

# 2020

Annual Report



*Big Sister Shandra and Little Sister Asharia enjoying time together while observing safe pandemic guidelines.*



**Big Brothers  
Big Sisters®**  
TWIN CITIES

# 2020's BIG PIVOT

## Unprecedented. Pandemic. Social Distancing. Quarantine.

These words became part of our daily vocabulary in 2020. The novel coronavirus affected our lives in both anticipated and unexpected ways. Toilet paper was a scarce commodity and rush hour traffic was nonexistent. Hugs and handshakes were replaced by FaceTime greetings and Zoom meetings. As the shutdown extended from weeks to months, we learned together how to adapt while keeping ourselves and loved ones safe.

No one escaped the impact of the pandemic. Fortunately, those impacts aren't all negative. The virus required us to pivot, giving us the opportunity to **innovate** and **reimagine**. It's in times of great challenge and adversity that we become stronger. At Big Brothers Big Sisters, we experienced this firsthand.

When initial stay-at-home orders went into effect in March, we adapted our programs to **support the needs of the community**. Face-to-face match meetings became virtual, in-person activities moved online, and staff intensified their support of Littles and their families.

Thanks to an outpouring of support from you and others in our community, we were able to provide **emergency grants** to our families for basic needs like shelter, food, and clothing. We also created **trainings and resources** to support our mentors and youth in navigating intensified racial unrest and injustice.

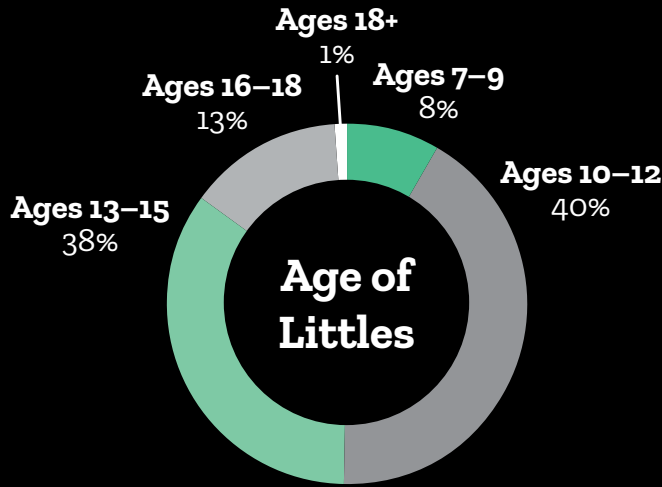
We are proud of our ability to adapt, adjust, and survive a global pandemic, a weakened economy, and racial and political unrest. But we didn't do it alone. **You were there, and for that, we are grateful.**

In this report, we're elevating the stories of people like you who **stood alongside us** in defending potential. You'll meet the dedicated and passionate partners who enabled thousands of Twin Cities youth to benefit from another caring adult in their lives. Remember, we are **#BiggerTogether!**

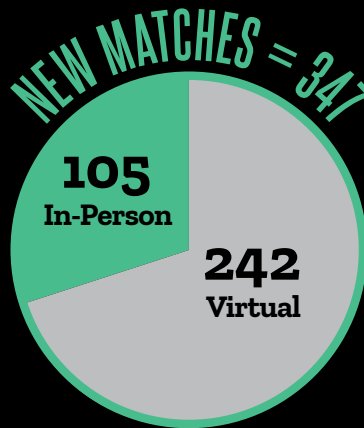
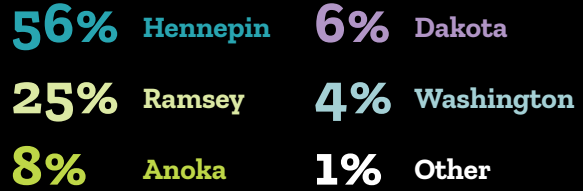


# 2020 AT A GLANCE

# 3,335 YOUTH SERVED



## SERVICE AREA



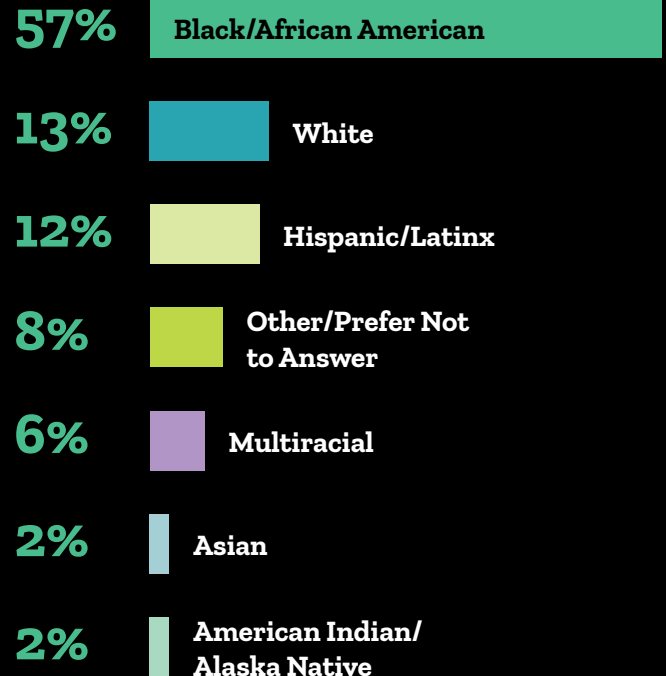
**28.2**  
months

Average match length  
(1.2 months longer than national average)

56% Little Sisters    44% Little Brothers



## YOUTH DEMOGRAPHICS



**85%** Youth from low income households

**82%** Youth living with a non-two parent household

High school seniors graduating on time **94%**

Littles reported improved or maintained grades. **91%**

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# /// ONE-TO-ONE-MENTORING

## One Child. One Adult. One Life-Changing Relationship.

Caring adult mentors (Bigs) are matched with children (Littles) to provide support, encouragement, and friendship. In our community-based model, matches spend time together in the community doing activities they both enjoy – riding bikes, visiting museums, playing board games, or simply hanging out. In our site-based model, Bigs meet with their Littles through an employee- or college-sponsored volunteer program at a consistent time and place throughout the school year.

### Meet a Match: Liz & Iyonna



*Big Sister Liz & Little Sister Iyonna*



*Little Sister Iyonna and her UNL teammates*

Big Sister Liz and Little Sister Iyonna were matched in 2015 when Iyonna was 12 years old. In their six years together, their activities have changed to reflect Iyonna's maturing interests. One activity, however, has been a constant in Iyonna's life – dancing with a troupe called Unlimited Next Level Drill Team (UNL). During the riots in Minneapolis following the death of George Floyd, the school where the UNL team practices was destroyed, along with all of their musical instruments valued at nearly \$10,000. Read the full story to learn how Liz supported Iyonna and her family through this tragedy at [bigstwincities.org/collaborating-to-defend-potential](https://bigstwincities.org/collaborating-to-defend-potential).

## Meet a Match: Rob & Asharion

**BBBS continued creating life-changing relationships during the pandemic. We just did it virtually!**



*Big Brother Rob & Little Brother Asharion*

Big Brother Rob and Little Brother Asharion were matched virtually via Zoom. At their match introduction meeting, Asharion noticed Rob's guitar in the background and excitedly ran to fetch his guitar. They played some tunes together and look forward to future virtual (and hopefully in-person) jam sessions.

## /// TEEN & EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING

At Big Brothers Big Sisters, youth mentoring opportunities don't end when a Little becomes a teen. Our dynamic teen programming equips young adults with the skills needed to graduate from high school, prepare for a career or post-secondary education, and turn dreams into reality. With the guidance of volunteer mentors, students learn how to build academic confidence, improve study skills, cultivate healthy peer relationships, and strengthen self-advocacy skills.



*Big Sister Christine and Little Sister Shelby*

## Community Partnership

Big Brothers Big Sisters Twin Cities and She Climbs Mountains partnered to establish Girls Rise Up, a no-cost mentoring program for girls ages 8-18 who have experienced the loss of their mothers. Christine and Shelby's relationship developed through this program. Learn more at [sheclimbsmountains.org/girlsriseup/](http://sheclimbsmountains.org/girlsriseup/).

**"It's been a true honor to walk this path with Shelby as she prepares for life after high school. It's been especially exciting to discuss and explore scholarship opportunities through BBBS as she considers her college options. I feel so fortunate to witness this important time of transition for Shelby, and to offer support and guidance along the way."**

**> Christine Friberg,  
Founder – She Climbs  
Mountains**

## FREE ARTS PROGRAM



Our Free Arts program leverages the power of mentoring by providing children with a safe place for artistic expression and self-discovery. Caring volunteers engage youth in art projects at partner sites throughout the Twin Cities. Through these supportive and consistent experiences, children are empowered to build trusting and positive relationships that can have a life-changing impact.

### Art Adaptations

During the pandemic, our Free Arts team got creative in adapting this in-person, hands-on youth mentoring model to a virtual platform. One example — students learned about spoken word art in a virtual residency with teaching artist, Frank Sentwali. Students wrote about a topic important to them. Many of them expressed feelings about heightened racial injustice following the death of George Floyd that had occurred a month earlier. At the final session, students performed their poems via video conference. Using their creativity and life experiences, students found an artistic outlet to share difficult feelings, learn new skills, and develop confidence.



**"Frank encouraged the kids to express themselves. He was very encouraging and made the children feel like they could do and write about anything. The fact that he was an African American man was very special because they could relate to him and some of his life experiences. The children's pieces literally made me and others cry ... it was amazing!"**

**> Patricia Krause, Educator;  
Northside Childhood  
Development Center**

# /// A CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

In 2020, Big Brothers Big Sisters Twin Cities celebrated its 100th year as a youth mentoring organization. We had big plans that included celebrations, match activities, fundraising events, and even an open house for our new Minneapolis home. The pandemic may have changed our plans, but it didn't dampen our enthusiasm. Here are some highlights from a year we'll never forget!



## JANUARY 2020

BBBS team members kick off a year of centennial celebrations with a BIG cake!



## JUNE 2020

### Care Package Drive

- 156 pounds of crayons
- 264 pounds of notebooks
- 343 pounds of colored paper

**TOTAL = 2,010 pounds**  
(that's more than 1 ton of donated fun and creativity to help our kids stay active, engaged, and healthy during stay-at-home orders)



## MARCH 2020

Honored a 75-year match relationship between Big Brother Jim and Little Brother Pat (that's three-fourths of BBBS-TC's entire existence!)



## OCTOBER 2020

### Big Night (in!), our first-ever virtual gala

- Raised \$257,000
- 500+ attendees from Minnesota and across the country





## POWERFUL PARTNERSHIP

Our mission is all about relationships. We create and support rewarding and long-lasting relationships every day between our Bigs, Littles, and families. We also rely on community partnerships to bring our mission to life.

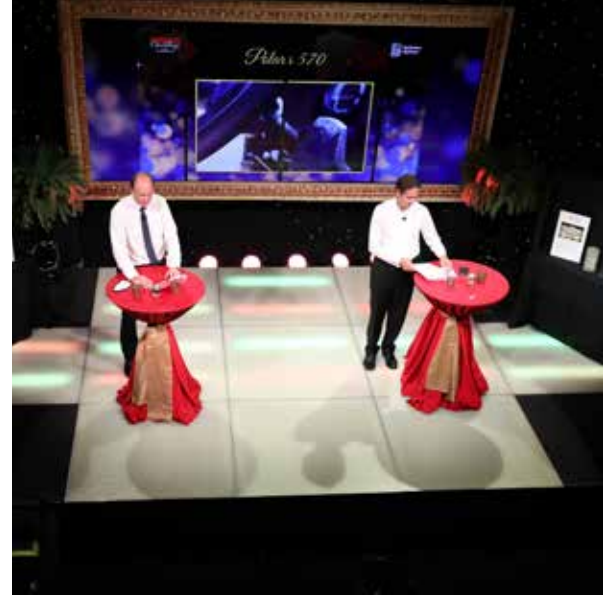
Federated Insurance® has partnered with Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies in Minnesota — Twin Cities, Central Minnesota (St. Cloud) and Southern Minnesota (Owatonna) — to change the lives of thousands of young people each year. The company's annual gala, the Federated Challenge®, raises awareness and provides critical funding to Big Brothers Big Sisters.

The 2020 Federated Challenge raised a record-breaking \$3,087,000 for Big Brothers Big Sisters despite being virtual due to the pandemic. More than 500 guests from 61 prominent businesses logged on to their computers or mobile devices to support youth mentoring. One hundred percent of the money raised benefited Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies in Minnesota and at the national level. Now in its sixteenth year, the event has raised more than \$41 million for youth mentoring programs.

"We knew in our hearts that canceling [the 2020] event was not an option," said Federated Insurance Chairman Jeff Fetters. "And that decision became more significant this year than ever before, as many kids have been patiently waiting to be matched with a Big. [Our] event set that in motion — opening the door to create strong bonds and long-lasting friendships."

Thank you Federated Insurance for your generous support and commitment to Big Brothers Big Sisters and the youth whose lives we seek to inspire!

[Learn more at federatedchallenge.org.](https://federatedchallenge.org)



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[Make a gift today at BigsTwinCities.org/donate](https://BigsTwinCities.org/donate)

# STANDING TOGETHER TO DEFEND POTENTIAL



So many things changed in 2020, but one thing never will. Children have a better chance of reaching their full potential with a caring adult by their side.

This past year is a stark reminder of why Big Brothers Big Sisters exists. It's during our greatest challenges that young people need us most. The support and friendship of another caring adult can have a tremendous impact on a child's emotional, physical, and intellectual development.

The stories we shared earlier in this report demonstrate how Big Brothers Big Sisters adapted to the challenges of a global pandemic, racial and political unrest, and economic insecurity. Our transition to virtual programming made it possible for Bigs to continue supporting their Littles in navigating today's uncertainties and inequities.

We have hope for the future as students return to classrooms, millions of Americans receive vaccinations, and the days get warmer and longer. Big Brothers Big Sisters has moved into our new North Minneapolis home. We look forward to hosting in-person events celebrating our community's resilience and determination. A new CEO will soon join our team whose leadership will empower our professional and dedicated staff to bring our mission to life.

During one of the most trying times in our nation's history, your support did not waiver. Because of you, we have survived when many nonprofit organizations have not. We have thrived when many have struggled. You have kept our mission alive and well.

Thank you for standing alongside us to create and support life-changing relationships at a time when young people need us more than ever. We couldn't do it without you. 2020 was a quintessential example of how we truly are **#BiggerTogether**.

With gratitude,



**Pat Cooper**  
Interim CEO;  
Big Brothers Big Sisters  
Twin Cities

**Rick Penn**  
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Big Brothers Big Sisters Twin Cities

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During what has been the most challenging year in my recent memory, I am in awe of the great work that is being done at BBBS. Their ability to be nimble in all areas of programming has been remarkable. The staff have made it possible to continue and expand services to further impact the lives of the youth and families we serve. It is a tremendous privilege to be a part of an organization that can adapt so quickly, continuing a 100-year tradition that supports its Bigs, Littles and families.

> Carol Smith; Donor, Board Member, Former Big Sister

# Thank You for Your Support

Big Brothers Big Sisters Twin Cities is deeply grateful to these generous donors for their dedicated support of our mission.

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*Mentors have been a vital part to my own success, and donating time and money to BBBS is one of the best ways I pay it forward. Funding provides this wonderful organization with more chances to foster nurturing relationships.*

> Vinay Thomas; Donor, Big Brother

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> Pat Sukhum; Planned Gift Donor, Board Member, Former Big Brother

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Donald Goar  
Bob and Shirley Hansing



Our vision at the Carlson Family Foundation is to uplift youth through leadership at the intersection of love and insight. This vision came into focus after years of partnering with the community in pursuit of solutions that would fill every young person with hope, opportunity and a sense of belonging.

Our very first partner on the journey to this vision was Big Brothers Big Sisters. The research pointed us to the efficacy of mentoring and the power of having a caring adult in one's life. Once we understood the strength of this model, we sought out the best with whom to learn, grow, and create impact — indeed, that was BBBS.

Every day, BBBS chooses to listen to feedback, to follow the research, and to reach further — to grow bigger and better — with the goal to ensure that every young person in our community wakes up in the morning knowing they have someone who cares. That is the way it should be, and BBBS makes it happen.

> Wendy Nelson; Chair, Carlson Family Foundation

Publishing an annual list of donors invites potential for both human and computer error. BBBS makes every effort to list donors accurately. Should an error occur on your listing, please contact Pam Kroyer at [pkroyer@bigstwincities.org](mailto:pkroyer@bigstwincities.org) or 651-789-2411.

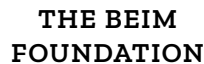
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# OUR PARTNERS

Thanks to the following organizations for distinguishing themselves through their generous support of Big Brothers Big Sisters Twin Cities.



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KATHERINE B.  
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FOUNDATION



# /// YOU CAN CHANGE LIVES

*Help us ignite the power and potential of Twin Cities youth.*

## Give

Inspired by these stories? Your gift allows us to create and support more life-changing relationships at a time when kids need it most! Big Brothers Big Sisters relies on the generous support of individuals, corporations, and foundations to provide our services at no cost to families.

Visit [bigstwincities.org/donate](http://bigstwincities.org/donate)

## Volunteer

We need caring adults like you to ignite the power and promise of Twin Cities youth. People who see the best in them, who recognize and empower their potential. Volunteering can change two lives - theirs and yours. Learn how you can become a defender of potential today.

Visit [bigstwincities.org/volunteer](http://bigstwincities.org/volunteer)

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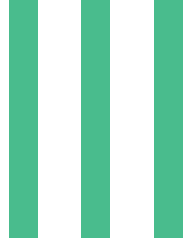
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*Make a gift today at [BigsTwinCities.org/donate](http://BigsTwinCities.org/donate)*



# Our New Home



*BBBS Twin Cities' new, modern facility is a prominent, inspiring community hub and the incubator of youth potential.*



**Big Brothers  
Big Sisters®**

TWIN CITIES

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Minneapolis, MN 55411

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[thinkbig@bigstwincities.org](mailto:thinkbig@bigstwincities.org)  
[bigstwincities.org](http://bigstwincities.org)

