



BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF PRINCE GEORGE

Orientation Package

Welcome to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George is one of over 150 local agencies serving more than 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 society since 1979. The Agency has a general membership of 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 society, the operating funds of the society come largely from gaming events and other fundraising projects and initiatives. The Agency is also supported by local donations, personal and corporate donations.

“Share a Little Magic”

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George brings children identified as being in need, 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 s/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!

Contact Us

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Share a Little
Magic.

Click on
www.bbbspq.ca



Programs available at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George

Traditional Big Brother/Big Sister Program

- One to one matches with youth ranging generally from 7 – 14 years although youth may remain matched until the age of 18
- Volunteers must be a minimum of 19 years of age
- Matches spend a minimum of 2 hours together each week or at least every two weeks
- Volunteer commitment is a minimum of one year
- Time is spent enjoying positive leisure activities
- Big Brothers are matched with Little Brothers and Big Sisters are matched with Little Sisters

Couples Program

- A couple is matched with a Little Brother or a Little Sister
- The couple must be living together prior to matching for a minimum of a year
- Volunteers must be a minimum of 19 years of age
- Matches spend a minimum of 2 hours together each week or at least every two weeks
- Match commitment minimum of one year
- Time is spent enjoying positive leisure activities
- Gender of the Little will be determined by who will spend the most time with the child

In-School Mentoring Program

- One to one match with a youth, in grade 1 – 7, for the term of the school year
- Volunteers to be 19 years of age, or older.
- Spend one hour each week with the youth, in school, typically enjoying activities such as board games, sports, crafts, reading, baking and just talking
- School District staff identify youth suitable for this program and make the referral to BBBS

Youth Experiencing Success (Y.E.S.) Group Mentoring Program

- A group based mentoring program for youth currently in continuing care of The Ministry of Children and Family Development or Carrier Sekani Family Services
- The youth range in age from 8 – 13 years old (graduating at their 13th Birthday)
- Volunteers must be a minimum of 19 years of age
- Activities will occur monthly and on most occasions will include a community speaker and an activity related to the guest speaker's experiences



Why Become a Volunteer with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George?

The Benefits of Being a Volunteer...

Volunteering is an opportunity to fulfill personal goals while contributing to the needs of your 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 its 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

Benefits for the Child, Youth or Student...

May experience:

- Increased self-esteem, interpersonal skills, Social skills, level of commitment, and self-awareness
- An increased feeling of belonging with their community
- Decreased absenteeism and drop-out rates from school



Who are our Volunteers?

Our volunteers are community members looking for an opportunity to give back to their community through giving to the youth in our community.

Qualifications and Requirements of Our Volunteers

- Have the ability to relate to children and adults, to adapt to change, and to work with the BBBS Agency as team members
- Make a commitment to see the child as per each of the program requirements
- Be personally suitable and mature, and exhibit mental and emotional competence
- Be reliable and of good character, dependable, punctual, honest, fun-loving and committed to communication
- Have the ability and willingness to support the Mission of the Agency
- Successfully complete each phase of the Agency's screening process
- Meet the Agency's minimum age requirement as per each of the program requirements
- Participate in the Child Safety Training facilitated by the Agency
- Agree to function within the guidelines of the Agency and Partner Agencies (ie. School District 57 and/or The Ministry of Children and Family Development)

Characteristics Exhibited by Our Volunteers

Ability to engage in a positive relationship with a child

Give attention to the child

Have a positive self image

React well to stressful situations

Ability to tolerate and deal with frustrating situations

Do not engage in drug use

Do not engage in alcohol use in the presence of the child

Listen well and be able to communicate with the child

Provide leadership and respect alternative lifestyles

Be a positive role model

Meet as required with the youth and show up on time

Do not have a criminal record

Care about youth

Be committed

Able to accept responsibility and be non-judgmental

Able to reinforce success

Nurture a relationship that respects the child, youth or student's dignity



Application Process For Volunteers

All Programs

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.

Orientation 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 Street) 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-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, and neglect). The training will also include training specific to the program of interest. This may include ground rules for traditional/couple matches, supervision techniques for group programs, or School District expectations and procedures for the In-School Mentoring Program.

Home Visit The **home visit** is only a requirement for those volunteers interested in the Traditional/Couples match or group programs.

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 Process

For the Child and Parent/Guardian

Traditional/Couples Match

- Referral** Referrals for the Traditional/Couples program are voluntarily made to the Agency by the parent/guardian.
- Orientation** 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 and complete the application forms if there currently is not a waitlist. If there is a waitlist, your child(ren) will be placed on waitlist and you will be contacted when the agency is ready to proceed with screening your child(ren).
- Application** Please complete the application forms and schedule an interview with one of our Mentoring Coordinators.
- Interview 1** 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 and child expectations.
- Interview 2** A second interview will be conducted by a Mentoring Coordinator with the parent/guardian and child. The parent 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. The child safety training must be redelivered when the child reaches adolescence.
- Acceptance** The Family will be notified of their acceptance into the Traditional Big Brother Big 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.



Traditional/Couples Match

Agency Expectations of the Volunteer, Parent and Child

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.

Agency Expectations

- 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 on computer, 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

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.

Match Monitoring and Support

It is a requirement that matches be monitored on a regular basis by our Agency. The volunteer, parent, child and Mentoring Coordinator make up a team. All four are responsible for a smooth and successful match.

The minimum contact requirements with the Agency include:

1st – 4th months – monthly **telephone contact** with volunteer, parent and child (Child contact not required in the 1st and 3rd months)

4th month – **In-person contact** - parent and child together and volunteer separately

6th, 8th, and 10th months – monthly **telephone contact** with volunteer, parent and child

12th month – **In-person contact** with volunteer, parent and child together (1st Anniversary)

13th + months – quarterly **telephone contact** with volunteer, parent and child

Annually – **In-person contact** with volunteer, parent and child together (Anniversary's)

Closing of Match – **In-person contact** with volunteer, parent and child (this meeting may include all parties meeting together or the parent and child separate from the volunteer based on assessment of why the match is being closed)



Traditional/Couples Match Ground Rules

Our goal as an agency is to facilitate successful matches for volunteers and children. By following a few guidelines, the above goal becomes attainable.

- ***Bigs and Littles will spend two or more hours together, once a week or at least every two weeks. The idea is to have fun, and spend quality time together on a consistent basis.*** Leisure activities can include anything that the volunteer and child agree upon, subject to the approval of the child's parent. If it isn't possible to get together, the other should be informed as soon as possible.
- ***The match is a one-to-one relationship.*** Bigs do not spend time in the Little's home and will not include the Little's friends or family members in their outings.
- ***Overnight visits will not occur within the first year of the match.*** After a match has been successful for more than one year, overnight visits can occur with the written and signed consent of the parent/guardian and the Agency for each overnight. Overnight visits must be restricted to no more than 3 nights in a row and not more than 4 times per year. Overnights may only occur in Canada.
- ***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. Gift giving should be limited to birthdays and Christmas. Gifts should not exceed \$10 in cost.
- ***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. The parent/guardian or a responsible adult must be home when the child returns from an outing. If alternative arrangements have to be made, the Big must be notified in advance.
- ***The Big shall carry the Little's medical number at all times in case of an emergency.***
- ***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. **The Big is a friend for the Little.** Difficulties experienced within the match should be discussed with your Mentoring Coordinator.
- **There is an expectation that parents will help throughout the year with the occasional fundraising event and they are requested to express their interest in events to the service delivery staff. (See Special Events Volunteer Application Form)**



In-School Mentoring Program

The **focus** of the In-School Mentoring Program is to provide positive support to children in grades 1 through 7. The focus will be to improve self-esteem and life skills, not to do homework or to become a tutor for the student.

Volunteers: Will complete the screening process as per policy of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George. (See Application Process for Volunteers...pg 5 of this document)

Students:

Referrals School District 57 staff identify students who they believe will benefit from the In-School Mentoring Program. Once they have obtained consent from the parent/guardian for the student to participate in the program, they will refer the student to Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Training Students referred to the In School Mentoring Program will receive a child safety training program delivered by either a Mentoring Coordinator or School District #57 staff.

Matching: 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 parent may also be present at the initial meeting. The Mentor (volunteer) and the Mentee (the student) will spend time together at this initial meeting getting to know each other and planning for their next visit.

In-School Mentor Responsibilities

- Complete the Agency application and training requirements
- Meet with the child in the school for approximately one hour per week at the time agreed upon by all parties
- Be a friend to the child
- Be a consistent and positive role model by modeling responsible behaviours such as reliability, respect, honesty, appropriate manners
- Have a concern for the protection and well being of the child
- Be monitored by a Mentoring Coordinator and remain accountable to the Agency
- Meet with Mentoring Coordinator in person or by phone a minimum of three times per year at the beginning, middle and end of the school year
- Work with the school liaison to create a positive relationship with the school and student
- Report any concerns to the Mentoring Coordinator and/or the school liaison
- In accordance with **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada's National Child Safety Standards**, all In-School Mentors will meet with their Mentee on school property when school staff are available. In-School Mentors must follow the Agency's policies about attendance at agency-sponsored events and school events such as assemblies. In-School Mentors must also follow Agency policy covering the provision of transportation to the In-School Mentee to such events. The Mentor may not see or communicate with the child outside of the school under any other circumstances.



Youth Experiencing Success Y.E.S. Group Mentoring Program

The focus of 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.

- Referrals** Children identified as being suitable for the Y.E.S. Program will be identified by Social Workers with The Ministry of Children and Family Development and Carrier Sekani Family Services. The referring Social Worker will discuss the referral with the foster parent and the child prior to making a referral to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George.
- Training** Children referred for the Y.E.S. program will be required to participate in a **Child Safety Training Program**. The Child Safety Training will be encouraged for foster parents and guardians.
- Activities** Activities and presentations will be attended by the children, volunteers and Mentoring Coordinator. Activities will generally take place on a monthly basis at different locations throughout the city. The goal of the activities will be to have fun while learning about a variety of potential life choices.
- Transportation** Foster parents will be required to transport youth to and from the activities. In cases where transportation is a difficulty, the Social Worker may be able to assist with arrangements or on occasion, the Agency may assist with transportation of children.
- Partners Role** The Ministry of Children and Family Development and Carrier Sekani Family Services will be responsible for referrals to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George; communicate any changes in the child's living situation to the Agency; support the Mentoring Coordinator with any difficulties that may arise with the child; liaise the initial meeting between the foster parent/guardians, youth and Mentoring Coordinator and assist with travel arrangements.

Y.E.S Group Volunteer Responsibilities

- Complete the application and training process as per Agency policy
- Commit to meeting on a monthly basis for group activities
- Be a friend to the children in the group
- Have the ability to remain patient and flexible when working with children
- Be a consistent and positive role model by modeling responsible behaviours such as reliability, respect, honesty and appropriate manners
- Have a concern for the protection and well-being of children
- Be monitored by the Mentoring Coordinators and remain accountable to the Agency
- Report any concerns to service delivery staff and/or The Ministry of Children and Family Development



Become a Special Events Volunteer

The need for Special Event Volunteers

- As a non-profit organization Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George gains funds through special event fundraising in our community. Major fundraisers have included, however are not limited to, an Annual Golf Tournament, Bowl for Kids Sake and ATV Raffle. In addition to these events, we also need volunteers to help us with monthly “Gaming” events such as bingo nights.
- Volunteering for special events may be in addition to time spent volunteering in other programs offered by our Agency; however, perhaps you are short for time and would still like to volunteer for our agency.
- Becoming a special events volunteer requires that you have an RCMP Criminal Record Check completed and provide one employment/volunteer or professional reference that has known you for 2 or more years. If you are a volunteer and have been screened for one or more of our child centered programs you are not required to provide this information again.
- Events volunteering is an opportunity to gain valuable experience and a great way to feel the rewards of giving back to your community.
- We ask that volunteers and parents complete the ***Special Events Volunteer Application Form*** which will allow us to contact you for events relating to your specific interests.

Bingo Guidelines for Volunteers

- Our Agency is generally responsible for supplying volunteers for Bingo once or twice a month throughout the year. When a volunteer confirms they will help with a Bingo evening it is crucial they are able to follow through on this commitment as we will not receive the funding for the evening if we do not have a volunteer present.
- Volunteers shall:
 - Sign in upon their arrival and Introduce themselves to bingo hall manager when they arrive
 - Wear the provided volunteer name tag
 - Ask the manager if there is something in particular he/she would like done
 - Be familiar with the work Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George does in our community
 - Help players when necessary, for example those who are in wheelchairs or have a walker may want coffee or food. Please help their stay at the hall comfortable
 - You are not required to clean up the smoking area, unless you choose to
 - Be willing to answer questions or locate a staff member to assist the patrons



Big Brothers Big Sisters National **Alumni Program**

Are you currently or were previously a Big Brother, Big Sister, Mentor, Employee, Board Member or Committee volunteer? 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!

Tell a friend all about the Alumni program and watch us grow! Be proud of your Alumni membership because together, we will serve more children.

Click on www.bbbspq.ca to find further information on the Alumni Program.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Fundraising Campaigns

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Prince George currently has three fundraising events. These events help generate the funds needed to maintain and grow our mentoring programs. Each event needs your support either by volunteering, participating or promoting the event within the community.

Bowl for Kids Sake encourages individuals to sign up a team of friends, family members or co-workers to collect pledges and come out and bowl. This one day event is held in March and in 2007 generated \$31,000 to support our mentoring programs.

The **ATV Raffle** runs from May to September and provides one individual to walk away with two top-of-the-line ATV's and trailer. Other prizes include \$1500 in gas cards or airfare for two through Westjet. Each year we only print 4500 tickets which provide everyone with better odds of winning.

The **Save-on Foods Scan for Kids Campaign** was started in 2006. This event runs October through December and encourages individuals to donate their Save-on-More points to our agency. For every 1,000 points donated our agency receives \$2.00. In our first year we collected over 2.5 million points!