



EVERY CONNECTION COUNTS

Dear Big Sisters Community,

I was honoured to join Big Sisters as Executive Director on June 15th. It's an organization that I had personally admired for many years because of the difference it makes in the lives of youth in our community.

What I could not have imagined was what an exhilarating and inspiring experience the first few weeks on the job were going to be, allowing me to learn first-hand how that impact is made.

Our dedicated team works tirelessly to provide expert support to the over 650 youth and volunteers Big Sisters serves each year. Stories like that of Ashley and Mariah in this newsletter, exemplify the deep bonds our organization creates.

Of course, all this would not be possible without the strength of our supporters and partners. Each year at our Annual Luminary Soirée presented by Scotiabank, Big Sisters recognizes a person or people in the community who have moved the needle on mentorship and youth empowerment.

This year, I'm delighted to announce 2022's Luminary Award recipients: Jill Schnarr (Chief Social Innovation & Communications Officer, TELUS) and Juggy Sihota (Vice-president, Consumer Health, TELUS).

We are so pleased to honour two progressive and visionary leaders. Jill and Juggy have truly made TELUS the vanguard of thoughtful corporate leadership, mentorship and community impact.

Please save the date and join us for a celebration of mentorship on October 13th, 2022 and I look forward to sharing more about the tremendous legacy of Big Sisters and our bright future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chantelle Krish'.

Chantelle Krish
Executive Director



Meet Big Sisters Alumni: Ashley Shankar



What started as a 1-year volunteer commitment, endured into a decade-long friendship.

Volunteer Mentor Ashley and her Mentee Mariah were matched in 2011. What began as just a mentor and mentee relationship has now blossomed into a decade-long friendship.

Ashley grew up in a single-parent household with her mom and brother. In her teenage years, the family moved around a lot. Oftentimes, she found herself wishing she had a constant figure of support to understand and talk to. The shifts in her life made her wish that she had a big sister growing up. Although a long-term admirer of the organization, Ashley wanted to wait until she felt stability in her life before committing to the program. At age 30, Ashley felt she was ready and officially started her application process to become a mentor at Big Sisters.

"I always knew that I wanted to work with young girls, especially because I had some crappy experiences during high school that made me question who I was and my worth," Ashley said.

During her application process, Ashley was open to working with any youth. She wanted to keep her options open to being a mentor to anyone in need of a support system. From experience, Ashley knew too well the pressures of being a girl. All she wanted was to be there for a younger person that may have needed the same.

Ashley's passion and drive to help others led her to pursue a career as a probation officer and social worker, more recently becoming a counselor. This also assured her that she was equipped to be matched with anyone despite their challenges in life.

Her goal was to be a friend and support system to someone like her younger self, offering guidance and sharing her knowledge from the battles she dealt with growing up.



In 2011, Ashley and Mariah were officially matched. Upon reflection, the two had a hard time remembering the days they weren't close. The match reminisced the journey they had to build the trust now shared with one another.

Mariah was a shy and guarded child. She was raised by her foster mom and needed another outlet of support. Ashley mentioned her struggles in the first few years to get Mariah to open up to her. Ashley's drive and passion to be a mentor were questioned by her own self-doubt as she had a hard time building a level of comfort in her relationship with Mariah. However, after a lot of patience, their relationship slowly grew stronger and Ashley's self-doubt faded away as Mariah began to trust and open up to Ashley and to the world.

Ashley now feels proud of how vulnerable Mariah could be with Ashley and the risks she took to be able to trust her mentor, and now friend. Years later, even after Mariah aged out of the program, the two continue to connect and support each other.

The long-time volunteer mentor currently sits on the alumni committee. She assists with planning engagement pieces for other Big Sisters matches. We asked Ashley why she chooses to continue to stay involved with the organization and take the next step to become a member of Big Sister's alumni committee. Ashley answered that the meaningfulness and sense of reward in witnessing Mariah grow up and become independent have made everything worthwhile. Ashley mentioned that the outcome she has seen in Mariah has impacted her life so much that she feels she has made such a difference from the simple act of being involved.

Volunteers like Ashley drive Big Sisters towards our mission: Enable life-changing mentoring relationships to ignite the power and potential of young people. Ashley saw firsthand the difference you can make in someone's life just by being there for them and not giving up even when things are challenging. Her perseverance and passion are the qualities we see in our mentors every day so we thank Ashley and volunteers, just like her, wholeheartedly for igniting the potential in our youth and believing in the power of mentorship.



GRAPEJUICE



BOUTIQUE WINE TASTING
& AUCTION EVENT

CHEERS TO RAISING \$312,000!

GrapeJuice this year was a success beyond compare. Together, we raised a total of \$312,000.

The success of GrapeJuice could not have been accomplished without the amazing team behind the scenes. From the AV team to the French consulate to our incredible hosts, Sarah and Cameron McNeill, and Cheryl Nakamoto we couldn't have created such a fun and inspiring night without you.

Whether it was your first, or 15th GrapeJuice event, we want to thank you for your generous support and for believing in the power of mentorship. Every bid you made and sip you took made a big difference in our community. We hope you enjoyed the exquisite tastes of French wines and delicacies. We can't wait for you to join us next year.

A toast to mentorship
and to you!



THE FIRST PITCH

The sun is out and baseball is back as players hit the diamond. This season, Big Sisters was honoured to be chosen as a charity of choice for RBC's We Care Wednesdays at the Vancouver Canadians baseball game.

RBC and Vancouver Canadians kindly gifted tickets for some of our matches to attend the game at Nat Bailey Stadium. All of matches had an amazing time watching the game and enjoying their hotdogs.

Two Littles, Tula and Jessica, were even given the chance to throw the first pitch! With their adrenaline running and hearts pumping, the two made their way onto the field and proudly threw the official Vancouver Canadians baseball to the umpire. We were so proud to see them to bravely make their pitch. Their self confidence really shined on the pitcher's mound.

This opportunity would not have been made possible without RBC.



CONGRATULATIONS

to the 2022 Bright Future Education Fund Scholarship recipients!

The Bright Future Education Fund (BFEF) Scholarship began in the Fall of 2018 when the Vancouver Foundation received a \$1 Million endowment fund to support five Little Sisters in their post-secondary pursuits. Fast forward to 2022, a total of eight Little Sisters were awarded with the BFEF scholarship this year. Recipients continue to be supported by their mentor through their post-secondary education to ensure a positive experience throughout. We want to proudly congratulate the following Little Sisters for this grand accomplishment!

Sruthy L.
Aya K.

Rachel W.
Shahad Al K.

Katayoun K.
Lilia K.

Masa A.
Flynn L.

HELP US MAINTAIN MENTORING IN THE LOWER MAINLAND.

We do not know what the future holds, but what we know is that the Littles we support will need our help and their Big Sisters as the world recovers. [Click here to make a donation!](#)

BIG SISTERS'

Spring Social

PRESENTED BY



This year's Spring event was different from the previous. Big Sisters' annual Spring Lunch was reimagined and renamed to Spring Social.

On behalf of Big Sisters and the youth we serve, thank you from the bottom of our hearts for those who attended our 2022 Spring Social event. This year we raised close to \$57,000, and we couldn't have done it without you.

From networking with likeminded individuals to cocktail delights masterfully designed by the Joey Restaurant, we hope you had as much fun as we did! We would like to thank our compelling speaker Amelia Warren, and our wonderful host Jennifer Palma.

We hope to see you at next year's event.



And the Big Heart Award goes to...

Big Sisters is proud to honour Media Button with your Big Heart Award. For 5 years, Media Button has been a valued partner in creating videos that elevate the voices of the youth Big Sisters' serves and demonstrates the impact of the Agency's work. They have approached this work with compassion and care, giving freely of their expertise and genuinely trying to understand the goals Big Sisters is trying to achieve.

In 2020, when we realized that we would not be able to hold in person gatherings and that we would have to raise 50% of the operating budget through virtual events they were the first to reach out to ask how they could help. They produced 2020's virtual Soirée, which raised over \$1,000,000 as well as Spring Lunch and Grape Juice. The fundraising team simply could not have executed these events without them.



Throughout our partnership, they have regularly given unconditionally of their time and expertise. Jen Araki, Randall Robinson, Henry Hayhurst-France, Lynette Garrison and the rest of the team at Media Button are truly part of the Big Sisters family and deserving of this recognition.



NEWS & UPDATES

BIG SISTERS' LUMINARY AWARD SOIRÉE

PRESENTED BY

Scotiabank



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This year's Luminary Award Soirée on October 13th will feature unique gala experiences and program hosted by Fred Lee. Enjoy a night of inspiring stories and delectable cocktails and experience a fresh new take on the classic Soirée at the enchanting Rocky Mountaineer Station.

[Click here](#) to learn more about our Luminary Award Recipients and the Event.

PEDAL FOR POTENTIAL September 21 Jack Poole Plaza

Reconnect with your peers and colleagues on a MEGA fun, team-building event as you pedal towards one goal:
to fund the power of mentorship!

Join the ride and support the cause that's happening coast-to-coast this summer.

To learn more about MegaBike, visit [our website](#) or contact at mloudon@bigsisters.bc.ca.



YOUR LEGACY IS THEIR FUTURE

Is our organization in your will?
Please let us know so we can thank you!

Email: akjennings@bigsisters.bc.ca