



Big Brothers
Big Sisters
OF THE COWICHAN VALLEY

2022 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, volunteers and mentors we can work to provide positive opportunities for young people, act as their champions, provide greater consistency in their lives, and connect them to broader experiences, 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

As a volunteer organization, we do not exist without volunteers! We appreciate the dedication, commitment and passion to supporting youth in our community! It is an honor to hear and see the impacts of how time spent together in a match relationship can make a difference to both a child/youth's life but also to our mentors! Thank you for being you, a dedicated individual supporting your mentee!

Thank you to the Board of Directors who continue to whole heartedly embrace the mission of our organization, enabling life changing mentoring relationships to ignite the power and potential of young people. Your dedication to strengthening the organization so we can serve more children, provides hope for all of us to ensure we can provide services for youth in need!

Last year was filled with staff transitions as well as added two new contract positions for Group Programs (Go Us and Game on). Despite changes, staff settled nicely into their new positions and we continued on with the important work of matching children and youth to mentors.

Although we saw a dip in numbers of children served in 2022 down to 171, we are happy to report numbers have already surpassed our highest number of children served at 223 (directly attributed to the growth in the group mentoring programs) in 2023.

We continue to see challenges in lower number of mentors/volunteers, particularly male mentors. The team is working hard to meet some of these challenges so no child/youth ages out of our programs or does not receive service. This has been a long-term struggle that we embrace as no longer acceptable. We need to work smarter, harder and share the challenges with community so we can deliver calls of action and calls for change. Waitlists need to be reduced, children and youth need mentors, particularly self-identifying boys.

Diversifying our revenue streams, increasing our annual fundraisers, and networking within our community will be important foundations in 2023. Much work is ahead, but feel confident we can take challenges in stride!

Nira Hopewell
Board President



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



“I will always remember Go Us because when I was asked to write about what made me happy I wrote this group and the leader (Natalie)” – Kassie 11

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
Drinkwater Elementary

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 vulnerable youth with a role model to talk with and share their experiences of growing up within the school environment. For one hour per week while school is in session, mentors meet with their mentee (either in-person or virtually) and engage in activities such as games or crafts, or just hanging out on school grounds.

The program strives to:

- provide youth impacted by adversity with a role model and a friend.
- promote the importance of staying in school and healthy relationships with family and peers.
- instill trust and self-confidence in order to help youth make healthy decisions.
- encourage leadership skills and independent thinking in participating youth.

TEEN MENTORING

Teen mentors are students who want to gain leadership skills, who want to benefit from skill assets for resume building or university applications, or who enjoy spending time with kids. Teen mentoring pairs high school students in grades 10-12 with elementary students. Students attending Queen Margaret's School, Cowichan, Chemainus and Frances Kelsey Secondary school are eligible to participate in this program.

SENIORS FOR KIDS

Senior mentors are older adults (55+) looking to give back through mentoring. Seniors for Kids facilitates inter-generational relationships that benefit both participants. Children benefit from a dedicated mentor with a lifetime of experience and seniors benefit from the social engagement and sense of purpose that comes from volunteering. For seniors, volunteering promotes active aging, which can enhance quality of life in one's later years. Mentoring assists with social isolation and provides an opportunity for seniors to share their experiences, wisdom and life skills with a youth.



COMMUNITY MENTORING

Community Mentoring involves ongoing, regular interactions between mentor and mentee in community settings (e.g. meeting for tea, bowling, hikes, etc.). These trust-based relationships are supported by our experienced Mentoring Coordinators to ensure safety and success.

The program Strives to:

- provide youth impacted by adversity a role model and a friend.
- promote the importance of staying in school and healthy relationships with family and peers.
- instill trust and self-confidence in order to help youth make healthy decisions. encourage leadership skills and independent thinking in participating youth.

Why is Mentoring Important?

Research shows that developmental relationships provide children with a number of mental and physical health benefits. Mentoring is a critical protective factor that helps children gain confidence, acquire new skills, and build supportive community connections. These assets set mentored children up for lifelong resiliency. Mentoring helps kids stay in school, avoid risky behaviour, and experience first-hand the importance of helping others in their community.

GROUP PROGRAMS

PARTNERING GROUP PROGRAM SCHOOLS:

Alexander Elementary
Khowhemun Elementary
Tansor Elementary
Alex Aitken Elementary
George Bonner Elementary
Discovery Elementary
Lake Cowichan School
Chemainus Elementary
Crofton Elementary
Bench Elementary
Maple Bay Elementary
École Cobble Hill Elementary
École Mount Prevost Elementary
Drinkwater Elementary

Group Mentoring programs are weekly sessions for youth aged 11-14 that focus on physical activity, healthy lifestyles, mental wellness, and healthy relationships. Group mentoring takes place over 7-10 sessions at school facilities either during the school day or after school. During each 1-1.5 hour weekly session, 6-10 participants share a nutritious snack, take part in a physical activity/game, and participate in a group exercise related to healthy bodies and healthy minds. Group mentoring is facilitated by our staff assisted by volunteer mentors (when available).

Group Mentoring at a Glance:

Group Mentoring consists of two programs: **Go Us! and Game On!**

Go Us! is targeted at self-identified girls, two-spirit, or non-binary youth.

Game On! is targeted at self-identified boys, two-spirit, and non-binary youth.

In both programs, participants take part in fun and engaging activities that cover four key focus areas:

Healthy Lifestyle:

- nutrition/healthy eating and the risks associated with eating disorders
- appropriate exercise and sleep habits
- the risks of drug/alcohol use and smoking/vaping

Media Literacy:

- critical thinking skills for media representation
- positive vs. negative media resources
- the importance of good social media hygiene/practices

Positive Relationships:

- recognizing and managing bullying and peer pressure
- setting healthy boundaries
- recognizing healthy and unhealthy relationships

Mental Wellness:

- recognizing symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression
- self-regulation and stress-management skills
- information on mental health resources



AGENCY UPDATE

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Staff participated in professional development by attending courses, workshops and webinars throughout the year. Mental Health First Aid Commission of Canada, Little Warriors Prevent It Training- how to protect children from sexual abuse, A.R.T. Anti-racism, Trauma Informed training, and Responding with Respect (Advancing Resilience) – Canadian Mental Health Association, to name a few.

Staff honored National Indigenous day by participating the ‘Every Child Matters Walk’ and attended the Grief to Medicine event with open hearts in understanding the impacts of Residential schools on our First Nations communities.

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.

In 2022, there was quite a few staff changes. We said good bye to Go Us Program Facilitator Erin Hogstead, Mentoring Coordinator Sheri-Lyn Goddard, and Program Coordinator Annie Arden. We welcomed Sarah Kendall (Mentoring Coordinator) covering Adara Mitchell’s (Director of Service Delivery) Maternity leave. We hired Jasmine Hopps as our new Program Coordinator, Natalie Ensz & Shawn Levine as our Group Program Coordinators for Go Us and Game On.

Big Brothers Big Sisters also had the opportunity to share our voice regarding youth and mental health. Some BBBSCV matches participated sharing their thoughts. Thank you, United Way British Columbia, for allowing us the opportunity to share on this important area of need. <https://youtu.be/oLIPFod7IFs>

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, new table toppers, business cards and community connections. In addition mentor and mentee engagement kits were produced and given to every Senior for Kids mentoring match. Kits were designed for virtual and in person mentoring to support matches in getting to know one another at the start of their relationship.



PROGRAMMING REVIEW

We welcome new partnership schools for site base programming; Bench Elementary, Drinkwater Elementary and Maple Bay Elementary who partnered with Big Brothers Big Sisters to host one to one In-School Mentoring program. We are thankful to School District 79 partnership schools providing support in helping us reach children and youth in need of a mentor.

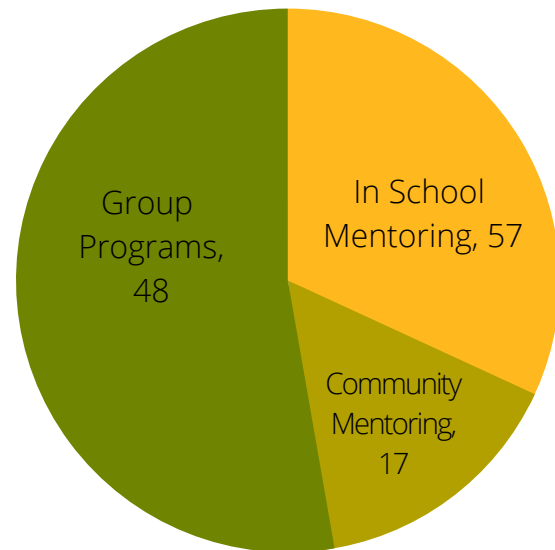
In School year 2022-2023 with various funding opportunities the organization was able to hire our first Game On facilitator to support boys who self identify as male to run a male lead group and hired a Go Us program facilitator who provided group service to self-identifying females. In total 23 groups were facilitated with 180 served in group programs.

We hosted two workshops with Dietitian Janet Krenz from Margaret Moss. Staff and volunteers reviewed body image, media literacy as well as the Canada Food guide and relationships with food to support youth around positive body image and healthy mindsets.

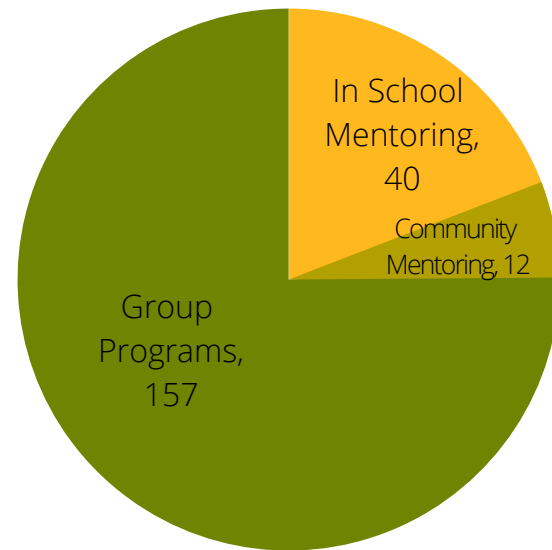
Through the group programs we worked in partnerships to bring in Subject Matter Experts from our community. We appreciate these opportunities to work with organizations such as Cowichan Valley Youth Services, Warmland Women and Central Vancouver Island Literacy. Having the support from external organizations helps to deepen the impact of programming on important topics youth are facing.

YEAR AT A GLANCE

Children Served 2022: 171



Children Served 2021: 209



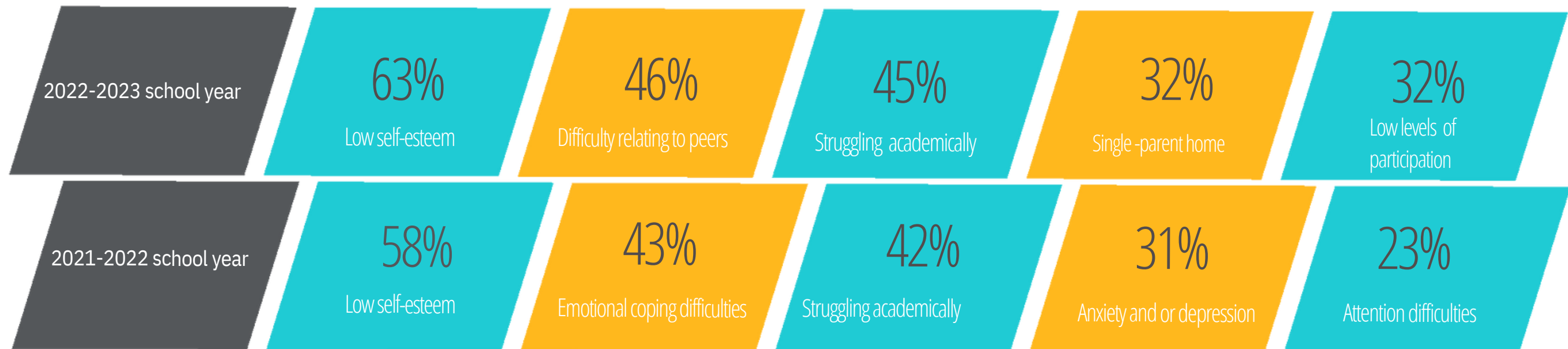
“I like having a big brother because if I’m having a hard day or something I can talk to him and ask him to help me.” Shared Little Brother C.

The agency hosted four practicum placements over the year, where BBBSCV staff had the pleasure of working with the following students; Ashley Vigar & Sarah Kendell from Vancouver Island University (Social Service Diploma program), Samantha Makow Vancouver Island University Bachelor of Social Work and Jade Hobenshield Vancouver Island University for Child and Youth Care.

We appreciate the experience to work along side students who work to obtain experience in the field, while working towards achieving their learning goals and preparing them for future professional practice.

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 2022, 54 individuals gave their time to mentor a child/ youth in need. BBBSCV's programming was also supported by an additional 23 volunteers who helped out with organizational activities, fundraising events (Bowl for Kids Sake & Sunfest 50/50 sales). Mentors and general volunteers contributed 1,708 hours towards mentoring and organizational activities. As covid 19 surged on in the early part of 2022 the agency continued to see lower numbers of inquiries and volunteer mentors. 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 66 in 2022.

As restrictions started to ease the organization was able to attend in person presentations and in person network events such as but not limited too; Seniors Expo and Chamber of Commerce to promote volunteerism. Volunteer recruitment moving forward is met with new challenges, less community engagement and responsiveness to call to actions. New strategies, techniques and innovation will be required to tackle the growing gap between number of children in need of a mentor and the declining volunteer participation, when traditional methods no longer appear fruitful. We have much gratitude for the mentors who stayed during difficult transitions over these past years as well as new mentors who step forward to support the need of our children and youth. Thank you!

IN-SCHOOL MENTORS

Heather Mitchell
Jasmine Hopps
Marianne Boldt
Rita Cooper

Travis Peterson
Samantha Makow
Christine Fagan
Kathini Cameron

Erin Hogstead
Anna Hilberry
Jade Hobenshield
Jordynn Janny

SENIORS FOR KIDS

Pip Woodcock
Murray Milne
Robyn Brinkac
Linda Joe

Maria Curtis
Donald MacGregor
Patti Etkin
Claudia Roland

Sheri-Lyn Goddard
Shannon Etkin
Charlaine Latta
Andrea Campbell

TEEN MENTORS

Mabel Carroll

Emma Anzarut

GROUP FACILITATORS

Erin Hogstead
Anna Hilberry
Emily Swain
Ashley Vigar

Meg Cuthbert
Katie McCleod
Marianne Boldt
Kathini Cameron

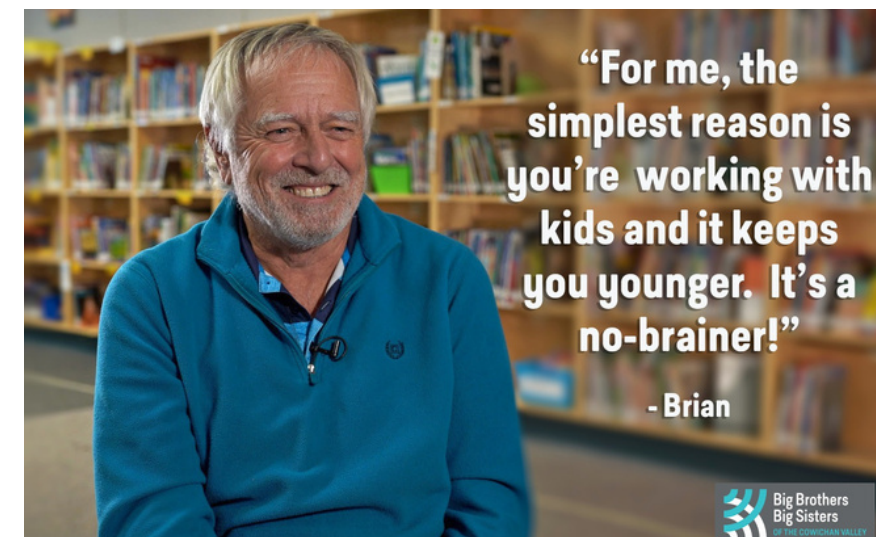
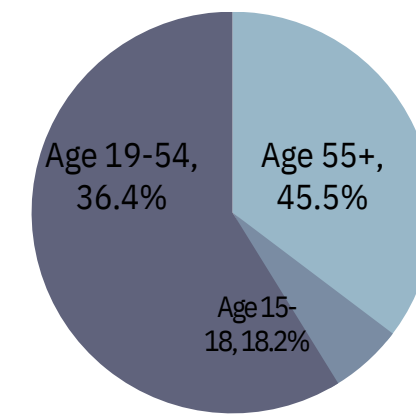
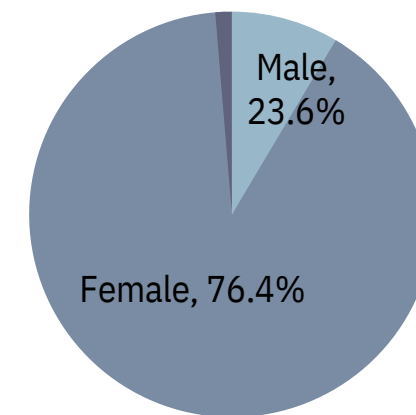
Samantha Makow
Jade Hobenshield
Sarah Kendall

COMMUNITY MENTORS

Camilla Lockwood
James Funfer
Brian Stott
Braeden Nash
Wendy Patel

Michelle Truitt
Lisa Hudson
Andrew Wedge
Emily Homuth

Nicolas Schwetz
Tara Brooks
Donald MacGregor
Joshua Hart



PRACTICUM STUDENTS

Ashley Vigar
VIU Social Service Diploma
Sarah Kendall
VIU Social Service Diploma
Samantha Makow
VIU Bachelor of Social Work
Jade Hobenshield
VIU Child and Youth Care

SENIORS FOR KIDS STEERING COMMITTEE

Wendy Patel
Claudia Roland
Pam Richmond
Pip Woodcock
Patti Etkin
Shannon Etkin
Donald MacGregor



PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Thank you to all of our funders, program partners, individual donors and community supporter who gave so generously to support our programs. The strength of our organization is based on the strength of our community support! We appreciate your support to help us achieve our mission to enable life- changing mentoring relationships to ignite the power and potential of young people.

Community Gaming



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

Tim Hortons



Hamber Foundation



New Horizons Seniors Program



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

Island Savings



A DIVISION OF FIRST WEST CREDIT UNION

Civil Forfeiture



Island Ford



United Way British Columbia



Working with communities in BC's Interior, Lower Mainland, Central & Northern Vancouver Island

Island Health



Telus Friendly Future Foundation



Kroffat Brake & Auto



Vancity Community Foundation

Greygates Foundation

OodyOos Pet Supplies

Galaxy Motors

The McLean Foundation



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





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