

IGNITING

POTENTIAL

40  
YEARS



Big Brothers  
Big Sisters®

OF WESTERN NORTH  
CAROLINA



Serving as leaders for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Western North Carolina has been humbling and an honor. The mission of BBBSWNC is to ignite the promise and potential of all youth. Since 1982, we have served thousands of youth ages 6 to 18 in our region. Providing one-to-one mentoring during the pandemic has proved to be more critical than ever, as Littles have experienced unprecedented levels of stress, social isolation and even depression.

Though challenging, this past year has also been one of tremendous growth. We have reached several significant milestones to serve not only our Littles but also their families, such as developing innovative programs to keep our matches engaged, providing programming that ensures those we serve have bright futures beyond graduation, and establishing our first partnership with a transitional living facility.

BBBSWNC is now serving more youth from different backgrounds than ever before. We're thrilled to have the opportunity to begin a High School Bigs program with the Cherokee Central School on the Qualla Boundary. In the upcoming year, several of the programs you'll be reading about in this report will be expanding. And we have another new one on the horizon - Bow You're Wow, a program where we partner with animal rescue organizations by having our Bigs and Littles volunteer to walk dogs awaiting adoption.

Making a difference in a child's life is one of the most gratifying ways to give back and to give to the future. We need you! Here are some ways you can get involved:

- Become a Big and help make a difference in a child's life
- Serve on a BBBS Advisory Council or committee in your community
- Serve on the BBBSWNC Regional Board of Directors
- Join us for a "Give Back Day," which helps local community projects
- Support Big Brothers Big Sisters with a financial contribution



**DEBBIE CHARLTON**

Chair, Board of Directors



**LELIA DUNCAN**

President and CEO, BBBSWNC



## BBBSWNC expands into **eight new counties** in 2021

In December 2020, we were thrilled to receive a generous grant from **Dogwood Health Trust**, which allowed us to expand into eight new counties. We brought on passionate and enthusiastic new staff to recruit Bigs and Littles for the meaningful conversations about the challenges that young people face, including substance use.

The response in the eight counties has been supportive and welcoming. We're partnering with schools and local government officials to address the needs of youth in these areas. Staff are working with community members to form local advisory councils to help recruit Bigs, plan activities for Bigs and Littles, and help raise funds for local programming. The councils will help build a solid foundation of BBBS programs tailored to each county's unique needs.



# Meet some matches



So says Little Brother Keemari, after spending the day with his new Big Brother Chris. In the few months they've been matched, the guys have ridden bikes, gone rock climbing, played basketball and had barbecues - all reminders that it's the simple things that count in a Little's life. And this Buncombe County duo has already made one person's dreams come true. "I just want him to be able to be a kid and have fun," says Keemari's mom. Chris isn't worried about meeting Mom's goals - the two look like they're headed for many new experiences in the years to come.

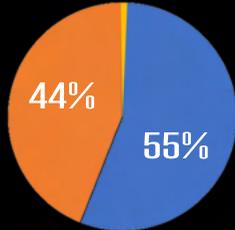
**"This was one of the best days of my life."**

Terri Martino remembers a quiet, shy third-grader when she was matched with Diego in Burke County. Over the years, she has seen him grow into a very social young man. Diego, now a high school senior enrolled at Western Piedmont Community College, wants to be a barber when he graduates. "I think support with homework was very important, since Diego was a second-language learner," Terri says. Today, the match still enjoys going out to eat and talking about soccer and school. Terri believes the relationship will be a lifelong connection.



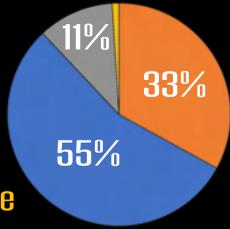
## Our Littles

**Gender**  
Female  
Male  
Nonbinary



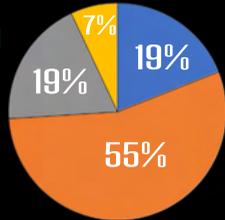
**Ethnicity**  
White  
Black  
Hispanic

**Indigenous people**



## Living Situation

Grandparents  
One parent  
Two parents  
Other



Connor Savugot, one of our High School Bigs at Murphy High School in Cherokee County, has seen Little Brother Bryson blossom over their mutual love of robotics. Meeting weekly at the high school, Connor and Bryson have created a program that enables a robot to speak, move, and change direction. Connor learned to make lesson plans and gather necessary supplies. "I have learned to be patient and tried to explain complex concepts in an understandable way," Connor says. "I just wanted to brag about Conner," an assistant principal at Murphy Middle School says. "He is so patient, and Bryson is having so much fun! Very sweet interaction!"

## Our outcomes

- 90% improved self-confidence
- 86% improved school behavior
- 79% improved problem solving
- 75% improved school attendance
- 71% more eager to learn at school
- 69% improved school engagement

Source: Local youth outcome surveys, 2021



**Winner of the 2021 Merrell #GreaterOutdoors Challenge award!**

Soon after BearWaters Brewing, a big supporter of BBBS, was flooded in August like much of Canton, BBBSWNC was there, mucking out bathrooms, cleaning the grounds, and straightening young trees. "There are not enough words to adequately thank BBBS for their sincere assistance and friendship during the floods," Canton mayor Zeb Smathers says.



"From Day 1," Smathers says, "the organization stood with Canton, whether that be through volunteering, clean up, or just lending a kind word."



# Big things we've done this year

Club Summit is our nationally recognized hiking series designed to get Bigs and Littles into the great outdoors we're lucky to have in Western North Carolina. We put together hikes this year that were informative and fun, led by staff trained in outdoor first aid and by hike hosts versed in the flora and fauna around us.

Our efforts were recognized by Merrell outdoors footwear and apparel company, which gave us one of three #GreaterOutdoors Challenge grants (we were chosen among the more than 120 BBBS agencies who participated). This national recognition gives BBBSWNC wonderful exposure and underscores our mission to provide our Littles (and Bigs) with meaningful, enriching experiences - especially outdoors.

Dorian Palmer, BBBSWNC Recruitment and Development Specialist, initiated and coordinated a successful statewide effort to entice N.C. Gov. Roy Cooper to support national recognition of September 2021 as Big Brothers Big Sisters Month. Working with other BBBS agencies in the state, Dorian also enlisted state Sen. Mujtaba Mohammed and state Rep. Graig Meyer to shepherd statements recognizing September as BBBS Month through the N.C. Senate and House of Representatives.

To our knowledge, this is the first time the state's legislative and executive branches have formally recognized the work we do in Western North Carolina and throughout the state. "I enjoyed being in Raleigh talking about not just the work we are doing in WNC but across the state," Dorian says. The governor's signed proclamation hangs in the Asheville office.



"Smiles can be seen under our masks, and members are in fact making a difference in Western North Carolina," Project MARS/AmeriCorps Program Director Katie Snow says. Here's one of the many changes its members are affecting while serving nearly 900 students in Buncombe, Haywood, Graham, and Cherokee counties.



At a school in Buncombe, Grace VanDerMeid, right, worked with a special needs student who was less vocal than she was before the pandemic. Working hard to get her to use her words again, Grace was stunned when the little girl was much more talkative one day. "After each word," Grace says, "I was sure to make a huge deal out of such an incredible accomplishment. In the special education classroom, sometimes progress might be small, but it never goes unacknowledged."

With BBBS staff and leadership, Greg Walker Wilson, left, at Walker Wilson Consulting is facilitating a new three-year strategic planning process for BBBSWNC to give the organization a decision-making guide to deliver and grow its current programs for 2022-2024. This process and plan will also help us build consensus among our various stakeholders, and build our internal capacity. Our goal is to determine organizational priorities and establish how we will measure success.

# More great stuff that happened this year

In October, we went to the Eliada Corn Maze, wandering around when we weren't shucking corn and having our faces painted. We enjoyed a beautiful day outside. Bigs and Littles got to meet a lot of other matches while picking pumpkins!

We were happy to support Eliada Home, a West Asheville facility that offers a variety of care services to young people. Eliada lost a significant portion of its corn maze to Tropical Storm Fred, But as you can see, we had a great time.

## Canoe x 2

This year Little Brother Landon helped his Big Brother David build not one, but two, canoes, for BBBS of Haywood County to auction off. These light-weight canoes, 11.5 feet each, were on display at BearWaters Brewing in Canton before the lucky winner was announced Dec. 23 - just in time for Christmas!



You just can't keep a Little down!

Twelve matches went kayaking this fall on Lake Junaluska, thanks to a generous community member and our Club Summit leaders. Thanks go also to Colt Miller, a Waynesville Recreation Center employee who facilitated and provided Bigs and Littles with the gear while teaching them how to be safe on the water.

"Colt and the other members were very helpful while also letting us have quality time with our Littles," one Big said.



Thumbs up for supporters

## All hands on deck!

Talk about networking! With the help of new friends, our BBBSWNC team came in third in the Drums & Dragons boat race in August. "Because we had some people drop from our roster last minute each heat, we scrambled to ask for paddlers from other teams to join us," staffer Blaine Weiss said. Nonprofits made up most of the teams racing on Lake Julian.



# Planning for 2022

## Qualla Boundary, BBBS to work together

In early December, BBBSWNC signed a memorandum of understanding with the Cherokee Central Schools Board of Education to provide mentoring services to young people on the Qualla Boundary.

“Our students from the high school need to be mentoring our younger kids,” school board member Tara Reed said, according to a story in *The Cherokee One Feather*.

Look for more about our work in the Qualla Boundary in 2022.



Cherokee Central Schools Board of Education Chairperson Jennifer Thompson signs the memorandum. With her are BBBSWNC President and CEO Lelia Duncan and Dorian Palmer, BBBSWNC Vice President of Philanthropy. Photo courtesy of *The Cherokee One Feather*



## Socks rock!

BBBSWNC staff gets warm and fuzzy during a year-end retreat to plan our 2022.

## Project MARS/AmeriCorps seeks new recruits

Serving schools throughout WNC every year, Project MARS/AmeriCorps recruits great mentors to serve great kids. Access to these paid jobs is on our website, [bbbswnc.org](http://bbbswnc.org).

Inclusion: Building Trust Rooted in Authenticity and Intentionality 



Among the many things BBBSWNC staffers learned during the 2021 virtual national conference is how important youth mentorship will be in 2022, another year of uncertainly for our Little's families. Among the presenters was Artis Stevens, President and CEO of BBBS of America.



# Leadership

## 2021-2022 Board of Directors

Debbie Charlton, Chair  
Allen Helms, 1st Vice Chair  
Joey Popp, 2nd Vice Chair  
Heather Brown, Secretary  
Josh Mellon, Treasurer

Margaret Carton  
Susy Chandler  
Barrie Christman  
Bernadette Joy Cruz  
Dave Gildersleeve  
Jennifer Kirkpatrick

Mark Kurdys  
Lane Perry  
Terry Peterson  
Tom Spencer  
Bruce Waller  
Shelley White  
Lauren Yoder



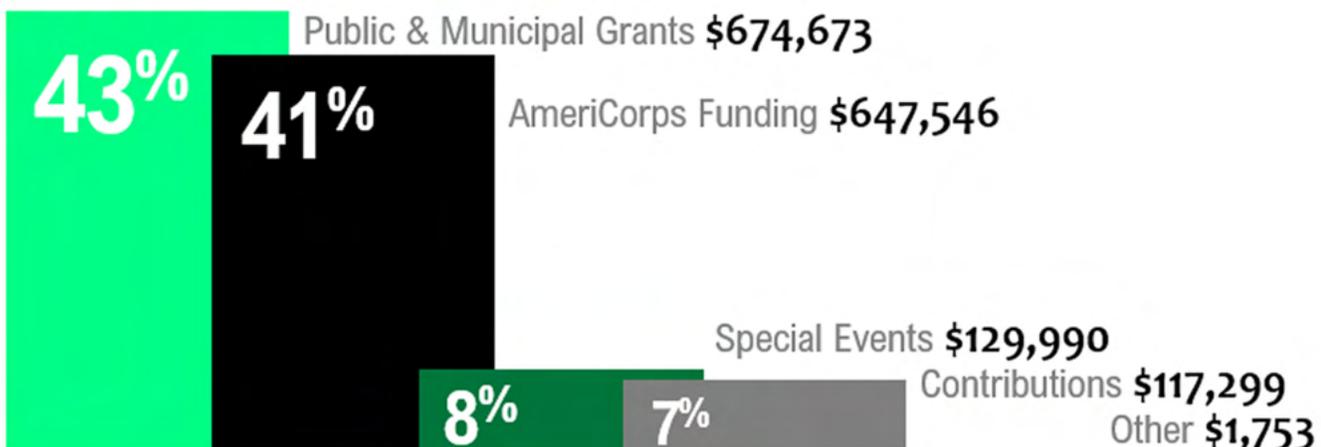
## Our commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

JEDI principles are helping our organization sharpen its focus on fostering a justice-centered environment where everyone is respected - Littles, Bigs, Parents, Guardians, and Employees. Committed to a nondiscriminatory and anti-racist approach, BBBSWNC and BBBS of America not only recognize but also celebrate the diverse life experiences of all of our stakeholders.

Having designated Chloe Jackson-Pierce, left, as BBBSWNC's JEDI Specialist, we have brought new energy toward our efforts to examine, through an equity lens, our organizational policies, systems, programs, and services. This year, Chloe and other staff attended JEDI training sessions and conferences. Our staff JEDI committee meets monthly to discuss current issues, share ideas, and collaborate on various initiatives.

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Total Revenue **\$1,571,261**



Expenses Breakdown: PROGRAMS **91%** FUNDRAISING **5%** ADMIN **4%**



# Big Brothers Big Sisters<sup>®</sup>

## OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

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Little Sister Malia with Susan Kocher,  
our Big Sister of 2020



Little Brother Ryan in 2017 with Dave Gildersleeve,  
our Big Brother of 2020

## OUR MISSION

Create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships  
that ignite the power and promise of youth

## OUR VISION

All youth achieve their full potential



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