

WHO WE ARE

In 1921, The Big Brother Association of Burlington and Hamilton-Wentworth evolved under the leadership of the Rotary Club of Hamilton. It was designed to assist boys brought before Magistrate's Court. The Association was incorporated in 1929.

The original purpose of the Association was 1) to work toward the prevention and cure of juvenile delinquency; 2) to co-operate with Juvenile Court for the reformation and care of the boys coming in contact with the Court; and 3) to consider and discuss all questions related to underprivileged youths.

In 2003 Big Sister Youth Services and the Big Brother Association of Burlington and Hamilton-Wentworth merged their Matching Programs and the organization began operating as Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hamilton and Burlington.

The new Big Brothers Big Sisters is...

The **Traditional Matching** program offers services to children aged seven to 18 years, mostly from single parent families. This is a one adult, one volunteer program.

The **Couple/Family Matching** program is designed much like the Traditional Program, however Couples and Families volunteers together.

The **In School Mentoring** program serves children who have been identified by school personnel as being "at risk". Such children may be struggling with socialization skills and/or are lacking in self-esteem, and may be more likely to drop out of school. This program brings together business, education and volunteer sectors to promote the social, emotional and educational well-being of children. It involves a one-to-one relationship between an adult and a child who meet weekly on school premises.

The **Child Safety and Empowerment** program is offered to clients, parents and volunteers. It provides tools and education in the area of child safety with a focus on the prevention of child sexual abuse. This program encourages the safety of our clients and families, at home and in the community.

Promise Scholarship and **Project Hope** initiatives provide motivational tools and financial assistance to encourage children to pursue post-secondary education.

In partnership with the **Canadian Tire Jump Start** program, our agency identifies children in need who would benefit from participating in an organized sport or recreational activity and could not ordinarily do so without assistance. The agency

disburses funds to the appropriate service provider to cover the cost of registration. Consideration is also given to fund equipment and transportation costs.

SOAR (Social Opportunities, Activities, and Relationships) is a group program with separate programs for girls and boys waiting to be matched with Big Brothers or Big Sisters. Volunteers provide learning and recreational activities for children and youth. Areas of focus are Special Events, Recreation, Sports, Personal Development, Employment and Volunteer Work in the Community. Each volunteer is matched with a few children who meet with other SOAR volunteers and children as a group for two hours a week over a 12-week period.

The **Go Girls! Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds** program provides adolescent girls with information and support to make informed choices about healthy, active living while maintaining sensitivity toward the emotional, social and cultural issues they may face. Specifically, the project addresses the issues of physical activity, balanced eating and positive self-image for participants aged of 12 - 14 through mentoring relationships.

Focus on Youth (new in 2008). Throughout the summer months students from the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board are matched in 1:2 mentoring relationships with unmatched children. Together with other matches they actively participate in relationship building activities and 'old time summer fun'.

Big Brothers Big Sisters currently serves approximately 1,000 at risk youth in the community, with an additional 250 children on a waiting list. We employ three part-time and ten full-time staff, and have approximately 750 active volunteers.

VISION

To significantly contribute to the healthy development of youth in our community.

MISSION

We provide quality mentoring relationships to children in need.