

EVERY CONNECTION COUNTS



Dear Big Sisters Community,

As we approach the spring, I am conscious that this can be a time for renewal and a time of celebration.

We at Big Sisters are so grateful for our supporters and volunteers who together helped us deliver 20,000+ mentoring hours to over 600 youth in our community! The impacts of these efforts will be felt today and well into the future.

As many of you know, March 8th is International Women's Day and the theme this year is #BreakTheBias, encouraging all to think how they can challenge gender biases in their workplaces and communities to create a more equitable world.

Big Sisters knows that mentorship is key to fulfilling this challenge. Mentored youth have been shown to be more likely to hold senior leadership positions, give back their communities and earn higher wages over a lifetime.

We are committed to this mission and ensuring that all the female, female-identifying and non-binary youth we support reach their full potential.

With gratitude,

Hanne Madson
Executive Director of Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland



INVESTING IN POTENTIAL

Interview with First West Foundation

Big Sisters sat with First West Foundation to learn more about how they've been supporting Go Girls! and hear their take on Trust-Based Philanthropy.

Allowing Big Sisters to Do What They Do Best!

On behalf of the First West Foundation, Susan Byrom, Executive Director, and Jackey Zellweger, Foundation & Community Investment Specialist, strive to bring the foundation into local communities through the power of relationships cultivated within partners like Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland.

As Susan explained, First West Foundation is the "philanthropic arm of Envision Financial, a division of First West Credit Union". The foundation works to support charities in the areas First West Credit Union geographically serves while devoting resources to connecting and getting involved with local communities.

Since 2015, First West Foundation has been a generous funder of our organization, specifically to the Go Girls! Healthy Body, Healthy Minds program. In honour of the Foundation's 25th anniversary in 2021, the foundation added \$25 to every grant made. In that year alone, First West Foundation granted \$20,025 to Big Sisters.

As mothers themselves, Jackey and Susan understand the amount of support each child needs. Big Sisters embraced the structure of consistency and cultivation of relationships. That is why our Big Sisters programs, such as Go Girls! have a commitment time of 8 weeks as a volunteer requirement. The program even runs three times a year directly in schools so youth can participate multiple times.



Jackey Zellweger (Left) and Susan Byrom (Right)

Beyond cultivating relationships between mentors and mentees, Big Sisters and the First West Foundation have also created a relationship built on trust and transparency over the last 7 years.

The challenges we all experienced with the COVID crisis highlighted financial support issues with the non-profit sector and caused differential funding needs to provide additional support for our communities. With a little momentum, First West Foundation used the opportunity to look at the bigger picture and helped where help was needed without restrictions. With support from First West Credit Union, the First West Foundation released a million dollars in a Community Response Fund unrestricted through a two-question online grant application summing up to:

- 1. How much money do you need?**
- 2. What do you need it for?**

What is Trust-Based Philanthropy?

The keyword is trust, something that Big Sisters and First West Foundation have intrinsically built over the years through the impact seen from previous donations, transparency, and most importantly, candid conversations. Because philanthropy comes from a place of love, trust, and care for communities, it allows funders to give based on trust and to build deep and meaningful relationships with community partners.

As Jackey and Susan said, "we didn't want to put barrier's back up. And so, the trust-based philanthropy approach provided us with a framework... an opportunity for us to have different conversations" with board members, staff, and community partners.

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Jackey mentioned, through the power of trust-based philanthropy, the applications now have alignment and charities can focus their time and energy on enriching their mission and vision, rather than fitting into the pillars of an application form.

The idea of trust-based philanthropy roots in finding a partner in change, one that has trust from both perspectives, and understands that the money is in the hands of the experts, such as the honourable way the First West Foundation has trusted Big Sister's to do what we do best, mentoring youth in our community.

Big Sisters applauds the continued support of funders like



By making a significant donation to our Go Girls! Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds program year over year, First West Foundation plays a pivotal role in mentorship opportunities for youth. THANK YOU!

CALLING ALL RUNNERS!

RUN & FUNDRAISE

May 1, 2022



BMO Marathon

Last year, our amazing marathon team raised over \$11,000 as one of only three chosen charities. Recently, we interviewed Mila, a former Big Sisters' grant writer and soon-to-be 3-time BMO marathon runner, to hear why she continues to participate and fundraise for Big Sisters:



Why do you choose Big Sisters to be your charity of choice?

"The organization is comprised of so many dedicated and talented people that are passionate about uplifting vulnerable youth. So I really believe in giving them all the resources they can get to do the amazing work they're doing! I find that Big Sisters does such great preventative work by helping at-risk people when they are young, which has been an empirically proven strategy."

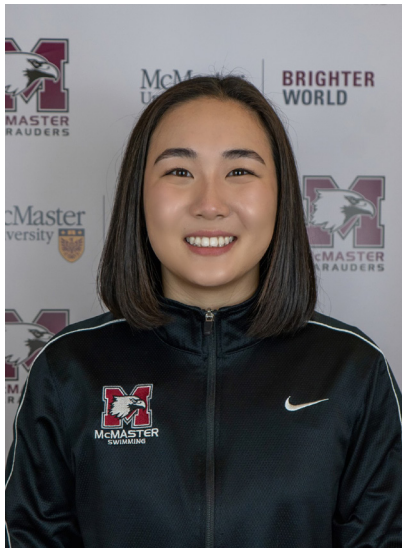
What would you tell others who are interested in running in the marathon and fundraising for Big Sisters?

"If you are thinking about it but aren't sure, just do it! People think they are not ready for a half-marathon but you would be surprised what you can do when you put in the time. As for choosing to support Big Sisters: I think it's a great fit. Both mentoring and running are good for the soul and can be comforting sources of stability in our highly uncertain world. Compatible sport and cause, in my view :)"

Whether you run a half, full or combo marathon, each step you take and dollar you raise directly supports Big Sisters programs and Little Sisters across the Lower Mainland!

Register and fundraise for Big Sisters [here](#).

Meet CINDY SHU



Cindy has been a part of Big Sisters since 2011 when her mother enrolled her into the Study Buddy program. As a new immigrant, Cindy struggled with the cultural differences and languages of this new country she was to call home. However, through the Study Buddy program and the power of mentorship, Cindy found the joys of education and developed passion in other areas of her life. Now, as a young adult, Cindy is carving her own path. With the help of Cottonwood Foundation Scholarship, she was able to secure a scholarship to pursue her degree in Chemical and Bio Engineering at McMaster University. While Cindy is busy with her studies, she is also a part of McMaster's varsity swim team. If that isn't enough on her plate, in 2020, Cindy joined Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada's National Youth Mentorship Advisory Council (NYMAC) and currently serves as the Communication Liaison.

What is NYMAC?

NYMAC is a consortium formed by the Big Brothers Big Sisters national office. It is comprised of youth from across the country who have been a part of Big Brothers Big Sisters in one way or another. For some, they may have been previous mentors and for others like Cindy, they could have been the mentee themselves.

What does NYMAC do?

The creation of NYMAC was meant to provide an accessible place for Big Brothers Big Sisters to hear the voices of the young people that are served within our programs. Each member of NYMAC provides their feedback on their previous experiences as a mentor or mentee and input their opinions on how the organization could improve for future experiences. It's especially helpful as there is a lot of diversity in the council, being that members join from all areas of Canada.

What is NYMAC hoping to accomplish in the future?

The goal for the future, according to Cindy, is to recruit members from all provinces. Although there is currently representation from most provinces, the council is hoping to ideally have a French-speaking member and other provinces that have not yet had the representation. The committee is also hoping to release a NYMAC podcast in the near future. Stay tuned!

To read Cindy's detailed match story and involvement with Big Sisters, click [here](#).

To learn more about NYMAC, click [here](#).

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

#BREAKTHEBIAS

This year's IWD theme is Break the Bias and at Big Sisters we believe that mentorship breaks the bias by igniting potential of youth to become their best selves.

- Mentored youth are more likely to become mentors themselves
- Mentored youth are more likely to take on leadership roles
- Mentored youth are more likely to pursue post secondary education and achieve higher paying roles

Women in Canada's workforce earn approximately 89 cents for every dollar earned by men, according to the federal government. **Your monthly donation of 1% of your monthly salary works to close the pay gap for the women of tomorrow**, who are youth being served by Big Sisters today.

On March 8, we will be asking women who have been experienced the power of female mentorship the following questions:

How do you see mentorship creating opportunities in your community or workplace?

How do you see Big Sisters supporting today's youth in growing into tomorrow's leaders?

What advice did you receive from a mentor in your life that changed your trajectory?

How can mentorship help young women challenge gender bias?



TUNE IN TO [@BIGSISTERSOFBCLM](https://twitter.com/BIGSISTERSOFBCLM) ON MAR 8, 2022 AND JOIN IN ON THE CONVERSATION

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!](#)



NEWS & UPDATES



Save the Date

GrapeJuice 2022

Join us at GrapeJuice, a boutique wine tasting and auction event in support of Big Sisters. To date, this event has raised over \$1,000,000 in support of youth in our community.

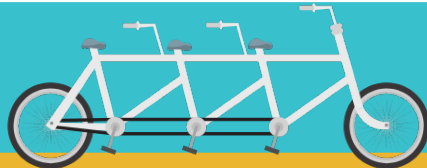
Date: May 4th

Time: 6:30PM - 7:30PM

Location: from your home/preferred venue

Stay tuned for ticketing details. To learn more about GrapeJuice, click [here](#).

MegaBike



PEDAL FOR POTENTIAL

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!

To learn more about MegaBike, contact mloudon@bigsisters.bc.ca.



Coming Soon!

YOUR LEGACY IS HER FUTURE

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

Email: akjennings@bigsisters.bc.ca