



## You've Enriched the Lives of Two Biological Brothers



One-on-one time with each of their Big Brothers has helped Caleb\* and Carter\* build strong, trusting friendships. "As a parent, you just want what's best for your kids," says their mom.

Ella\* describes both of her sons as typical, active kids who love sports and running around.

But before her kids were matched with Big Brothers, Ella recalls a period **when her sons would become nervous any time an adult visited their home, worrying that they would be left with a babysitter.**

As a home-based business owner, Ella is fortunate to be able to spend a lot of time with her kids. But the boys began to develop an anxiety

around being away from her. Raising two boys on her own with no other family in town, Ella knew that she needed to make a change. She turned to *Big Brothers*.

"It was amazing to have a Big Brother understand when my older son just wanted to hang out here [at home], that he was hesitant to leave at first. But Caleb's Big Brother was so kind and patient with him, and now Caleb doesn't hesitate to go on outings or try new activities with his Big Brother.

“There was a time, when my boys were young, that if someone came to our house, **they would panic** and ask, ‘Is this the babysitter? **Are you leaving us with this person?**’”

It was just what Caleb needed,” says Ella.

“And I felt so comfortable and confident with the organization’s safety checks, and was very impressed with how patient the staff was in understanding my children’s concerns.

I can’t say it enough how lucky my sons are to have such great Big Brothers. These relationships are immeasurable, they’re priceless. **It has definitely changed their lives.”**

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## You've Helped Us Partner with the Aboriginal Youth Community

Within minutes of entering the school gymnasium, basketballs are flying through the air. The kids have shed their backpacks and jackets along the bench and have already worked up a sweat from running around.

With the help of supporters like you, *Big Brothers* launched the Aboriginal Mentoring Program in 2013 in partnership with *Red Fox Healthy Living Society*, a non-profit that serves Aboriginal and inner-city children, youth, and families.

# Aboriginal Youth Leading in the Community



*Snack time in smaller groups gives children a chance to build a stronger friendship with their Aboriginal youth mentor.*

Through the program, Aboriginal youth receive training on how to mentor younger children in the community.

This leadership training is apparent as the youth mentors expertly settle the children down and gather them in a circle for a group game — this week, it's rock, paper, scissors tag.

“The leadership abilities of the youth mentors have really blown us away,” says *Big Brothers’* Ryan Cadamia, who oversees the program.

“There was this one young man, Jackson\*, who came to our

program from an alternative school. He had had some trouble in school in the past, but he turned out to be one of our most motivated, passionate, helpful, and reliable leaders,” explains Ryan.

“He built amazing relationships with the kids, and by the end of the year, the boys were much more engaged and really listened — even the older boys respected him.”

In between activities, the children and youth pause for a healthy snack provided by *Big Brothers*. The children excitedly split off to find their designated youth mentor. Each mentor is matched with two to three children.



*Let's play! Children get to play with hoola hoops, pogo sticks, skipping ropes etc. each week to encourage healthy physical activity.*

As they snack on apples or cheese and crackers, mentors ask the kids about their day. This time around, youth leader Angela\* lets one of the kids in her group, Michelle\*, choose the “question of the day.”

Michelle, 8, ponders for a moment before announcing, “We'll go in a circle and everyone will say how they are feeling today and what their favourite animal is!”

Her confidence is striking for a child so young, but you get the feeling that she is mirroring behaviour that she has seen before — perhaps from her mentor.

## Share Your Story!

You are the backbone of our organization and we want to share your story! Tell us why you volunteer, why you donate, or why you enrolled your child in a mentoring program. Send us a picture, artwork, a letter or just a few lines — we can all learn and grow from each other!

Email [vli@bbgvf.com](mailto:vli@bbgvf.com)



*\*Names have been changed to protect the safety and privacy of the children whom we serve.*

# Double the Impact: Teen Mentor, Little Buddy Grow Together

By: Jasmin, Volunteer Teen Mentor

Your words and actions can make a huge difference in someone's life.

Volunteering for the past three years has impacted my life in many ways. When I was first told about the opportunity to become a Teen Mentor, I was thrilled. Although I was persuaded by the temptation to obtain graduation volunteer hours, the thought immediately vanished when I entered the program in 2013 to meet my Little Buddy, Lily\*.

I remember seeing a little girl's eyes glistening right into mine as I stepped foot into the room where we first met. I don't know how she knew, but before it was even time for the group of Little and Big buddies to be paired up, she gasped loudly, rushed up to me and said, "You're going to be my Big Buddy."

To this day, Lily still has the same glint in her eyes every time she sees me.

Being able to spend time with Lily is truly a gift. Lily enables me to relive my childhood. She expresses herself and allows me to understand her. Through this, we're



able to build a strong foundation of friendship.

It's amazing how I can be a role model and friend at the same time. I have always wanted to inspire someone through my actions and words. Because of Lily, I know I have lived up to this dream. I am grateful for being able to influence someone's life positively, especially for Lily to look up at me and say,

**"Because of you, I want to become a Big Buddy too one day."**

The Teen Mentoring Program matches a teenaged volunteer with a younger Little Buddy in a nearby elementary school.

Teens spend one hour a week on school grounds with a Little Buddy whom teachers think will benefit from one-on-one quality time with a role model.

"What I learned from my Little Brother is...

how to be a good listener."



# A Sisterhood Supports Big Brotherhood through Zumba®



Nearly a hundred enthusiastic Zumba® participants showed up to boogie for Big Brothers, contributing an outstanding \$1,026 in donations!

When Chantel Genio first started teaching Zumba® classes, she would often co-teach with other instructors in the community. “There are fewer opportunities now to teach together, so our Zumbathon® fundraiser was a fun chance for all of us [instructors] to share a class again,” explains Chantel.

The ZED Team is made up of four Zumba® fitness instructors — Sara Fox, Chantel Genio, Debbie Jessen, and Sandra Louie — who teach classes throughout the Lower Mainland. This is their second year participating in the Scotiabank Bowl for Big Brothers Classic.

Their Zumbathon® fundraiser at South Slope Elementary in early March brought in crowds of

enthusiastic supporters, including many Zumba® first-timers.

It is that enthusiasm from the community and the sisterhood that has formed between the ZED Team Zumba® instructors that inspires Chantel to continue raising funds to support Big Brothers’ mentorship programs.

“I knew a few people growing up who had Big Brothers or Sisters. Today, my teammates are my mentors. We’ve supported each other professionally and even in our family lives,” says Chantel. “We have really been there for each other; we’ve become sisters.”

To donate to the ZED Team or to start your own bowling team, visit [bowlforbigbrothers.com](http://bowlforbigbrothers.com).

## Bowl for Big Brothers Fundraising Tips

- Set up a snack station in your workplace lunchroom with chips, chocolate, and other goodies! Set a price for snacks or make it by donation.
- Have an upcoming birthday or holiday party? Ask for a donation in lieu of gifts.
- Did you know? Bowlers who collect donations online typically raise more funds.
- Fundraising with your kids? Bake sales and coin drives are great for getting children involved and teaching them about helping others.

