



MEDIA RELEASE

August 19, 2022

**BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF NORTH AND WEST NIAGARA
HAS AN URGENT NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS**

August 19th, 2022 (St. Catharines, ON) – Big Brothers Big Sisters of North and West Niagara is calling on community members to step up and become volunteers with the agency. For as little as one hour a week you can become a mentor and have a life-changing impact.

Big Brothers Big Sisters relies on volunteers to deliver mentorship programs to children and youth between the ages of 6 and 18 years of age. In early 2019, the agency had over 300 volunteers as mentors for over 1,000 children. Over the last few years as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, their volunteer pool has shrunk and less new volunteers are signing up to get involved. **The agency is looking to recruit close to 100 volunteers to meet the anticipated demand for mentorship programs during the 2022/2023 school year.**

Big Brothers Big Sisters offers one on one and group mentorship programs for children and youth in schools throughout the Niagara Region. The schools are valuable partners who help identify vulnerable children and youth that will benefit the most from spending time with a caring and supportive adult. Once screened and trained, volunteer mentors are matched with a young person “little” or paired up to support a small group of young people “littles” and are instantly positioned as role models or “bigs”. The relationship between a Little and Big has been proven to be instrumental to their development, sense of self-worth and confidence. As mental health concerns are on the rise with children and youth, mentorship is a proven strategy to support young people to realize their power and potential.

“Our mentoring programs strive to reach young people who face adversity and are in need of an additional supportive relationships,” explained Ashley Sinclair, Director of Services for BBBSNWN. “Our agency formally matches children and youth with adult volunteer mentors who are trained and supported by our staff. We currently have a significant need for male-identifying volunteers and we are asking the community to sign up to be a volunteer. Help us match these children and youth with a role model who they can trust and believes in them.”

If community members do not come forward to volunteer, the number of children and youth waiting to experience life-changing mentorship will continue to grow. This is an amazing opportunity for individuals and businesses to get behind Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and help them continue to form life-changing relationships for vulnerable young people in Niagara.

“Game On! Is a group mentorship program that encourages activity, healthy life choices and promotes play, education, self-worth and community to participants,” explained Caleb, a Game On! Mentor. “I have had the pleasure of being a long-term mentor in the Game On! program and have found the interactions, relationships and rewards to be immeasurable. I am confident that the participants have enjoyed the program as much as I have, and it has increased their self-esteem and relationship building skills.”

If you have any hour a week you can spare, sign up today to make a difference in a young person’s life!

GET INVOLVED TODAY

905-646-3230 ext. 234 | volunteer.nwn@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca

<https://nwniagara.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/volunteer/>.



ABOUT BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF NORTH AND WEST NIAGARA

For 85 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters of North and West Niagara has been making a meaningful difference in the lives of at-risk youth through our mentoring programs. For both Big and Little, the mentoring experience becomes a life-changing relationship built on friendship, empowerment, and trust. Mentoring is an important way to give youth experience with these essential back-and-forth relationships, developing them into healthy young people better able to deal with and overcome life's adversities. Children with mentors are more likely to graduate from high school, go to university, get full time employment and have on average higher incomes than those who do not have a mentor.

For media inquires please contact

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