



**Big Brothers Big Sisters of North and West Niagara in partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Central Niagara announce intent to amalgamate to form one Niagara agency.**

November 10, 2022

Big Brothers Big Sisters of North and West Niagara (BBBSNWN) and Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Central Niagara (BBBSSCN) have announced their intent to amalgamate into a single agency, creating the largest mentoring program to support children and youth across Niagara.

The new agency will operate under the name Big Brothers Big Sisters of Niagara (BBBSN). “Our goal is to create a single, strong Big Brothers Big Sisters that will increase our impact throughout the entire Niagara region,” says Frank Ruberto, Board Chair for BBBSSCN. “We want to ensure that every child that wants a mentor has access to a mentor.”

The amalgamation will allow BBBSN to enhance and expand programs and services across the Niagara region, leveraging best practices from both agencies, and ultimately provide consistent support for vulnerable children and youth. “The ongoing support and strengths of our two agencies, staff, volunteers, donors and stakeholders will contribute to the success of this natural evolution for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Niagara,” says Erin Graybiel, Executive Director for BBBSNWN.

The amalgamated agency will maintain the size of its collective workforce, services and locations. Over the coming months the agencies will combine fundraising efforts, services, staff teams and administrative functions. BBBSN staff structure will consider community needs, agency priorities and staff skill sets. “Joining forces is an incredible opportunity to strengthen our mission, combine resources, and maximize our impact in the community,” says Sarah Ludberg, Executive Director for BBBSSCN.

The agencies believe the amalgamation will enhance their fundraising capability across the region. “We’ve already begun to work collaboratively with joint fund raising initiatives like Project Snowflake,” says Gynette Smith, Board Chair for BBBSNWN. “One Niagara agency allows us to strengthen existing relationships with donors and partners, while also seeking out new partnerships that help us support more children, volunteers and families.”

The amalgamation is expected to be completed by the summer of 2023.

## **ABOUT BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS**

For over 100 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters 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 essential back-and-forth relationships, which help them to develop 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, secure full time employment and have on average higher incomes than those who do not have a mentor.

## **A BRIEF HISTORY OF BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS IN NIAGARA**

- For 85 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies have served Niagara's youth
- Five original Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies across Niagara:
  - St. Catharines-Thorold & District
  - Niagara Falls
  - South Niagara
  - Fort Erie
  - Grimsby, Lincoln and West Lincoln
- 2013: South Niagara and Fort Erie merge
- 2018: St. Catharines-Thorold & District and Grimsby, Lincoln and West Lincoln merge to form North and West Niagara
- 2022: Niagara Falls and South Niagara merge to form South Central Niagara

For further information, visit us at [www.nwniagara.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca](http://www.nwniagara.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca) or <https://southcentralniagara.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca> or visit our social media channels on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.