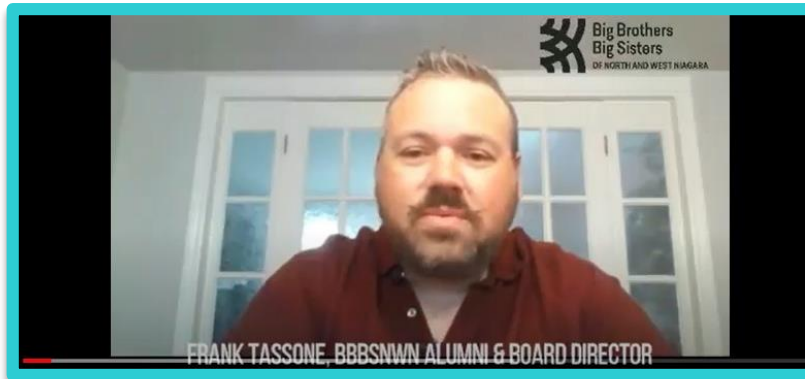
As we strive to keep pace with the constant change, we continue on a path of accountability, transparency and trust. We are focused on assembling the right people to drive strategy, those not afraid to ask the hard questions and those who exude a genuine care and passion for what we do.

I am grateful by the tremendous support of the team and the Board during this year of change. As I continue to look ahead, I see another exciting and transformational year of recovery with new leaders erupting. I see an exciting year re-establishing pre-pandemic in-person mentoring opportunities, in-person events and cultivating exciting new partnerships and relationships.

Our strength to move forward is propelled by the contributions of our dynamic team, our devoted volunteers, our Board and Stakeholders, past and present. The way we do business will continue to evolve and to grow as our young people **need** our mentoring programs. We are committed to helping them achieve their full potential. I encourage the community to join us on this journey and I invite **YOU** to become a **Big Believer**.



**Michelle Miller, Board President**  
Lais Hotel Properties Limited



Meet Frank Tassone, a Board Director and former Big Brother. [CLICK HERE](#) to hear his story.

## 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We want to thank our engaged board members, a diverse group of individuals committed to children and youth thriving in North and West Niagara.

**Michelle Miller, Board President**  
Lais Hotel Properties Ltd

**Bryan MacCulloch, Director**  
Niagara Regional Police Service

**Gynette Smith, Vice-President**  
Former Owner, Tim Hortons

**Paul Nohara, Director**  
Freedom 55 Financial

**Stephen Mannell, Treasurer**  
FlavourArt North America Inc.

**Bradley Moyer, Director**  
Braymark Inc.

**Tiffany MacLeod, Secretary**  
Lais Hotel Properties Ltd

**Michael Bronzi, Director**  
Royal Bank of Canada

**Frank Tassone, Director**  
Regional Municipality of Niagara

**Ashleigh Myers, Director**  
Bell Media

**Nino Fasulo, Director**  
TD Canada Trust

**Alexandra Del Vecchio, Director**  
Lancaster Chown & Welch LLP

**Laura Lee-Blake, Director**  
Pearle Hospitality Inc.

# MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am honored to have joined an agency with such a strong legacy and ongoing significant impact. Big Brothers and Big Sisters has been providing critical programs and services that ignite the potential of young people for 85 years in North and West Niagara. Today, the agency continues to provide vulnerable youth with positive mentoring relationships allowing them to overcome adversity. Within a short period of time, I was able to recognize the key ingredients that allow our agency to thrive.

- The positive impact the agency continues to have on the lives of young people during the pandemic is outstanding. Young people have been emotionally impacted the hardest during the pandemic, and we're seeing the consequences through increased demand for mentorship. Big Brothers Big Sisters has continued to offer services and programs in the safest way possible.
- Over 200 volunteer mentors currently give their time and resources to continue connecting with the youth they support, both in-person and virtually. They are committed to building upon these relationships to support young people at a time when they need it the most.
- Big Brothers Big Sisters relies on generous support from individuals and businesses who are advocates, event participants, donors, sponsors and more. Thank you for your continued generosity!
- I am motivated by the dedication of the Staff team and commitment of the volunteer Board of Directors. There are so many people that contribute their energy, time and talent to make this agency thrive.
- We are very fortunate to have strong community partners including United Way Niagara, the Niagara Catholic District School Board, District School Board of Niagara, and too many more to name. We look forward to expanding our partnerships and collaborating with more organizations to enhance the supports we offer young people.

As we continue to expand our in-person programs and services, we work hard to support the growing needs of the community and surpass pre-pandemic service numbers. Our goal is to have more than 1,000 young people involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters of North and West Niagara, but we cannot do it without your continued support.

I look forward to leading our agency as we regrow with an intentional focus on innovation, engagement and growth. We are stronger together!



**Erin Graybiel**

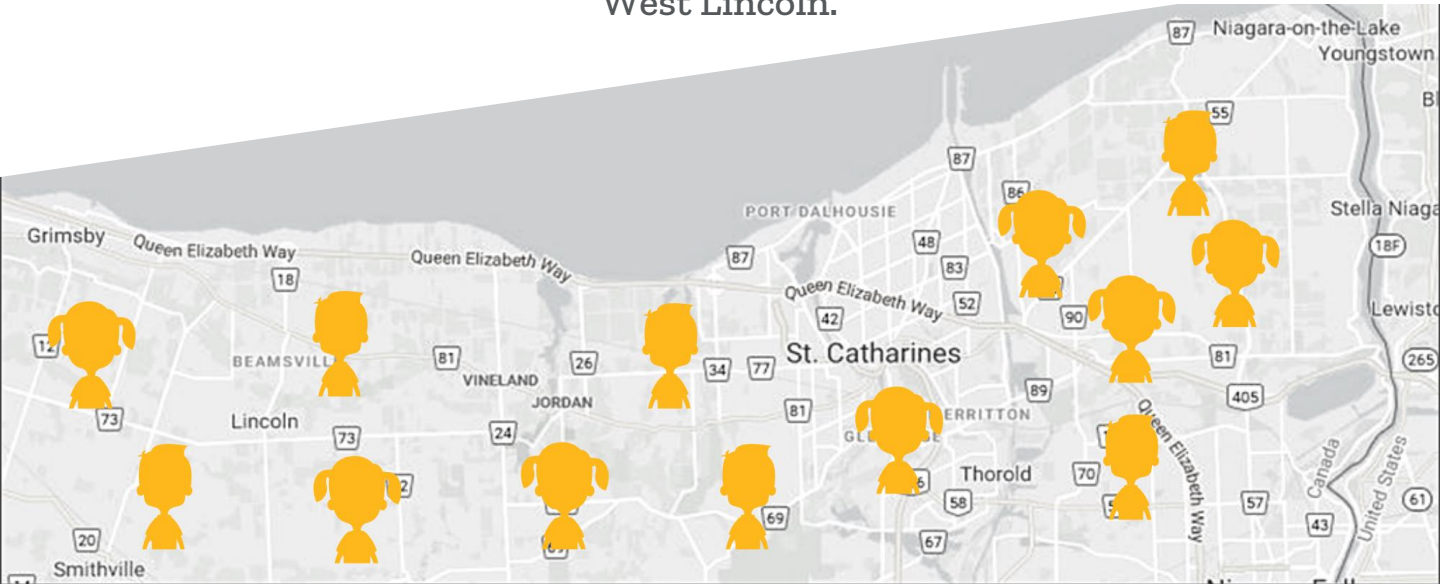


[CLICK HERE](#) to view our full list staff and their contact information.



# SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

Big Brothers Big Sisters of North and West Niagara proudly serves St. Catharines, Thorold, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Grimsby, Lincoln and West Lincoln.



## 2021 IMPACT

While the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic caused setbacks, we are proud of the impact that our agency achieved in 2021.

**10,784**

Hours volunteered

**232**

Individual volunteer mentors

**31**

Schools supported by our mentoring programs

**311**

Total children and youth mentored

**286**

Individual children and youth mentored

**38**

New community based 1 to 1 matches

# MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF SERVICES

In reflecting on 2021, I commend the Service Delivery staff for the commitment, dedication and resiliency they have shown in order to provide the best support and service possible to our volunteers, children and families through another challenging year. The agency and staff navigated numerous challenges and worked diligently to overcome obstacles to ensure we continued providing the high-quality programs Big Brothers Big Sisters of North and West Niagara (BBBSNWN) is known for.

We quickly shifted our service delivery model in 2020 to create virtual screening and matching opportunities for our new Littles and Bigs, while allowing for online match meetings of existing matches in order to protect all parties' health and safety. We relied heavily on this model throughout 2021 as regularly changing public health restrictions called for pauses on in-person programming. Through these adaptations, we were one of the few youth-serving organizations that continued to operate through additional pandemic waves.

*When a long-term ISM match had to move their visits virtual, the pair were hesitant, but made the best of it. The mentee taught her mentor many different online skills – giving her a feeling of confidence and boosting her self-esteem. The mentor successfully adapted to the new platform and her time and attention continued to make a difference in her mentee's life. Their ongoing bond demonstrates how essential it is that we continue to have our mentors available to students, especially during times when social supports are limited. A mentor can make a difference in a young person's life regardless of limitations such as a public health crisis, age difference and/or virtual learning curves. - Adapted from former Mentoring Coordinator, Jessica*

The more we can encourage people to stay connected, strengthen their communication, and develop goals for their time together, the better their outcomes will be after this situation has passed. We are doing all we can to support the safety and health of our staff, our volunteers, young people and their families during these uncertain times.

We have learned through the pandemic that BBBSNWN is uniquely positioned to ensure mentors continue to connect with children and youth who need it the most, when they need it most. Now, more than ever, children and families are facing increased anxiety, distress, social isolation, fear, and worry. Mental health challenges do not stop when a pandemic begins.

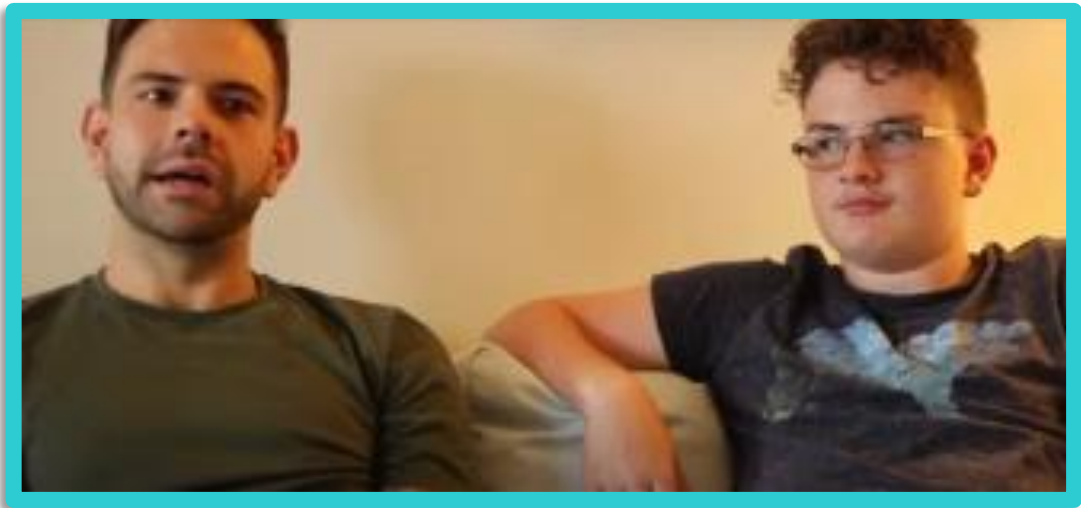


*A lot of people believe that we serve “troubled youth”... now, I’ve realized that we serve great kids who have been through some terrible things. Big Brothers Big Sisters is, for many families, a refuge and a bastion of hope in a province that severely lacks mental health resources and funding. I truly believe that every kid could use a mentor, but we provide mentors to kids who need it, and it makes all the difference in the world for them.” - Tyler, Mentoring Coordinator*

There is important work that will need to be continued after the pandemic is stabilized. Our young people will need the support of a mentor now more than ever to cope with these challenging times of change and uncertainty. We are committed to continuing to be a pillar of support in our north and west Niagara communities, and look forward to developing stronger community partners as we forge ahead to support the children of today, and the Niagara citizens of tomorrow. We are #strongertogether.



**Ashley Sinclair**



Meet Charles and Davin, one of our community based 1 to 1 matches from 2016 - 2020. [CLICK HERE](#) to watch their story.

# MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF FUND DEVELOPMENT

In 2021, the pandemic continued to hamper our ability to plan and execute our fundraising and special event plans. Our dynamic team was able to rise to the occasion, and modify plans while at the same time remaining nimble enough to take advantage of opportunities as they appeared. We were able to pivot and adjust to the local landscape in a spirited and relevant way.

Substantial work went into increasing awareness of our agency and the significant life-changing impact mentoring relationships have. Our community came together, and got behind the call to “take a child off the waitlist”. The support from donors, participants, sponsors and stakeholders was monumental, allowing the agency to continue to provide essential services at a time when they were desperately needed.

Forming supportive relationships with local businesses was also a priority in 2021. Extensive time was spent connecting with businesses of all sizes, to discuss opportunities for them to get involved with BBBS, and in turn support young people and their families. We were thrilled to see so many Niagara businesses step up to make a positive impact in our community.

Now more than ever, your support is essential. Big Brothers Big Sisters raises over 80% of our annual revenue thanks to support from donors, special events, and grants. Your support allows young people to experience mentoring relationships that are critical to their healthy development and future success in life.

We are excited to build upon these foundational elements as we continue to expanding our fundraising efforts.



**Jorie Zavitz**



Check out our 2021 rewind video! [CLICK HERE](#) to watch some of our highlights from the 2021 rewind video!

# EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

## Beatties Bigger Together Golf Classic

We were fortunate to be able to bring back the Big Brothers Big Sisters signature golf event in August of 2021. We received overwhelming support from participants and sponsors to make this one of our largest fundraisers! We had over 120 individuals participate in a fun filled day of golf and comradery at the St. Catharines Golf and Country Club.



## Virtual Trivia

Trivia moving to a virtual platform allowed us to continue to engage agency stakeholders, generate funds, and have some fun from the comfort of our homes. The event was expanded to through the creation of enhanced interactive sponsorship packages and allowing participants to collect pledges in addition to their event ticket purchase. In 2021, we had a total of 184 individuals participate in our two Big Brothers Big Sisters Virtual Trivia events!

## Smile Cookie

Tim Horton's Smile Cookie was a significant third-party event for Big Brothers Big Sisters of North and West Niagara in 2021. We are very grateful to the Tim Hortons Ownership group in our service area for selecting us. Thank you, to all the volunteers, our partner recipient charity Niagara Children's Centre and Tim Hortons stores for helping us make and sell over 70 thousand cookies! Thanks to support from third party partners like Tim Hortons we continue to provide the highest quality volunteer-based mentoring programs to children and youth.



## Project Snow Flake

Do you want to buy a snow flake? We distributed 10,000 copies of the snowflake cards to local business in north and west Niagara. This event provided the opportunity to collect donations at many locations throughout Niagara and increase awareness for our agency. We were fortunate to have support from over 40 business partners who agreed to collect donations for a snow flake and display them at their business. Thank you to all our business supporters and community ambassadors who helped make our first year of this campaign a huge success.



**Thank you to all our amazing Sponsors and Community Partners!**

[CLICK HERE](#) to view our full list of Sponsors and [CLICK HERE](#) to view our full list of Community Partners and Donors.

# MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD TREASURER

Through a period of such uncertainty, Big Brothers Big Sisters of North and West Niagara has maintained a culture of financial prudence while investing in its staff and focusing on the aspects that make the Organization such a terrific charity to be involved in. We are all extremely proud to be part of an ever-growing movement that provides its stakeholders with such a high social return on their investment.

Despite the challenging fiscal environment, Big Brothers Big Sisters of North and West Niagara continues to attain positive operating results. For this, we thank our funders, the generosity of individual and corporate donors, the dedication of volunteers and Board members, and the passion of the Organization's caring staff for their ongoing support and confidence. Together we make it possible to deliver such impactful youth mentorship programs and help build a brighter future in our community.

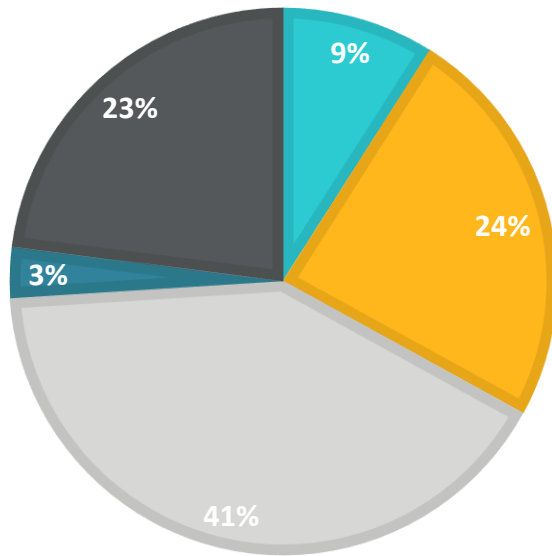
As we advance through 2022, we do so with a breath of fresh air. Loosening Covid-19 restrictions will allow the Organization to bolster its in-person mentoring to pre-pandemic levels and reintroduce the in-person fundraising events that make up such a significant component of the Organization's revenue. Part of our focus this year will be to replace government assistance with new and revived revenue streams and to further collaborate with our community partners while Keeping the health and wellbeing of our stakeholders at the forefront of our decision-making.

Thank-you to all stakeholders for bringing Big Brothers Big Sisters of North and West Niagara ever closer to reaching its vision that all young people realize their full potential.



**Stephen Mannell, Board Treasurer**  
Flavour Art North America Inc.

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



## SOURCES OF REVENUE

- Fundraising Events
- Donations
- Grants
- Other
- Government Assistance (COVID-19 relief)

## SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

**\$23:\$1**

EVERY \$1 INVESTED IN MENTORING  
RETURNS \$23 TO SOCIETY<sup>1</sup>

## MENTORED YOUTH SEE POSITIVE RESULTS:

### IN LIFE

- 81% REPORT FINANCIAL LITERACY
- 98% BELIEVE THEY MAKE GOOD LIFE CHOICES
- 80% PURSUE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

### IN COMMUNITY

- 87% HAVE STRONG SOCIAL NETWORKS
- 50% MORE LIKELY TO VOLUNTEER  
(AND GIVE 30% MORE TIME!)
- 13% MORE LIKELY TO DONATE  
(AND GIVE 20% MORE MONEY!)

### AT WORK

- 47% HOLD SENIOR LEADERSHIP POSITIONS
- 17% MORE LIKELY TO BE EMPLOYED
- 13% HIGHER EARNINGS  
(\$115,000 HIGHER LIFETIME INCOME)



WE ARE  
#BIGGERTOGETHER



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18 Ontario St, Grimsby, ON L3M 3H1



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[www.bbbsmentors.ca](http://www.bbbsmentors.ca)

# Big Brothers Big Sisters

OF NORTH AND WEST NIAGARA

Charitable Business Number 130485907 – RR0001



@BBBSNWNiagara



United Way  
Niagara