

Welcome to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George!

We are one of over 135 local agencies from more than a 1000 communities across the country as part of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George has been in operation as a non-profit organization since 1979. The agency has general membership for concerned people from the community who have the opportunity to nominate and elect people to the Agency's Board of Directors. As a non-profit organization, the operating funds come largely from gaming events and other fundraising projects and initiatives. The Agency is also supported by local donations and corporate sponsorship.

“Share a Little Magic”

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George brings children identified as being in need of a mentor together with responsible, caring adults for friendship, role modeling and support. Do you believe in **magic**? At Big Brothers Big Sisters we do because we have seen it over and over again! Magic is the sparkle in a child's eye the first time she/he has a new experience. It is the feeling that “bigs” get when their “littles” look at them and say “thank you for being my friend.” Our magic is about moments shared!

Our Staff:

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**Mentoring Coordinator
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**Big Brothers Big Sisters
of Prince George**

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WHY VOLUNTEER?

The Benefits of Being a Volunteer...

Volunteering is an opportunity to fulfill personal goals while contributing to the needs of the community.

Through Volunteering you can...

- Gain positive work experience
- Make use of your talents and abilities
- Achieve new skills
- Secure job references
- Improve communication skills
- Develop a greater knowledge and understanding of people
- Stimulate new friendships
- Receive personal satisfaction by helping people in need
- Become more aware of the community and it's resources
- Enlarge your world

From "Friends" Volunteer Handbook

Volunteers are FRIENDS and are not...

- To replace the role of the parent/guardian
- To expect dramatic changes in attitude, self-esteem or participation instantly
- To provide solutions for all problems facing children and students today
- To interfere with school policies and procedures or to become tutors
- To break the trust they have established unless abuse or neglect is suspected or known about

The Benefits of Mentoring...

- Little Brothers/Sisters were 46 % less likely than their peers to initiate drug use during the period
- Little Brothers/Sisters were 27% less likely than their peers to initiate alcohol use during the study period.
- Little Brothers/Sisters skipped half as many days of school as did their peers, felt more competent about doing school work, skipped fewer classes and showed modest gains in their grade point averages.
- There were improvements in Little Brothers'/Sisters' relationships with their peers relative to their peer counterparts.

From Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters

YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES...

What do you do to in your spare time? Do you like to play sports, bake, do arts and crafts, eat pizza and laugh until their sides hurt? You know what - There is a child who likes to do the same thing. Being a volunteer with our agency does not require you to do something you don't want to do. **You don't have to change your life to change the life of a child!**

BECOMING A VOLUNTEER

The application process is generally the same for all volunteers interested in becoming a member of our agency. Where the requirements are specific, they will be noted below.

Inquiry

Contact our agency to discuss your interest in volunteering. You will be asked to read the orientation package to explore the programs that might be suitable to your interests and availability.

Application

The applicant is required to complete the application forms. If applicant needs assistance, please contact the office. The following are required portions of the volunteer application:

- Four references (two character, one family and one employer/volunteer)
- Signed copies of the volunteer code of conduct, permission and release and confidentiality forms
- Copy of valid BC driver's license (not required for In-School Mentoring Program)
- Criminal record check. It is necessary for the volunteer to deliver forms to the local RCMP detachment (999 Brunswick St) in person. The detachment will forward the completed criminal record check to the agency.

Interview

Schedule an **interview** with one of our Mentoring Coordinators. The interview will occur in the office and will cover personal information, suitability and motivation for becoming a volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George.

Training

The applicant is required to attend the **Child Safety Training** which includes information concerning safety issues and abuse awareness (sexual, emotional, physical & neglect). The training will also include training specific to the program of interest.

Home Visit

The home visit is only a requirement for those volunteers interested in the Traditional/Couples Program.

Acceptance

The decision with regard to acceptance/non-acceptance will be based on the Agency's established criteria and shall be communicated promptly to the applicant. The Agency is under no obligation to accept or assign an applicant and no reason need be given.

Application forms are available on our website at www.bbbspge.ca or can be picked up at our office.

BECOMING A LITTLE

Referral

Referrals for the Traditional/Couples program are voluntarily made to the Agency by the parent/guardian. Referrals for the In-School Mentoring program are made to the Agency by the child's school. Referrals for the Y.E.S program are made to the Agency by the Ministry of Children and Family Development and/or Carrier Sekani Family Services.

Inquiry

Contact our agency to discuss your interest in referring your child(ren) to our programs. Agency staff will discuss your child(ren)s eligibility for our programs and you will be asked to read the orientation package.

Application

Please complete the application forms available at our office or on our website and schedule an interview with one of our Mentoring Coordinators.

Parent Interview

Upon completion of the application, an initial interview with the parent/guardian and Mentoring Coordinator will be completed. The interview will cover family background and parent/guardian and child expectations.

Child Interview

A second interview will be conducted by a Mentoring Coordinator with the parent/guardian and child. The parent/guardian and child will be interviewed both together and separately.

Training

All parents/guardians and children must complete the **Child Safety Training Program** prior to participating in the Agency's programs. Children who have been sexually abused may be excused at the discretion of Agency staff. There are different components to the CST (ie: Adolescent Safety Training) that children may be asked to participate in as their match progresses.

Acceptance

The Family will be notified of their acceptance into the Traditional Big Brother/Sister Program. When a potential match for your child has been identified a Mentoring Coordinator will be in touch with you to begin the matching process.

Application forms are available on our website at www.bbbsp.org or can be picked up at our office.

TRADITIONAL PROGRAM

Big Brother, Big Sister, and Couples

“Our lives intertwined. Bruce (little brother) became the most constant person in my life outside of family. That’s just the point of the organization’s name—he became my little brother”

Frank P, Alumni

The Traditional Program is our most popular program and the program that most people are familiar with. This program is inclusive of all of community based matches; the Big Brother/Little Brother, the Big Sister/Little Sister and Couples. Here are some frequently asked questions regarding this program. If your question is still not answered please contact us. We would be happy to talk to you!

Am I eligible to volunteer for this program?

Volunteers for this program must meet the following eligibility criteria.

- 19 years of age and older and have access to a reliable vehicle
- Be available to spend a minimum of 2 hours together each week or at least every two weeks
- Be able to commit to a minimum of one year
- Be flexible, reliable and willing to have some fun!

Who are the littles?

- Children and Youth living in Prince George aged 7 - 18 who are looking for a mentor
- Littles come from a single parent/guardian household
- Kids looking for someone who is willing to listen to them, hang out and have fun!

I’ve been screened and accepted...now what?

When a potential volunteer(s) appears to be suitable for an individual child, a Mentoring Coordinator will arrange a meeting between the parent/guardian and volunteer(s). Information such as interests and expectations will be exchanged. A decision will be made with regard to whether the volunteer(s) will be introduced to the child. If the decision is to proceed with the match, the volunteer(s) will be introduced to the child on a later date, at the family residence, in the presence of the Mentoring Coordinator.

We are now matched. What does the agency expect from me?

- Matches are expected to meet regularly for leisure activities
- Type of activities will vary from match to match and may include cooking, hockey, hiking, fishing, sewing, watching movies, playing games, crafts, skiing etc.
- Group activities will be offered by the Agency every three months and matches will be encouraged to attend. The activities are fun and a great way to meet other matches.
- It is a requirement that matches be monitored on a regular basis by our Agency. The volunteer, parent/guardian, child and Mentoring Coordinator make up a team. All four are responsible for a smooth and successful match.
- **Communication between all parties is very important!** If a “Big” or “Little” move or change phone numbers, it is a requirement that the Agency be notified as soon as possible.

TRADITIONAL PROGRAM

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Can we have sleepovers?

- Overnight visits will not occur within the first year of the match.
- At your one year anniversary a Mentoring Coordinator can go over ground rules for overnight visits

What is the cost to me?

- Expenses incurred during outings are shared.
- Low cost activities are encouraged; and the expectation is the activities will generally be no more than \$10.00 per week.
- High cost activities should be planned and saved for.

What is the parent/guardian(s) role?

- It is important that the parent/guardian know about, and approve scheduled outings.
- The parent/guardian must ensure that the Little is appropriately dressed and ready on time and must be home when the child returns.
- If alternative arrangements have to be made, the Big must be notified in advance.

What is my role?

- The Big is a friend for the Little.
- The Big has no legal, financial or parental responsibility toward the child or the family.
- Discipline, religion, education and basic needs are the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian.
- Discuss any difficulties with your Mentoring Coordinator

JUMPSTART PROGRAM



The JumpStart Program in partnership with the Canadian Tire Foundation for Families is a program designed to “give all kids a sporting chance.” The program is designed to help those children from low-income families register in organized sport programs. As some families do not have a lot of financial resources, extra-curricular activities sometimes are sacrificed. That is why Big Brothers Big Sisters are excited to be working with JumpStart to help provide opportunities that they miss out on otherwise.

The Jumpstart Program is split into two sessions. The Spring/Summer Session runs from January - June and the Fall/Winter Session runs from July to November. Each child is eligible for \$300 per session to cover the registration costs of a sporting activity. For more information and eligibility criteria contact Karrie at 250.563.7410 or reception@bbbsp.org

IN-SCHOOL MENTORING

“Matt is awesome! We have so much fun playing basketball, baking and eating cookies and hanging out”
Josh, In-School Mentee

“From my point of view, there were very, very many positive outcomes for Josh. He was a happier little boy during this year, during the time that Matt was his mentor”
Jackie, Josh’s Teacher

The In-School Mentoring Program is our school based program where all mentoring happens on school property. The focus of this program is to provide positive support to children in Grades 1-7 and to improve self-esteem and life skills. Here are some frequently asked questions regarding this program. If your question is still not answered please contact us. It would be great to talk with you!

Am I eligible to volunteer for this program?

Volunteers for this program must meet the following eligibility criteria.

- 19 years of age or older
- Reliable and consistent
- Can commit to a minimum of one school year
- Can spend one hour each week with the youth at the school, enjoying activities such as: board games, sports, crafts, reading, baking and just talking.

Who are the children?

- Children/youth in Grades 1-7
- Referrals come from School District 57 staff who have identified students who will benefit from the program.
- Children/youth looking for someone who is willing to listen, hang out and have fun.

I’ve been screened and accepted...now what?

When a potential volunteer has been identified for an individual student, a Mentoring Coordinator will contact the volunteer to discuss their interest in the match. If the volunteer wishes to pursue the match, then an initial meeting will be arranged with the In-School Liaison, the volunteer and the student. The volunteer and student will spend time together at this initial meeting getting to know each other and planning for their next visit.

What school will I be matched at?

The In-School Mentoring Program is currently being offered at seven schools in our school District. These schools are Harwin, Spruceland, Peden Hill, Carney Hill, Ron Brent, Central Fort George and Highglen.

Can we hang out outside of school?

Sorry, the volunteer may not see or communicate with the child outside of the school under any circumstances.

IN-SCHOOL MENTORING

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We are now matched. What does the agency expect from me?

- Meet with the child in the school for approximately one hour per week at the time agreed upon by all parties.
- Leisure activities will vary from match to match and may include baking, sports, playing games, crafts, using the computers etc.
- Our Agency monitors each match on a regular basis with a Mentoring Coordinator. In person or by phone a minimum of three times per year at the beginning, middle and end of the school year.
- **Communication between all parties is very important!** You are responsible for letting all parties know of any cancellations or problems through the match.
- Work with the school liaison to create a positive relationship with the school and student.

Are there any costs to me?

- There are activity bins at each school that offer things to do and ideas you can plan for your next visit.
- Low cost activities are encouraged and to be divided between volunteer and student.

What is the parent/guardian(s) role?

The parent/guardian may want to meet with the volunteer some time through out the school year.

What is my role?

- Be a friend to the child
- Be consistent and positive role model by modeling responsible behaviours such as: reliability, respect, honesty, appropriate manners.
- Be monitored by a Mentoring Coordinator and remain accountable to the Agency.
- Report any concerns to the Mentoring Coordinator and/or a school liaison.

ALUMNI PROGRAM

Are you currently or were previously a Big, Little, Mentor, Mentee, Parent, Board Member or staff member? As a member of Big Brothers Big Sisters Alumni, you can stay connected with the movement and remain informed as we continue to grow and develop. Join the Alumni program today-it's free, but the rewards are priceless! Visit www.bbbspq.ca to find further information on the Alumni program.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2008 our agency served over 140 children.

YOUTH EXPERIENCING SUCCESS

“The Y.E.S. Program has benefited CSFS children with positive results. It uses positive social and peer interactions and incorporates fun as well as learning more about their own creativity. The program builds self esteem, self care and uses a strength based approach to teach children about what they can do and assists them in becoming the most capable person a child can be”

*Sandra Ritchot, Supervisor/ Transitional Coordinator,
Carrier Sekani Family Services*

The Y.E.S Group Mentoring Program is to provide twelve children, ages 8-13, currently residing in a foster/group home setting, the opportunity to meet members of the community that have overcome challenges in their lives and to visit their places of employment or to participate in a related activity.

Am I eligible to volunteer for this program?

Volunteers for this program must meet the following eligibility criteria.

- 19 years of age or older
- Can commit to a minimum of one year
- Available a couple hours a month, usually a Saturday to participate in an activity

Who are the children?

- Children ages 8-13 who are currently clients of the Ministry of Children & Family Development and Carrier Sekani Family Services.

Is there any costs to me?

- Throughout the year there may be an activity that requires the volunteer to contribute to the cost of the activity if they chose to participate. These costs are kept minimal.

What kind of activities do we do?

- Activities vary from month to month depending on the interests of the kids and volunteers and availability of the guests. Some activities have included first aid training, wheelchair basketball, cross country skiing and disk golf.

What is expected of me while I am there?

- Volunteers are matched with a pair or trio of children and are encouraged to participate in the activity with the kids.
- Assist with set-up, clean-up and other tasks during the activity.
- Be a consistent and positive role model by modeling responsible behaviors such as reliability, respect, honesty and appropriate manners.
- Report any concerns to the Mentoring Coordinator

SPECIAL EVENT VOLUNTEERS

Our agency is always looking for **Special Event Volunteers**. These individuals are the people that help out and make our events as successful as possible. Special Events Volunteers help out with activities such as **Bowl for Kids Sake**, our annual **Raffle**, **Recruitment Booths**, and **Community BBQ's**. To find out how you can get involved contact Tim at tim@bbbsp.org.