



Big Brothers Big Sisters.ca

**2011 Federal Pre-Budget Submission
The Honourable Jim Flaherty
Minister of Finance**

August 2011

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Big Brothers Big Sisters is 100 years old in Canada

2013 will mark 100 years of Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring services in Canada. A century of service is a rare milestone for any Canadian organization. We see it as a pivotal moment to celebrate our strong proud history, and to prepare for our next 100 years of innovative programming and mentoring service delivery.

“The true measure of a nation’s standing is how well it attends to its children – their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization, and their sense of being loved, valued, and included in the families and societies into which they are born”

UNICEF Innocenti Report Card 7, Child Poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries, 2001

Executive Summary

The current global recession has and will continue to impact all Canadians. We strongly believe that a healthier economy for all Canadians must begin now, with an investment in our youth. An investment of \$26 million would support the next step in a mentoring Canada initiative where thousands of young people in need could benefit from mentoring programs. With a comprehensive approach to improving the self confidence of youth, and a strong emphasis on child safety, Big Brothers Big Sisters offers results-focused programs that have long term impacts upon children. Big Brothers Big Sisters provides life-skills, group mentoring programs, in-school mentoring programs, the Big Brother Big Sister program, as well as several community-specific mentoring programs designed to meet the diverse needs of our communities. The goal: to foster academic achievement, encourage civic engagement, and assist in the avoidance of risky behaviours like bullying and drug use.

One hundred years of knowledge and expertise has allowed us to position ourselves as the largest leading mentoring service in Canada, providing young people with the highest quality volunteer-based mentoring programs. We provide services to those who come from families disadvantaged social and economic background families, at-risk youth and those individuals who need a mentor.

Mentoring the next generation of youth is critical to the future health and prosperity of our nation. Yet, millions of young people are currently growing up without the guidance and support that is needed to prepare them to become well-adjusted and contributing members of society. Making progress in addressing this need will require a substantial commitment of both time and resources at all levels-from individuals to communities to government.

We know that one million young people in Canada are growing up lacking a strong relationship with a caring adult. Those coming from disadvantaged homes and communities are over-represented in this number. Young people who lack this connection with a caring adult while growing up are vulnerable. Research finds that resilient youth-those who successfully transition from risk-filled backgrounds to the adult world of work and good citizenship- are consistently distinguished by the presence of a caring adult in their lives.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada is requesting \$26 million to dramatically increase the number of at-risk children and youth who are impacted by mentoring services, to invest in our organizations innovation and social enterprise development, and to celebrate and ignite our centenary initiatives. This funding will be directed over a three year period to assist the most vulnerable citizens in Canada for the greatest reward of all; helping children and youth reach their full potential.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Impact

Since 1913.....
112, 000, 000 Volunteer hours
425, 000 Children and Youth served
Mentoring Programs in over 1000 communities from coast to coast

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada is the nation’s leading mentoring organization. Our Vision is to create a Canada where “every child who needs a mentor, has a mentor”. Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies match children and youth who are in need of a mentor with adult role models who provide positive life experiences.

Nationally, in 2011 we provided mentoring services to over 33,450 young people through our 150 local agencies. This represents a 9.5% increase in the number of young people impacted through mentoring programs over 2009 and a 16% increase over 2008, despite challenging economic times.

In response to the different needs and demands of children, youth, and volunteers alike, we have created effective new programs to fit our changing society. These programs all provide a variety of opportunities for volunteering and civic engagement among all Canadians.

Moving Forward

After 100 years of success, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada is seeking \$26 million in funding for our plans to move forward. For us, the next 100 years is dependent on three main areas; celebrating and highlighting our achievements, building capacity through expanding

mentoring services to serve more children and youth, for innovation and social enterprise to ensure that we stay current, relevant and most importantly effective. Each of these areas are highlighted and explained below.

1. **Expanding Mentoring Services**
2. **Innovation and Social Enterprise**
3. **2013 Centenary Initiatives**

1. Expanding Mentoring Services

Effective spending, efficient programming and meeting government obligations to the Canadian taxpayer can be fully implemented when investing in young people. When young people reach their full potential they are more likely to become productive, caring and contributing members of our society. Investing in these youth now, will help them become well-informed and educated adults, promoting economic growth and creating a workforce of responsible citizens.

The concepts of expanding mentoring services are not new to anyone, and for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada it is at the forefront of our strategic advancement. We are continuously investing in and supporting organizational development and organizational effectiveness. This is done through evaluation scorecards, collaboration with new service delivery models, and the evolution of cultural change in a federated model, diversifying operating funds/fund development, and providing organizational training/learning to maximize impact on children/youth and to engage in the mentoring programs of the highest possible quality.

Charted growth in mentoring programs and expansion provides opportunities for all Canadians. We can easily link our results to a reduction in federal spending in the following areas:

a. Educational Achievement

We believe that every child in Canada should have the opportunity to reach his or her full potential; unfortunately, Canadian statistics tell us that they are not. As seen below, an alarming number of our youth are headed down a dangerous and costly path:

- 11.6% of 20-24 year olds do not have a high school diploma. Canada is ranked 16th among its OECD countries.
- Young people who graduate instead of dropping out will earn \$439,000 more throughout their working life. (McKinsey & Company)
- Young people will also contribute to society's wealth by paying more taxes and by generating fewer government expenditures, for an additional net gain of \$184,000 per year, per youth (McKinsey & Company)
- It is estimated that every year, the youth that drop out of high school will cost Canada \$23.8 billion (Hankivsky, 2008)
- In 2010, approximately 1 in 10 boys and 1 in 15 girls dropped out of school.

However:

- 90% of mentors saw a positive change in the child they were mentoring in schools (*Tierney, Joseph and Grossman, Jean B. (2000)*)
- 88% of students who have a mentor showed improved literacy skills (*Tierney, Joseph and Grossman, Jean B. (2000)*)
- 89% who had a mentor felt better about themselves and developed *higher levels of self-esteem* (*Tierney, Joseph and Grossman, Jean B. (2000)*)
- Participation in mentoring programs in out of school time *decreased behavioral problems, improved social and communication skills, relationships with others (peers, parents, teachers), increased self-confidence, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, lower levels of depression and anxiety, development of initiative, improved feelings and attitudes toward self and school.* (Social/emotional Outcomes; Harvard Family Research Project, 2008)

If we were able to reduce the dropout rate by 1%, through the intervention of a positive adult role model the aggregate estimated cost savings of the federal government would be over \$7.7 billion (Hankivsky, 2008).

b. Avoidance of Risky Behaviours

Every child should have the opportunity to reach his or her full potential, both as individuals and citizens. When children and youth reach their full potential, they will not only do well, they become economic contributors to Canadian society. The snapshot of our youth that statistics provide tells us that something needs to change.

- 42% of boys and 23% of girls in Grades 6, 7, and 8 reported that they had bullied others in the past two months (Pepler, Craig, Connolly, Yuile, McMaster & Jiang 2005)
- The average age for the initiation of cannabis and alcohol use among Canada's youth is between 15 and 16 years of age. (CADUMS 2009)
- Youth courts in Canada processed 58 379 cases involving 191 054 charges in 2008/2009.
- Youth Corrections costs approximately \$967,000,000 every year. (Stats Canada, 2008)

It has been proven that mentoring works, and for at risk youth there is no better program than Big Brothers Big Sisters. Our youth are:

- 46% less likely to initiate drug use than children from similar socio-economic backgrounds who weren't paired with a mentor
- 27% less likely to initiate alcohol use than children from similar socio-economic backgrounds who weren't paired with a mentor
- Little Brothers and Little Sisters were almost one third less likely than their peers to hit someone. (Tierney, Joseph and Grossman, Jean B., 2000)

By changing the course of young lives we can in turn be changing the course of a community's future. It could lead to a reduction in poverty and unemployment, to safer schools and neighbourhoods, and to a renewed optimism for growth. It could even lead to change on a broader, more far-reaching scale. These benefits can't easily be measured, but we can measure the money saved every time one of our nation's youth doesn't go down a dangerous path:

- For every youth that is prevented from being charged with drug possession, Canada saves \$7,800 in incarceration costs and \$2,532 in court case and persecution costs. (2008 Statistics Canada)
- For every youth that is prevented from being charged with drug trafficking, Canada saves \$27,820 in incarceration costs and an average of \$2,532 in court case and persecution costs. (2008 Statistics Canada)

This means that for every 100 youth that are prevented from being incarcerated for 30 days, the justice system saves \$1,033,200. The cost of mentoring these youth is just 10% of this number.

c. Civic Engagement

"I believe that in Canada, helping your neighbour is more than a duty; it is a source of pride. This spirit of giving, which often develops at a very young age and helps to define our collective identity, forms the very basis of any dynamic society. Each of us has a vital role to play in building a smarter, more caring nation. And to realize this vision to which we aspire, **we have a responsibility to our youth, who are filled with determination and have so much energy to be channeled into good works. They need role models, guides and advisors. They need the generations that have come before them—older peers, adults in their prime, seniors who have long served this country**—people who are giving generously of their time and of themselves, right across Canada, in service to their fellow citizens..."

His Excellency, the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada

Communities with the greatest and most diverse citizen participation are often resilient and strong. Engaging citizens to address common issues is essential for educated decision-making. This area provides resources for encouraging civil discourse and involvement.

- The Canadian charitable and non-profit sector employs more than 2 million people and mobilizes more than 12 million volunteers in rural, northern and urban communities at home and abroad. In 2008, we generated \$106.4 billion in economic activity, a contribution of 7.1 percent to Canada's GDP.
- As reported, those who volunteer, strengthen civic attitudes, promote volunteer activity and show improved learning (Learn and Serve America, Corporation for National Service 1997).
- An important result of young people volunteering is the creation of a behaviour pattern or "habits" that carry into adulthood. The young person experiences the meaning of volunteering and the positive values that accompany it and is more likely to be an active volunteer. (Independent Sector Report, American's Teenagers as Volunteers, 1994)
- Volunteering develops, enhanced cognitive and moral development, respect for others, understand people different from themselves, develop leadership skills, and good citizenship (Boyer 1996)
- The Muttart Foundation, "Talking About Charities 2008," a public opinion poll to survey Canadians on their views about charities and issues affecting charities; Canadians believe that charities are important, play a key role in meeting the needs of Canadians, and improve their quality of life. Similarly, the level of trust that Canadians have in charities overall has held constant over the past several years, with a strong majority of Canadians trusting charities.
- Minister Finley from HRSDC was quoted as saying, "The Government of Canada is proud of the millions of volunteers, businesses and not-for-profit organizations that generously give their time, experience and expertise to make their communities stronger," "The Prime Minister's Volunteer Award which celebrates the exceptional contributions of people and organizations across Canada and we hope they encourage others to participate and make a difference in their own communities."

There are 161, 000 Canadian charities and non profits delivering programs worth more than \$3 billion in countless communities across Canada and internationally. In 2009, this equaled 1.1 million jobs in Canada. Big Brothers Big Sisters contributes almost 3, 000,000 volunteer hours per year, employs just over 1,000 individuals and delivers mentoring programs worth more than \$30 million annually.

How the government can help?

With the investment of \$7 million annually by the government for a total of \$21 million over a three year period, the government would invest in 21,000 children and youth mentored. Compare this investment to incarcerating 21, 000 youth federally at \$94, 900 would equal \$ 2 billion.

2. Innovation and Social Enterprise

“If you believe that each life has equal value then it is disgusting to learn that some lives are worth saving and some not...We asked, how could the world let these children die? The answer is simple, and harsh. The market did not reward saving the lives of these people and governments did not subsidize it. So the children died because their mothers and fathers had no power in the market and no voice in the system. We can make market forces work better for the poor if we develop a more creative capitalism – if we can stretch the reach of market forces so that more people can make a profit, or at least a living, serving people who are suffering from the worst inequities. We can also press governments around the world to spend taxpayers’ money in ways that better reflect the values of people who pay taxes. If we find approaches that meet the needs of the poor that generate profit for business and votes for politicians we will have found a sustainable way to reduce inequity in the world.”

Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft

Innovation and Social Enterprise will provide us with the ability to investigate the different approaches used internationally to build capacity for improving mentoring services through more Canadian research and governance. These projects will assess current approaches, research opportunities in identifying international examples of success to develop recommendations for continued growth in mentoring services in Canada.

Big Brothers Big Sisters has already begun developing innovative partnerships and initiatives that address key societal issues facing our youth:

- The Canadian Institutes of Health Research has provided \$1.7 million in funding to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the Oxford Centre for Child Studies to undertake a ten year longitudinal investigation. This will involve over 1000 families and adult mentors from Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies across Canada to examine children’s involvement in structured mentoring relationships as a determinant of positive change in their health and behaviour. This study is expected to advance the field of mentoring research by identifying why a child’s relationship with a volunteer adult mentor contributes to positive changes in their mental health, social relationships, and academic performance at school.
- The work of Big Brothers Big Sisters has also been recognized for its efforts in creating an accreditation process which assesses local Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies using a strict set of standards determined by the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada national office. This process was praised in Ed Broadbent’s influential report entitled “Building on Strength: Improving Governance and Accountability in Canada’s Voluntary Sector”.
- Altus Dynamics CRM awarded Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada the Innovation Award, recognizing the customer whose innovative use of technology in their organization delivers measurable benefits to their organization, is committed to organizational efficiency, and is willing to explore cutting edge technology to positively impact users, and clients.
- Microsoft Worldwide has highlighted Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada’s work with Dynamics by publishing a case study

These examples of innovation and social enterprise barely scratch the surface. We have developments in a Northern Canada Gateway for hub – central services to rural, remote, aboriginal populations. Initiatives like, BIGS@work, is an exploratory look at initiatives designed to encourage mentoring in corporate and governmental departments. We are pioneers in the area of Child Safety for injury prevention, undergoing an intensive child safety audit with police services and national and international professionals in the field to identify benchmarking and training opportunities for those working with children and youth. Our work constantly demands creativity and innovation.

How the government can help?

As articulated in the 2002 Government of Canada, Innovation Strategy, “Innovation is everybody’s business, Innovation simply means finding ways to do things better than before. It means a country in which everybody strives for excellence. It means a personal effort to contribute to Canada’s economic performance for the benefit of us all. That’s why we should all get involved”. Big Brothers Big Sisters is striving to achieve excellence through partnerships and building stronger more vibrant opportunities for children and youth and through innovation we will achieve a more inclusive society for all young Canadians. The government’s contribution of \$2 million dollars over a three year period would invest in Canada’s future.

3. 2013 Centenary Initiatives

Celebrating a centenary milestone for mentoring in Canada provides a unique opportunity to educate, engage new volunteers and ignite private and corporate sector interest. Celebrating the impact of mentoring programs and services in Canada fortifies opportunities to having charted a well defined Marketing Campaign, utilizing ambassadors for a speaker’s series entitled “Start Something” and engaging with youth for these initiatives. We will be campaigning a Youth Summit on Parliament Hill and bring everyone together at our National convention for the grand tribute to mentoring in Canada.

How the government can help?

A centenary is a landmark in Canadian society and the current federal government, led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, historically has supported and celebrated centenary initiatives. With a federal contribution of \$1 million per year for three years totaling \$3 million dedicated to the initiatives of the centenary will ultimately create the greatest national impact for mentoring children and youth.

The Power of Mentoring

As the statistics have shown, mentoring works. Over the last 100 years we have seen this time and time again. Our *Littles* (youth in our programs) go on to graduate from high school at a rate of 20% higher than the national average. 78% of *Littles* who came from a social



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assistance background no longer rely on this form of income and a disproportionately high number of former *Little*s graduate from college or university compared to others in their age group.

On the other hand, children who are denied the benefit of a positive role model are children who will continue to be deemed “at risk”, and not children “on the brink of success”.

Mentoring is about prevention. It is about guiding children away from behaviours and situations that ultimately affect their academic, social and economic well-being. Put another way, government support for Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programs will limit the amount of resources our government devotes to punitive measures in the future. We are asking for funding to dramatically increase the numbers of children and youth served in mentoring programs with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada and more importantly, we are asking for funding to support the future of our nation’s children and youth. With a little guidance, there is no limit to what these young people can accomplish and what they can give back to their communities and to their country.