



Media Release

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### **Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Durham used \$118,600 grant to support pandemic recovery**

**Port Perry, ON:** In late 2020, Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Durham (BBBSND) received the news that it was receiving a \$118,600 Resilient Communities Fund grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) to help it rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. The OTF grant enabled the agency to be more responsive to the needs of youth in the community by giving it the tools, training and technology to continue delivering services with young people.

“Now, more than ever, our Littles need to feel emotionally connected to consistent, caring and trusted adults,” said Margaret Ayres, Executive Director for Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Durham. “The Ontario Trillium Foundation grant gave us the necessary resources and tools to run our programs efficiently, things like computers to allow us to meet virtually with our Littles and their families, as well as office workstations that allow us to maintain social distancing while we are working from the office to bring mentoring programs to youth in the communities we serve. We thank the Ontario Trillium Foundation and are grateful for this grant. We are also grateful for the Bigs, who continue to connect with our Littles during these difficult times.”

Throughout the pandemic, many youth faced challenges like social isolation, loneliness, and anxiety. BBBSND pivoted quickly to virtual programming so youth would be able to consistently connect with their mentors who, in turn, helped them navigate the isolation and changes in their routines. The OTF grant enabled the group to hire a Digital Communications Coordinator, a certified executive coach and consultant as well as purchasing laptops and other technological equipment. BBBSND was able to plan strategically for the future – a future that continues to provide support and expand possibilities for youth.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of North Durham is the leading child and youth mentorship organization in North Durham. Through volunteer mentors, they help ignite the power and potential of young people. 2021 marked the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their commitment to providing life-changing mentoring in the community. Early intervention by the Big Brothers Big Sisters team can help prevent the physical and mental effects that adverse childhood experiences can cause. By donating your time as a mentor or financially, you’re giving a child a chance at a better future.

For more information on their programs, please visit [www.northdurham.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca](http://www.northdurham.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca)

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada’s leading granting foundations. Last year, nearly \$112M was invested into 1,384 community projects and partnerships to build healthy and vibrant communities and strengthen the impact of Ontario’s non-profit sector. In 2020/21, OTF supported Ontario’s economic recovery by helping non-profit organizations rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Visit [otf.ca](http://otf.ca) to learn more.

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