



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



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WHO WE ARE

At Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Cowichan Valley, we create, support, and empower life-changing relationships for children and youth facing adversity. With the support of our professional staff, mentors advise and challenge these young people, act as their champions, provide greater consistency in their lives, and connect them to broader experiences, opportunities, and networks. By providing a range of one-to-one mentoring programs in the community and in school, as well as through group mentoring programs, our agency, annually, helps hundreds of Cowichan Valley youth and children become resilient young people who are able to overcome life's adversities.



VISION

All young people realize their full potential.



MISSION

Enable life-changing mentoring relationships to ignite the power and potential of young people.



STRUCTURE

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada is a Federation servicing more than 1,100 communities across the country.



ISSUE

Many children and youth in Canada struggle with societal barriers and face adversities in their lives.



IMPACT

Facing prolonged adversity creates toxic stress in the brain that can negatively impact development.



SOLUTION

With the support of a mentor, these risks can be reduced or even avoided, and youth can reach their full potential.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Heading into the second year of the pandemic was another diverse and unique experience. Learning to adapt, remain flexible, and implement the skills needed for a consistently shifting response was the greatest part of our organizational navigation in 2021. During the past year, government funding and grants were the foundational support during times when regular fundraising activities were not achievable. This financial support provided the organization with the ability to expand service and respond to increased program requests, particularly with the group program.

The implementation of the Group Program Coordinator position provided curriculum development to enhance the virtual mentoring programs, where eight online virtual program groups were delivered and eight 'in-person' sessions were facilitated through our partnership schools when the pandemic permitted.

With increased staff support, the organization was able to provide service to 209 children returning us to pre-pandemic service numbers.

As the organization moves ahead, focus on maintaining financial stability, returning to annual fundraisers, exploring new fundraising initiatives and ensuring appropriate staffing levels will be paramount in the important work at hand; ensuring children and youth receive developmental relationships through mentorship.

We recognize the challenges ahead; however, we remain confident that with our strong, dedicated Board of Directors and staff team we'll continue to navigate these rough waters, keeping the focus on expanding services to serve the increasing need for mentorship in our community.

Lastly, but certainly not least... a HUGE thank you to the VOLUNTEERS who have continued their support during a vital time by providing consistency, compassion, a familiar face, and space to connect to and support children and youth. You are the heart of the organization and we THANK YOU for your time and compassion.

Nira Hopewell
Board Chair



Erin Generous
Executive Director



THEORY OF CHANGE

WHO DO WE SERVE?

- Young people who face adversity and are in need of an additional consistent and supportive Developmental Relationship.

HOW DO WE IGNITE POTENTIAL?

- By intentionally recruiting based on the needs of a community's young people
- By matching young people with a professionally screened volunteer mentor
- By monitoring and supporting that match with a professional caseworker
- By training and supporting the mentor, the mentee and the family
- By building a Developmental Relationship between the mentor and the mentee that: Expresses Care; Challenges Growth; Provides Support; Shares Power; and Expands Possibilities
- By graduating the match relationship towards natural support

HOW DO WE IGNITE POTENTIAL?

- YOUNG PEOPLE GRADUATE OUR PROGRAMS WITH MEASURABLE OUTCOMES:

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETANCY

Relationship skills
Social awareness
Responsible decision-making
Self-management
Self-awareness

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Positive Identity
Mental wellness
Social inclusion & empowerment

EDUCATIONAL ENGAGEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT READINESS

School connectedness
Commitment to learning
Enhanced constructive use of time



"This group had overall helped my confidence and I now talk to pretty much all of the girls in the group." - Go Us! Group Participant

Search Institute® has identified five elements that make relationships powerful in young people's lives. We refer to this as the **developmental relationships framework**

EXPRESS
CARE

CHALLENGE
GROWTH

SHARE
POWER

PROVIDE
SUPPORT

EXPAND
POSSIBILITIES



IN-SCHOOL MENTORING

PARTNERING ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS:

Alexander Elementary
Khowhemun Elementary
Tansor Elementary
Alex Aitken Elementary
George Bonner
Elementary
Discovery Elementary
Palsson Elementary
Lake Cowichan School
Chemainus Elementary
Crofton Elementary
Quamichan Middle School
Bench Elementary
Maple Bay Elementary
École Cobble Hill

IN-SCHOOL MENTORING MAKES A DIFFERENCE:

90% of mentors saw
a positive change in
the child they were
mentoring*
88% of students
showed improved
literacy skills*
64% had developed
higher levels of self-
esteem

The In-School mentoring program provides youth with a role model and a friend to talk to and share the experiences of growing up within the school environment. For one hour per week for the duration of the school year, mentors meet with their mentee and engage in activities such as board games, crafts or just hang out on school grounds. Matches do not meet over the summer-break or during school holidays.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Cowichan Valley developed a virtual mentoring component to our program that has served as an alternative and/or supplement to in-person meetings. This new online option helps vulnerable youth remain socially connected to caring mentors and peers despite physical distancing protocols, providing an important “lifeline” for children facing additional adversity as a result of the pandemic. BBBSCV’s Mentoring Program facilitates important developmental relationships between children and caring mentors, which research has shown to provide myriad positive mental and physical health benefits and serve as an important “protective factor” for vulnerable children. Within the In-School mentoring structure, we also offer the Teen Mentoring and Seniors for Kids programs:

TEEN MENTORING

Students in grades 10, 11, 12 attending Queen Margaret School, Cowichan Secondary, Chemainus Secondary, or Frances Kelsey Secondary could be eligible for this program. Teen Mentors may be students who want to gain leadership skills or skills in working with children, or are required to complete compulsory volunteer hours as a part of their school curriculum. Some simply enjoy spending time with kids. Teen Mentors also benefit from skill assets for resume building and scholarship applications. The Teen Mentor program is a magical program, increasing self-esteem in Teen Mentors who realize they are making a difference.

SENIORS FOR KIDS

There is no doubt that volunteering contributes to the health and well-being of our communities. Seniors make up some of our most active and engaged volunteers, playing a critical role in strengthening their local communities. Not only does it make a difference in the lives of recipients, it also benefits volunteers mentally, socially and even physically. For seniors, volunteering promotes active aging, which can enhance quality of life in one’s later years. Programs that bring people of different generations together are mutually beneficial for all participants. They prevent social isolation and provide an opportunity for seniors to share their experiences, wisdom and life skills with youth, as well as learn valuable lessons from younger people.

GROUP PROGRAMS

Go Us! and Game On! are group mentoring programs for youth aged 11-14 that focus on physical activity, balanced eating and self-esteem. The single, most important goal of the program is to positively shape the lives of youth by helping them build a positive self-image – setting them on a path to reach their full potential in life.

Group programs consist of seven to ten weekly curriculum-based mentoring sessions, held within school facilities. Each 1.5-2 hour-long session is loosely structured around four themes: physical activity, healthy eating, self-esteem, and communication skills. Groups are facilitated by 2 adult mentors and group size is limited to 6-10 youth.

The program strives to do the following:

- create appreciation for the benefits of an active, healthy lifestyle
- build understanding of what constitutes healthy eating habits and the risks associated with eating disorders
- promote the importance of positive mental activity and regular physical exercise
- encourage awareness of core values, personal interests, strengths and attributes
- support the development of leadership and life skills
- offer guidance in establishing and maintaining friendships
- instill respect for socio-economic, ethno-cultural and racial diversity

COMMUNITY MENTORING

The Community mentoring program provides children and youth with a role model to talk to and share the experiences of growing up. Through regular outings, a relationship built on trust and common interest is developed between the mentor and the mentee, and is supported by our experienced Mentoring Coordinators. The result is a life-changing experience for both the mentor and the mentee.

Community mentoring consists of Big Brothers, Big Sisters, and Couples For Kids. Couples mentoring allows partners to spend time together while learning to be a kid again. Couples also have the flexibility to mentor one on one, if one partner is not available.

The Community mentoring program usually requires two to four scheduled outings a month of several hours each and a minimum of a one year commitment.



AGENCY UPDATE

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Through virtual connections, staff and volunteers were able to continue their personal development, as well as continue to support the important work around cultural awareness and inclusion. Staff and volunteers attended various workshops through BCIT's Indigenous Awareness program, 2SLGBTQ+ workshops, BMO's e-course on Nisitohtamowin- an introduction to understanding Indigenous perspectives in Canada, and the Village workshop hosted by Kathi Camilleri, a four-week workshop on colonization and the reconciliation journey.

Additionally, we continued our learning and understanding with Marlene Rice, Elder in Residence with Vancouver Island University, who led a workshop 'The Child is Sacred'. Staff also attended the local event, 'Every Child Matters march', honoring children whose lives were lost at Residential schools.

Our work around cultural understanding, inclusion and diversity is ongoing. As an organization we are committed to ensuring safe and inclusive programming through continued learning and review of policy and practice in regard to working with children, youth, and their families.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Cowichan Valley recognizes that equity can only be achieved by continual reflection and development. Understanding this goal is an ongoing process that requires active review and reflection from staff and directors, as well as the consistent use of an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) lens to update and develop policy and practices.

During 2021 we said good-bye to long term Program Coordinator Julie Pyon and welcomed Annie Arden to our team. With much appreciation we want to acknowledge Julie for her four years of service to Big Brothers Big Sisters, and the tremendous amount of work she completed in streamlining volunteer screening, updating volunteer training modules, implementing orientation sessions as well as form development and website additions of adding online applications (an ongoing process).

Funding opportunities through New Horizons, CKNW and United Way allowed Big Brothers Big Sisters to purchase additional iPads for virtual mentoring and laptops for staff, making working and mentoring through the pandemic manageable.

SENIORS FOR KIDS STEERING COMMITTEE

BBBSCV's "Seniors for Kids" steering committee is a group led by seniors that helps BBBSCV support the intergenerational relationships made possible by our Seniors for Kids (SFK) initiative (a component of our school-based, one-on-one mentoring involving a senior mentor and a mentee in grade 2-7). This committee was instrumental in helping BBBSCV to reach and recruit new SFK participants through targeted advertising and outreach, as well as continuing to monitor and evaluate service delivery.



"She's my Big Sister, kind and my favourite person."
-In-School Mentoring Program Little

PROGRAMMING REVIEW

This year Go Girls was re-named to Go Us to support diversity and inclusion. Program curriculum was augmented for the virtual group program and BBBSCV sought feedback from experts in our community to ensure culturally sensitive and inclusive language was reviewed. Thank you to Cowichan Valley Youth Services, Margaret Moss (Janet Krenz), Vancouver Island Literacy and Kendra Thomas from Warmland Women for this support. A quick resource guide was created for group participants and virtual workshops were hosted by Cowichan Valley Youth Services (Gender Unicorn) and Margaret Moss (Body image) to support group program participants.

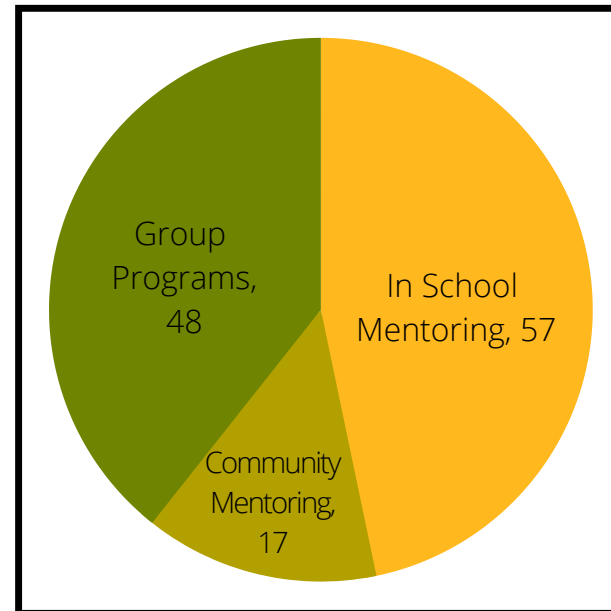
We welcomed Alex Aitken and Quamichan School to support the In School Mentoring program, as well as École Cobble Hill for the Group program Go Us. Thank you to all our partnership schools in SD 79, who support both 1-1 site based and group mentoring programs.

Learnings from 2020 recognized that building relationships virtually is new to many. To ensure that we support matches from the start, to be positive, fun, and to have meaningful interactions, we developed Engagement Kits. These kits were funded through the New Horizons Seniors program. Each mentor and mentee received an Engagement Kit as part of their new match, to assist with the development of the new relationship. The Engagement Kits provide activities and interactive games that initiate conversation, and get-to-know-you activities that assist a new virtual connection.

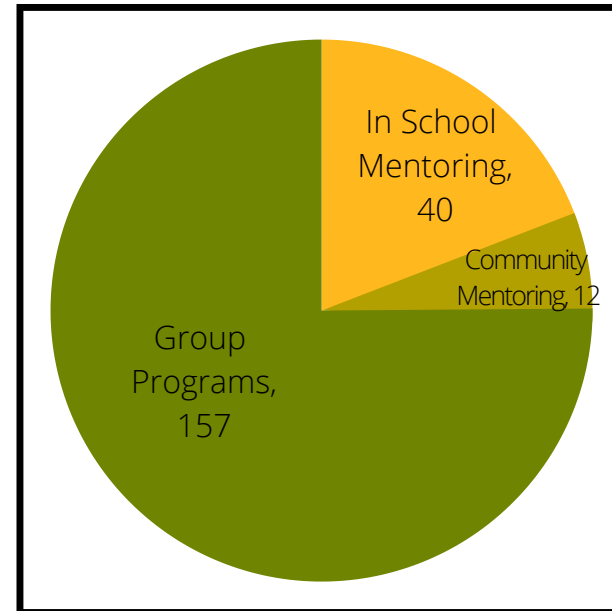
Additionally, our agency had 15 youth participate in the Boston Pizza Youth Labs project through the partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada. Youth had a voice in preparing workshops, materials and resources and joined many youth across Canada in sharing these collected materials. This program was youth led and two workshops were hosted in our local area: one for Social Inclusion with Meesha from Literacy Central Vancouver Island, and the other was Mind, Food and Body by Janet Krenz from the Margaret Moss Centre. The Youth Labs team inspired us with their insights, resilience, knowledge, and willingness to learn and share how we could support youth best in mental health.

YEAR AT A GLANCE

Children Served 2020: 122



Children Served 2021: 209



"He is kind, fun, adventurous and our match in 3 words was friendly, balanced and fun. I liked that he was a male influence for me."

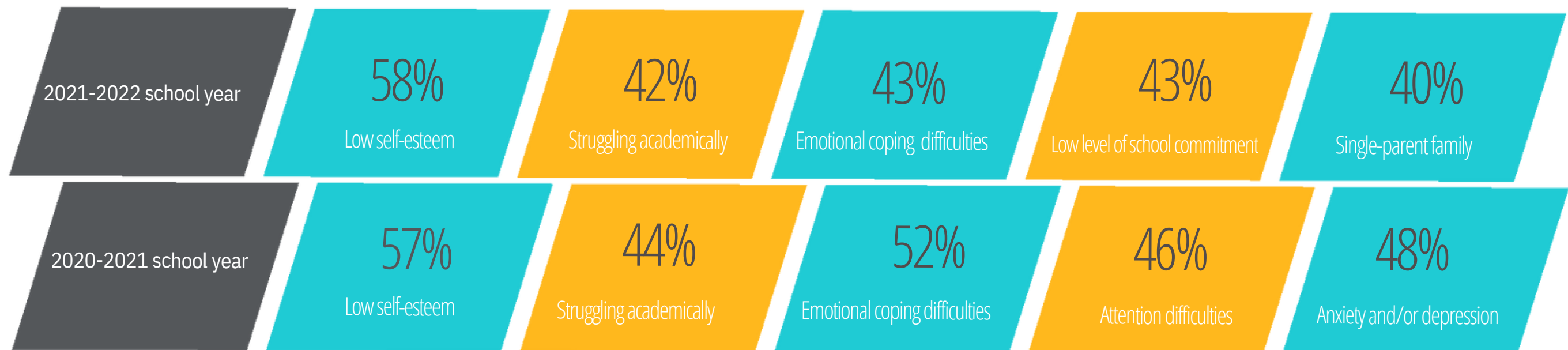
-Community Little

The agency hosted five practicum placements over the year, where BBBSCV staff had the pleasure of working with the following students; Lauren McKay and Jasmine Hopp from Vancouver Island University (Social Work), Vanessa Peacey from Discovery Community College (Social Services), Chelsea Carmichael from Vancouver Island University (Social Services) and Marianne Boldt from Vancouver Island University (Child and Youth Care). BBBSCV honors the opportunity to mentor students in their learning goals, preparing them for future professional practice.

This year practicum student Lauren McKay connected BBBSCV to Corrine Chow, a representative of the Metis community, Corrine joined our Go Us online groups to provide space to learn about the Metis culture. In the group sessions, participants had an opportunity to learn about the medicine bag as well as make their own, practice dot art and make bannock.

TOP FIVE CHILDHOOD ADVERSITIES:

*Percentages based on # of children for whom adversities were disclosed by their school and/or parent/guardian



SITE-BASED PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

*In-School mentees and group participants



VOLUNTEERS

In 2021, 66 individuals gave their time to mentor a child/ youth in need. BBBSCV's programming was also supported by an additional 6 volunteers who helped out with organizational activities, fundraising events (Festival of Wreaths) and within the office. Mentors and support volunteers contributed 1,360 hours mentoring and supporting organizational activities. Through the Volunteer Coordinator position (short term contract with United Way), this position supported one of the major hurdles of mentor recruitment during a pandemic. Pre-pandemic, 133 mentors inquired for various programs, dropping to an all-time low of 12 inquiries during 2020 and recovering slightly in 2021, rising up to 64. Promoting mentoring through traditional methods continued to be challenging during Covid-19, virtual mentoring and tech support continued to engage mentors in virtual mentoring. Hope of better days ahead sits with all of us, with reduced Covid infections paired with Provincial restrictions lessening, it is anticipated we will see numbers of inquiries and mentors continue to rise. Mentor recruitment continues to be an important goal of Big Brothers Big Sisters to reduce the wait time for mentees in receiving a mentor match.

IN-SCHOOL MENTORS

Heather Mitchell
Jasmine Hopps
Marianne Boldt

Travis Peterson
Lauren McKay

Erin Hogstead
Anna Hilberry

SENIORS FOR KIDS

Pip Woodcock
Carol Heino
Karen Dodds
Linda (Diane) Kay
Linda Joe

Kimberly Girolami
Laura Pigott
Heather Miller
Robyn Brinkac
Lorna Richardson

Sheri-Lyn Goddard
Jean Saville
Dian Chang
Patti Etkin
Claudia Roland

Murray Milne
Donald MacGregor
Shannon Etkin
Charlaine Latta
Andrea Campbell

TEEN MENTORS

Taryn Neligan
Taylor McKee
Emily Swain

Yue (Jennifer) Zhou
Teagan Kropp
Mabel Carroll

Jake Dorby
Cecilia Xia

Catherine Yuan
Yunqi (Yoyo) Lui

GROUP FACILITATORS

Erin Hogstead
Susannah Coons
Emily Swain
Kieran Olenick

Adara Mitchell
Anna Hilberry
Vanessa Peacey
Stephen Finch

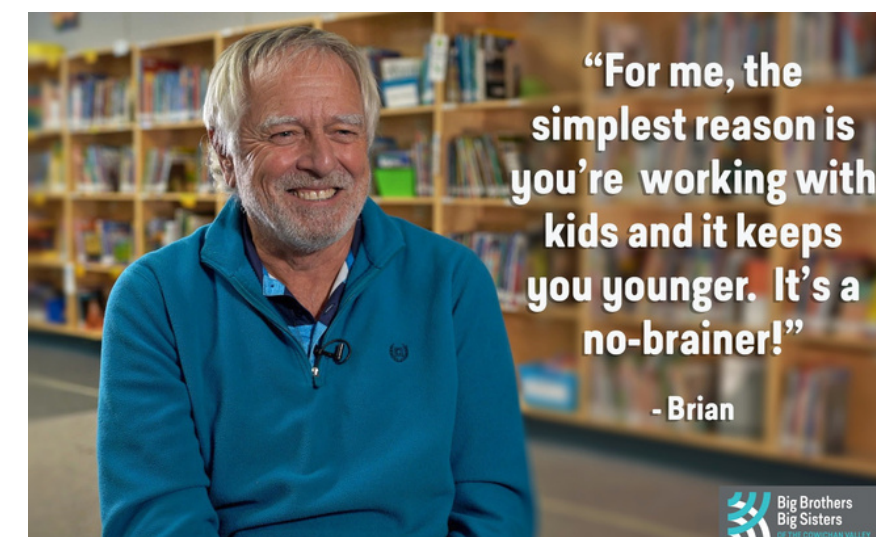
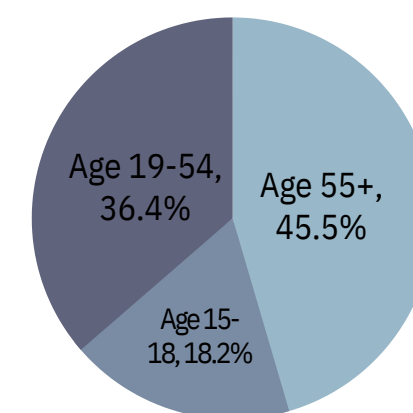
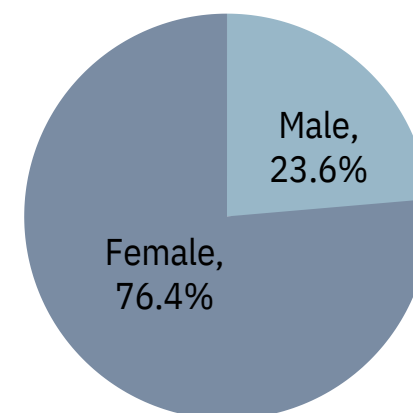
Jasmine Hopps
Lauren McKay
Marianne Boldt

COMMUNITY MENTORS

Camilla Lockwood
Derek Gibson
Tyler Scammell
Braeden Nash
Donald MacGregor

Michelle Truitt
Lisa Hudson
Kevin Hossack
Emily Homuth
Wendy Patel

William (Bill) Hibberd
Tara Brooks
Don (Brian) Stott
James Funfer



PRACTICUM STUDENTS

Lauren McKay
(VIU Social Work)
Jasmine Hopps
(VIU, Social Work)
Vanessa Peacey
(Discovery
Community
College, Social
Services)
Chelsea Carmichael
(VIU Social
Services)
Marianne Boldt
(VIU Child and
Youth Care)

SENIORS FOR KIDS STEERING COMMITTEE

Wendy Patel
Claudia Roland
Pam Richmond
Pip Woodcock
Patti Etkin
Shannon Etkin
Donald MacGregor
Jean Saville
Laura Pigott

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

A sincere thank you to all of our funders and program partners, all of the individuals who gave so generously to support our programs, individuals who gave anonymously, and those who made their gift through another organization. We appreciate your continued support.

Community Gaming



"We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Province of British Columbia"

New Horizons For Seniors Program



This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors program.

Canadian Tire Jumpstart



Island Ford



Tim Hortons



Island Savings



United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island



Canadian Women's Foundation



Hamber Foundation



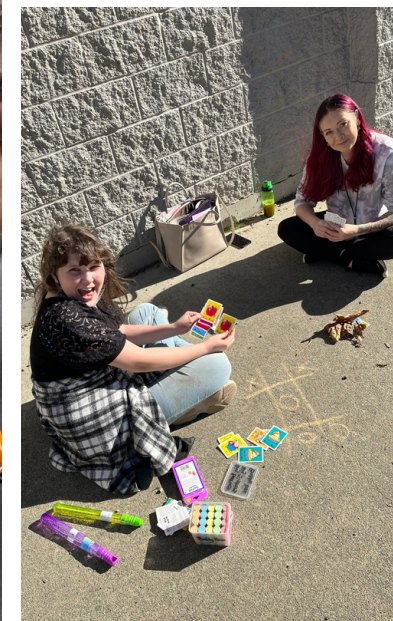
Coast Capital Savings



CKNW Kids Fund



Boston Pizza



"Having a mentor makes me feel happy. She taught me how to be myself." - In School Mentoring Little





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