

Big Brothers
Big Sisters
OF TORONTO

Reflections on a Year of Perseverance

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



PERSEVERANCE
[pur-suh-veer-uhns]

~ Noun

Steady persistence in a course of action, a purpose, a state, etc., especially in spite of difficulties, obstacles, or discouragement.

Message from CEO



In our recovery from the pandemic, BBBST emerged greater than ever.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, BBBST was unwavering in our commitment to defend the potential of children and youth in Toronto.

We continued to support Littles and families in 2021 through virtual mentoring, providing protective gear for in-person match outings, as well as offering additional supports such as tutoring and other educational opportunities thanks to the Lightbulb Lab and Park Street Education.

BBBST spent 2021 focusing on innovation and modernization of Service Delivery in order to set us up for growth in 2022 and beyond. The Poirier Group volunteered their time to support us in improving efficiencies in delivering our services. FreshBooks interviewed mentors so we could better understand and support our Bigs. Additionally, we took a deeper dive into our data and the lasting impacts of our intervention.

Volunteers are the heart of BBBST. We are deeply grateful for the volunteers who support BBBST in a number of ways. To our Board, your volunteer leadership has brought us through the pandemic in a stronger position to serve more Littles and families. I want to thank our Events Committee for all of your hard work pivoting events. Lastly, a heartfelt thank you to our Bigs. Without your dedication and commitment, we could not do what we do; you are truly our heroes.

I continue to be deeply grateful for our staff and students as we embark on a journey of unprecedented growth through focused cohorts in 2022. We will continue to partner with organizations to reach more young people. We look forward to matching more Littles with Bigs within the Rexdale community and continuing our growth in Scarborough and many other neighbourhoods across the city.

I can't wait for all of the opportunities 2022 will bring and I hope you will join us in continuing to empower young people across Toronto to thrive through the power of mentorship!

Leanne Nicolle

President & CEO

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Toronto

2021 Board of Directors

We are so grateful to be served by an outstanding and diverse Board of Directors, who are engaged and committed to helping young people across Toronto reach their full potential.

Paul Henry - Chair,
Principal at Revival Capital Partners

Sharon Kim - Treasurer,
Executive Managing Director &
Co-Head Global Foreign Exchange, TD Securities

Lilly Wong - Vice Chair,
Senior Partner at Gowling WLG

Randy Carter - Vice Chair,
Staff Superintendent, Community Safety Command –
Field Services at Toronto Police Service

Peter Block - Market Vice President,
Real Estate Corporate Banking at CIBC

Julie Adam - President, News & Entertainment at
Rogers Sports & Media

Lisa Boulanger - Chief Commercial Officer at Flexiti

Nick Eaves - Chief Venues & Operations Officer at
Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment

Nicole Frew - Executive Vice President and
Chief Compliance Officer at Scotiabank

Mark Harrison - Founder, MH3 Collective

Sam Jawad - Executive Vice President,
Head of Banks and Intermediaries, ACI Worldwide

Dean McCann - Corporate Director, Chief Financial
Officer (retired) at Canadian Tire Corporation

Tim Piggott - Partner, National Managing Partner,
Private Equity & Pensions at EY

Michael Prosserman - CEO at
EPIC Leadership Support Inc.

Aly Rahemtulla - Co-Owner & CEO at
Sphere Manufacturing Group

Message from the Chair



In 2021, BBBST continued to build its foundation and position itself for exceptional growth in the coming years. We have enhanced our services while providing clear leadership, as we weathered the adverse effects of the pandemic. We emerge today from the pandemic more efficient, more focused than ever, and in a strong financial position.

During my tenure with BBBST, I have witnessed the Agency's transformation of becoming more evidence-based in our approach and delivery models. Our adoption of the Search Institute's Developmental Asset and Development Relationships Framework has allowed us to track and measure tangible positive outcomes. We continue to meet the growing expectations of our donors and our community, by collecting data and more clearly measuring and validating the positive impact of our mentorship relationships. The one thing that has not changed is the unwavering commitment of all the staff and volunteers, including our dedicated Board, to serve the Littles and support their families.

Over the past 12 years of volunteering with BBBST, I am proud to have been part of a team that has ignited the potential of over 10,000 young people across our diverse City to thrive in the areas of: Self Esteem, Education and Career Prospects. I am delighted that BBBST's incoming Chair, Mark Harrison, will bring a fresh perspective and a growth mindset to the Agency, as BBBST pursues its growth strategy.

It has been a truly rewarding experience serving as Chair for the past 4.5 years and I look forward to continuing to support BBBST in its pursuit of impacting more children and youth for many years to come!

Paul R. Henry

Outgoing Chair, Board of Directors 2017-2021
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Toronto



“I am honoured to take on the Chair of the Board of Directors as BBBST scales for renewed growth. As we strive to reach and empower more young people to see their unlimited potential, we will also focus inwards by committing to build a diverse Board reflective of the community we so passionately serve.”

~ Mark Harrison
Incoming Chair, Board of Directors 2022
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Toronto

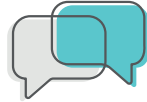
The Impact of COVID-19

The mental health challenges experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic – especially by children and youth – pose serious public health risks that we can't afford to ignore. Many young people are left behind in education, economic opportunities, health and well-being during a crucial stage of their development.



70%

of children and adolescents in the GTA experienced deterioration of their mental health during the pandemic.¹



33 k+

children report they don't have a friend they can talk to about how they are feeling.²



15 k+

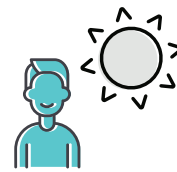
children in Toronto report they don't have an adult family member they can talk to.²

Formal mentoring programs like BBBST's are a powerful antidote to the effects of the pandemic, as they actively mitigate the negative social effects and help close the mental health gap.



75%

of Littles who had regular contact with their mentor reported feeling less isolated during the pandemic.



70%

of Littles who had regular contact with their mentor reported that they helped them when they felt worried or anxious during the pandemic.

¹Cost, K.T., Crosbie, J., Anagnostou, E. et al. Mostly worse, occasionally better: impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of Canadian children and adolescents. Eur Child Adolesc Psychiatry (2021).

²COVID 19 Child and Youth Well-being Study: Toronto Phase One Report. June 2020. Prepared by Maximum City

Impact of Mentoring

Symptoms of Depression

51% **NON-MENTORED YOUTH** reported suffering from symptoms of Depression while only

44% **BBBS YOUTH** reported feeling the same

Symptoms of Anxiety

40% **NON-MENTORED YOUTH** reported suffering from symptoms of Anxiety while only






28% **BBBS YOUTH** reported feeling the same

The Impact of Developmental Relationships

Project Ignite

In 2021, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada launched 'Project Ignite' in which BBBST and over 80 national agencies participated. This was a national initiative – made possible by funding from Scotiabank and collaboration with the Search Institute® – that enabled us to revise our Big Fundamentals training for mentors to incorporate a Developmental Relationships (DR) framework while also integrating evaluation tools to measure the strength of Developmental Relationships across our matches.

The Developmental Relationships (DR) framework is a valuable tool with a singular focus: **strengthening relationships in young people’s lives**. Our improved Big Fundamentals training - that now incorporates DRs and evaluation tools - will enable Bigs to be intentional in their mentoring relationships. BBBST continues to support Bigs and Littles in creating and fostering the kinds of relationships that propel young people to learn, grow, and thrive.

Challenge Growth:		82% Youth feel that their mentor encourages them to be their best.
Expand Possibilities:		66% Youth feel their mentor has connected them with new people, places, or ideas.
Express Care:		91% Youth feel their mentor shows them that they matter to them.
Provide Support:		63% Youth feel their mentor helps them get things done.
Share Power:		93% Youth feel their mentor listens to their ideas and takes them seriously.

All five elements working together... makes a relationship developmental.

BBBST Community Demographics

FAMILIES	LITTLES	BIGS
55% of the families we work with live in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas	85% of BBBST Littles self-identify as a visible minority	47% FEMALE
62% have a household income under \$50,000.	55% come from single-parent homes	44% languages are spoken by BBBST Bigs
40% have a household income under \$30,000	53% MALE	52% MALE
	59 Languages spoken by BBBST Littles	1% NON-BINARY
	46% FEMALE	1% NON-BINARY

Measuring Our Impact

Our mentoring programs have the power to effect positive results in young people in all facets of their lives.³



1063

YOUTH MENTORED



50,000

HOURS VOLUNTEERED



615

VOLUNTEER MENTORS



670

NEW MATCHES MADE



**SUCCEEDS
IN SCHOOL**

96%

of Littles want to do well at school.

98%

of Littles look forward to learning new things.

64%

of Littles like to read and read for fun.



**MAINTAINS
GOOD MENTAL &
PHYSICAL HEALTH**

96%

of Littles feel good about themselves.

88%

of Littles think about how they are going to make a difference in the future.

22%

increase in Littles who feel they have some control over the things that happen in their lives.



**VALUES
DIVERSITY**

98%

of Littles feel it is important to help other people.

97%

of Littles feel it is important to speak up for people who can't and that everyone should be treated equally.

96%

of Littles know and spend time with a diverse group of people who are not like them.



**OVERCOMES &
RESISTS DANGER**

30%

increase in Littles who feel that if someone hurt their feelings, they would be able to deal with it peacefully.

95%

of Littles feel they can say no when someone wants them to do something that isn't safe.

82%

of Littles feel they can make healthy eating choices.



**EXHIBITS
LEADERSHIP**

96%

of Littles feel they can stand up for what they believe in.


90%

of Littles feel they can tell the truth even when it is difficult to do so.

94%

of Littles feel they are good at making and keeping friends.

³BBBST measures the impact of our intervention based on the Search Institute's® Developmental Relationships and Developmental Assets Framework.



My son is definitely happy with his Big and looks forward to their visits. His Big motivates him to be more physically active, set fitness goals, and celebrate successes. I appreciate the fact that he's an excellent role model for my son.

~ Parent/Guardian of Little Brother

The Scarborough Decentralization Project

The past three years of BBBST's Scarborough Decentralization Project have been a great success. The project, which was funded by a three-year Grow Grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, enabled BBBST to provide developmental relationships through the support of a mentor to children and youth in Scarborough. We increased visibility and impact in several Neighbourhood Improvement Areas* (NIAs) by taking up permanent residence in Scarborough and supporting the local youth in developing strong emotional and social skills through mentorship.

Youth living in NIAs in Toronto have the highest rates of suicide, self-harm, and acute mental health challenges. In response to this urgent need, BBBST made an intentional shift to provide programming in and recruit mentors from Scarborough.

As the funding concluded in 2021, BBBST will continue in our commitment to support underserved communities. We will continue to build our partnerships in Scarborough and focus on moving our services and staff into other communities, like Rexdale. Our work in Scarborough is a blueprint for new engagement models that fit different communities' specific needs, challenges, and barriers as we expand.

319
YOUNG
PEOPLE

The Scarborough Decentralization Project

directly impacted 319 young people over three years and allowed BBBST to drastically increase the number of matches between mentors and mentees, while also increasing awareness of our services in the community.

Successful Collaboration

Within the framework of the program, we successfully connected and collaborated with local communities and organizations who supported us in raising awareness of the project and our need for volunteers!

- Black Focused Fraternities
- Black Graduate Student Association
- Black Professional Association
- Boys and Girls Club of East Scarborough
- Canadian Tamil Professional Association
- East Scarborough Storefront
- Skinz Barbershop
- St. Stephens Presbyterian Church
- The Mid-Scarborough Hub
- Toronto Fire Charity Committee

*NIAs are neighbourhoods that have inequities on several indicators of well-being.

Supporters

As Big Brothers Big Sisters of Toronto faced the challenges of the pandemic, our amazing partners continued to support us, reminding us that our Littles, our Bigs, and our agency can count on your dedication, commitment, and generosity.

Circle of Leaders Campaign

This year, we continued the Circle of Leaders Campaign. The campaign was established to reach a \$5 million investment goal that will enable BBBST to prepare for unprecedented growth - to serve 4,000 vulnerable youth by 2025. A big thank you to our seven Campaign Cabinet members for their hard work and dedication, including our Chair, Stephen McDonald, who is a long-time supporter and whose leadership has played a tremendous role in reaching the halfway mark of our campaign!

The Poirier Group and FreshBooks

We would like to express our thanks to The Poirier Group and FreshBooks. Over the past year, we enhanced the efficiency of our internal processes of matching and monitoring Bigs and Littles. Matching time is now 30% faster thanks to a matching tool designed by The Poirier Group. Meanwhile, our partnership with FreshBooks allowed us to innovate to improve the volunteer experience. Thanks to these impactful partnerships, BBBST has and will continue to reduce the wait time for our applicants while improving the efficiency, experience, and impact of our programs and services.

Park Street Education

Park Street Education is a progressive virtual school combined with in-person learning activities. Students, parents, and teachers work together to customize the learning experience to meet every student's needs and find a learning solution that works best for each individual student.

Thanks to their scholarship fund, children and youth participating in BBBST programs have been able to receive access to Park Street and their integrated curriculum. In the 2021 academic year, a total of 10 BBBST Littles received a full scholarship to Park Street. Additionally, Park Street provided the after-school program 'Lightbulb Lab' to 26 of our Littles!

Eight Capital, Reid Obradovich, and Winston Miles

With the help of their U.S. Thanksgiving Football Fundraiser, the team at Eight Capital, Reid Obradovich, and Winston Miles raised \$264,483 in support of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Toronto, helping us connect 105 children facing adversity with a caring and consistent adult for an entire year.

Scholarships

In 2021, we awarded seven post-secondary education scholarships to BBBST Littles. Congratulations to Nevaeh Peters and Divine Emuze (Alternate Winners: Sarah Yang and Tayshaun Nelson), who were the 2021 recipients of the Andra Takacs Scholarship (supported in part by the Bertha Lamb Scholarship); Anran Wang, Arthur Illiescu, and Sabreena Abdallah, who were presented with The Leaders of Tomorrow Scholarship created by the JAM Charitable Foundation; as well as Quentin Kozai and Anran Wang, who received the Ted Rogers Scholarship.

“It has been one of the most incredible experiences. I seriously couldn't ask for better Bigs for my sons. I'm thankful for BBBST and all you guys do. After all, without the team none of this would be possible. This added support during the pandemic has been very helpful. Maintaining normality when everything had changed really helped the boys.”

~ Parent/Guardian of Little Brothers

Events

Events looked different in 2021, with a focus on virtual and at-home activities. We are so thankful to our Community of Care who helped us celebrate the impact of BBBST and helped keep Bigs and Littles connected.

2021 Holiday Toy Drive

The 2021 holiday season was heavily impacted by the pandemic. With the help of our amazing donors who supported our 2021 Holiday Toy Drive, we were able to encourage holiday cheer among our Littles and their families. Thank you to Aritzia, Best Buy Canada, Rogers Sports & Media, The Block Family, The Santos Family, The Shoe Box Project, Toronto Police Services, Under Armour, and Winners (College Park) for your donations of toys, books, gift cards, and self-care items!

Winter Party Packs

Understanding the importance of supporting children and youth at a time like this, long-time supporter JAM Direct continued their wonderful tradition of creating opportunities for Littles to have positive experiences. Embracing the spirit of giving, JAM Direct pivoted from an in-person holiday party – an event they have hosted for more than 10 years – to delivering over 300 Winter Party Packs to Littles and Bigs. The gift boxes allowed our Littles to engage in activities with their Bigs and included gifts, accessories, and treats.

Big Night In

In May of 2021, BBBST hosted our first virtual gala Big Night In, presented by Scotiabank. The generous support from our community allowed us to raise an incredible \$500,000, helping BBBST to build thriving communities by empowering lives through mentorship!

Thank you to our sponsors Scotiabank, Rogers Sports & Media, Cadillac Fairview, KingSett Capital, Ernst & Young (EY), Canadian Tire Corporation, Slaughter Music, and Starlight Investments.

“Big Brothers Big Sisters of Toronto has been such a blessing to our family. From the perfect Matches with the Bigs, grocery cards, ballet ticket, and an educational scholarship ... I can't express in words how much I appreciate what you and your donors have done for my family.”

~ Thank You Note from a BBBST Little & their Family



Match Highlights

At a time when feelings of social isolation and loneliness were exacerbated, BBBST continued to work hard to connect children and youth across Toronto with positive and caring adults: in the previous year alone, we made 670 new Matches!

The Triple G Program and The Big G Program

In 2021, BBBST delivered two initiatives inspired by the idea of fostering intergenerational relationships between seniors (55+) and youth: the Triple G Program and the Big G Program. While the Big G Program matches a Little with a senior (Big G), the Triple G Program works together with Circle of Care (CoC) and the Triple G evaluation team to pair an already established match (Big and Little) with a senior on CoC's Friendly Visiting Program waitlist. The Allan Slaight Seniors Fund through the United Way Greater Toronto funds both programs.

Scientists In Schools

We ran four Scientists in School workshops in 2021, engaging a total of seven matches and an additional 13 Littles, who are currently on our waitlist. The workshops covered topics such as "Good Clean Fun", which included soap-based science experiments, and "Investigate it!", where forensic science was used to solve the mystery of a missing car!

Virtual Mentoring Matches

To support us in providing critical mentoring services to youth throughout the pandemic, the United Way Greater Toronto granted us additional funding through the Emergency Community Support Fund. This donation enabled us to support 110 Virtual Mentoring Matches!

Pumped for Post-Sec Readiness Program

BBBST wrapped up another successful year, delivering the Pumped for Post-Sec Readiness Program virtually. Thank you to our program partners: University of Toronto New College, York University, George Brown College, Humber College, and the University of Toronto Scarborough.

- **More than 70% of youth** reported they have the skills and knowledge to be successful in post-secondary education and/or the workforce.
- **More than 80% of youth** reported they feel better prepared for post-secondary education and/or a job after participating in this program.

“The Senior in our match has taught me a lot about life experiences and values.”

~ Mentor in a Triple G Match



Bigs of the Year

Our 2021 Big Night In gala provided an opportunity to honour and celebrate two extraordinary volunteer mentors, who have gone above and beyond to support Littles over the past year! Our Bigs of the Year Awards are presented to volunteers who demonstrate dedication and commitment to their mentees, ensuring their Littles have the confidence, knowledge, and tools to reach their full potential!



Alicia and her Little Tamia

Big Sister of the Year – Alicia Harris

Alicia and her Little Tamia were matched in June of 2020. Due to the ongoing pandemic, most of their relationship has been completely online. Alicia is an award-winning Director and Filmmaker from Scarborough and shares her passion for film with Tamia. The pair enjoy watching movies together and talking about her career as an artist. Tamia is 11 years old and also a talented artist. With Alicia's encouragement, Tamia continues to explore their artistic side and comments on how appreciative they are to have a friend with whom to share their artwork. The relationship between Alicia and Tamia is one of a safe and brave space, artistic connection, and an escape from current pandemic realities. Tamia's mother, Martika, has noted how much Tamia's confidence has grown since being matched with Alicia.



Rutwij and his Little Ethan

Big Brother of the Year – Rutwij Devashrayee

Rutwij and Ethan were matched this past fall and have only ever connected online. While looking forward to meeting in person when possible, the virtual connection has been a welcome friendship during this isolating time. Their weekly get-together is a definite highlight. Rutwij is an entrepreneur and speaks often with Ethan about his academic and career goals. Ethan is 15 years old, and this relationship has helped him navigate what his future might look like. Ethan has shared that Rutwij is one of the only people outside his immediate family that he can truly connect with and talk to. Ethan's mother, Katherine, has noted just how much she's seen Ethan's confidence grow and communication with others develop during their match.

I used to think that the word 'Gratitude' is only for life coaches and influencers on Instagram, but I learned about it and Ethan had a very very large hand in getting me there. I didn't have a perspective from a younger person. Having that perspective is always a very refreshing thing to have in your life.

~ Rutwij Big Brother of the Year

Fall Awareness Campaign for Big Brothers Big Sisters Month

In September 2021, Big Brothers Big Sisters launched our brand-new nationwide [fall awareness campaign for BBBS month](#). This campaign positioned our agency as an essential intervention in response to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and showcased how we champion the health and wellbeing of youth, stepping in before it's too late, to give every child the chance to reach their full potential.

In partnership with Rogers Sports & Media's "All IN" program, an initiative designed to support equity-seeking communities by amplifying stories on a national stage, the campaign emphasized the trauma that ACEs can have on children as young as seven – trauma that can last and define a lifetime without our intervention.

The BBBS awareness campaign was highlighted on Rogers TV, as well as radio and billboards across the country, with Toronto as a key market. The campaign was produced pro-bono by the creative agency Humanity and the amazing images and videos were directed, also pro-bono, by Thyrone Tommy. Thyrone is a former BBBST Little who is now a celebrated Canadian director. He showcased his film 'Learn to Swim' at TIFF 2021, where he received huge buzz and critical acclaim for his feature debut.

A very special thank you to the BBBST Littles who participated in the campaign and did a fantastic job telling our story in such a beautiful and impactful way – we are so grateful to them, their families, and their Bigs!



On behalf of the young people and their families across the country that we support, Big Brothers Big Sisters is thrilled to be a part of the Rogers Sports & Media All IN program. With over 100 locations across Canada, BBBS Agencies are proudly supporting our Bigs who work with children and youth to develop the skills they will need to thrive and overcome adversity. Rogers Sports & Media's commitment to supporting equity-seeking communities such as ours will significantly increase the awareness for the essential work we do.

~ Leanne Nicolle, President & CEO, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Toronto.



humanity

Humanity Creative Agency



Thyrone Tommy,
Canadian Film Director
and former BBBST Little



2021 Financial Highlights

In 2021, we generated \$3 million in revenue compared to \$2.7 million in 2020.

Fundraising Events		Government Grants		Individuals		Corporations, Foundations & Other		Federal Government Assistance (COVID 19 Response)	
2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
6%	26%	13%	12%	21%	16%	45%	37%	15%	9%



Summarized Financial Information

Year Ended December 31, 2021	2021	2020
SUMMARIZED STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS		
Revenue	\$3,046,544	2,737,927
Expenditures	2,876,707	2,513,441
Excess Revenue over Expenditures	169,837	224,486

As at December 31, 2021

SUMMARIZED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION		
Assets	1,974,988	1,779,424
Liabilities	470,436	444,709
Net Assets	1,504,552	1,334,715

Audited Financial Statements may be obtained online at toronto.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca
Charitable Business Number 10679 3771 RR0001

It has been one of the most incredible experiences to be honest. I seriously couldn't ask for better Bigs for my sons. I'm thankful for BBBST and all you guys do. After all without the team none of this would be possible. This added support during the pandemic has been very helpful. Maintaining normality when everything had changed really helped the boys.

~ Parent/Guardian of Little Brothers



Donors

Thank you to our DONORS.

Circle of Leaders

Ron Bresler
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Paul Henry
Martine Irman
Sharon Kim
John MacIntyre
Walt MacNee
Stephen McDonald
Waugh Family Foundation

The Big Deal Club

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Coca-Cola Canada
Government of Canada
The Ontario Trillium Foundation
United Way Greater Toronto

\$50,000 - 99,999

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