

Big Brothers
Big Sisters
OF WATERLOO REGION

MENTORSHIP



A BETTER
FUTURE



2023 ANNUAL GENERAL
REPORT



Mentorship is a powerful connection. A relationship that nurtures potential and fosters growth. For mentors, the rewards add up to fulfillment, and for mentees, the benefits are exponential. But don't just take it from us, discover the inspiring stories of Marc Lafleur and Jose Jimenez. Through their experiences, we see a clear pattern that mentorship = opportunity, guidance, and success.

Mentorship = Empowerment



Meet Marc Lafleur. From a young age, Marc faced challenges that seemed insurmountable. Growing up in a low-income family, attending high school without the support he needed and holes in his shoes, Marc's future always seemed limited.

One day, he found Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada. Marc was introduced to mentors who saw potential in him, potential he had not dared to imagine before. These mentors provided consistent support, encouraged his interests, and guided him toward setting and achieving goals beyond high school.

Marc credits mentorship with not only his survival but his ability to thrive, leading him to found truLOCAL, an innovative startup that he eventually sold for \$16.7 million. Marc's journey from uncertain beginnings to becoming a successful entrepreneur and race-car driver underscores the profound impact mentorship can have on a person's life trajectory, no matter their circumstances.

Mentorship = many things to many people, but Marc's story is an examples of how mentorship = the possibility of a brighter future. By becoming a mentor, you can provide the same support, encouragement, and guidance that can change the course of a young person's life.

Join us in making a difference and envision yourself playing a pivotal role in the future success of young people like Marc and Jose, all thanks to your support.

STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

Children and youth in our community have access to impactful, life-changing mentoring relationships.

MISSION

We foster and support safe and empowering mentoring relationships for children and youth in our diverse community.

OUR VALUES



Belonging

We embrace diversity in our community.



Innovation

Continuous learning and adaptation enable us to create the greatest impact.



Relationship Focused

We create impactful relationships.



Impact Focused

We deliver outcomes that build resiliency.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Champion the Potential of Youth

- Strengthen supports and resources for children and families
- Identify key social and mental health issues to strengthen collaborative practices and partnerships
- Develop diversity in programs to accommodate needs in our community

Grow Awareness and Impact

- Strengthen volunteer recruitment & retention through enhanced onboarding, continuous training & support
- Build awareness, encourage ongoing involvement
- Identify new program initiatives and share our impact

Enhance Organizational Sustainability

- Use technological innovation to improve service
- Diversify revenue streams promoting sustainability
- Attract and retain staff through professional development to enhance workplace

LETTER FROM OUR CHAIR AND CEO

When the Covid-19 pandemic began, none of us could have anticipated the next three years. Nevertheless, one thing was certain throughout: our services were needed now more than ever and our firm commitment to serve the children and youth in our community.

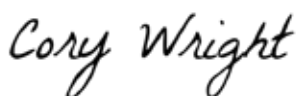
In 2023 we witnessed the evolving needs of our young people and of our volunteers. The post-pandemic world has experienced a unprecedented decline in volunteerism [across the sector in Canada] as well as the downward donation trend across Ontario and Canada. The need to reimagine our programs has never been more pressing. Our young people continue to cope with learning losses and mental health impacts, while volunteers face increased barriers like transportation issues, reduced free time, and financial constraints.

In the face of these significant challenges, we remain so thankful for our remarkable community of supporters, funders, volunteers, staff and leaders who have consistently stepped up to uphold our mission and vision. Your ongoing dedication to the children, youth, and families we support has been unwavering. Thank you!

Thanks to your continued commitment, BBBSWR was able to serve 600 children and youth with the support of 325 volunteers!

This past year has also been filled with research, new data gathering, strategic planning, and comprehensive work crucial to our future success. We were able to introduce new Developmental Relationships training and launched a new Learning Management System for on-boarding and re-training for volunteers and families. We are happy to share more program highlights and the impacts on our youth and community in this booklet.

As we take a moment to look back on our accomplishments, it's important to recognize that our journey is ongoing. In 2024, we continue to move forward with our strategic plan and our mission to improve the lives of youth by delivering high quality mentoring programs. We deeply appreciate your commitment, dedication and support. We look forward to all that we will accomplish together.



Cory Wright, Board Chair



Julie Phillips, Chief Executive Officer



THE IMPACT OF MENTORSHIP



600

Children Served



17,500

Hours Volunteered



350+

Volunteer Mentors

45

New Matches Made

SUCCESS STORY

Meet Jose Jimenez. Jose's transition from Ecuador to Canada was fraught with difficulties. Integrating into a new culture, finding confidence, succeeding in a foreign education, and even dreaming about a successful future seemed impossible. Finding a mentor through Big Brothers Big Sisters provided Jose with not just one, but several guiding figures who helped him navigate these changes. His first mentor, Maz, introduced him to new ideas and helped him build confidence, while his later mentor, Ying, offered practical advice that prepared him for the professional world.

For Jose, mentorship meant finding a safe space to explore his capabilities and envision a future filled with possibilities. Today, Jose works in digital innovation, a field he was introduced to by his mentors, and credits his success to the life-changing guidance and support he received.



THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

Challenge Growth

85% of youth feel that their mentor encourages them to be their best

Expand Possibilities

78% of youth feel their mentor has connected them with new people, places, or ideas

Express Care

90% of youth feel their mentor shows them that they matter to them

Provide Support

78% of youth feel their mentor helps them get things done

Share Power

90% of youth feel their mentor listens to their ideas and takes them seriously

100% of mentors noted that they put conscious effort toward expressing care and providing support to their mentees.

THE NEED IN WATERLOO REGION

Young people in our programs are facing daily adversities and barriers to their success. Mentorship can enable young people to thrive, despite the challenges they face.

73% have experienced social isolation

70% have been exposed to financial stress

90% have experienced parental separation or divorce

72% have experienced bullying

74% have been exposed to mental illness within their household

49% are coping with mental illness

THANK YOU

Thank You to Our Supporters

A BIG thank you to Lyle S Hallman Foundation for their continued support of our organization. Thank you to the Ontario Trillium Foundation and Canadian Red Cross for grant support. Continued thanks to United Way and Waterloo Region Community Foundation for grant support. We would like to thank the Ministry of Education for their support of our School based programs. Thank you to Scotiabank for supporting our One-to-One Mentoring Programs.

A big thank you to our Corporate Partners Strassburger Windows and Doors, Heffner Lexus Toyota, Setman 30 Duke Street Limited and LoneWolf. Thank you to our many Monthly and Annual Donors and Event Sponsors. Special mention to the Browns, Adams, Lutkenhaus, Boyer Family, Hislacan Homes, Financial Awareness, Penny Towndrow, Wastell Developments and Paul Huntley. We would also like to thank our very hard working Best Friends! Thank you for thinking outside the box and using your time, talents and treasure in thinking of new ways to fundraise for the children we serve.

Thank You to Our Volunteers

We would not be where we are without you.

"This program has been something my daughter and I can look forward to. We really enjoy my daughter's time with her Big Sister. She's come out of her shell and when she comes back from a visit she's chatty and excited for days! It's been a great experience!"



OUR SUPPORTERS



The Ross and Doris
Dixon Foundation



Jumpstart
Giving kids a sporting chance.



The Oakes
Foundation



LYLE S. HALLMAN
FOUNDATION



The Brenda & Dave Walden
Family Foundation

