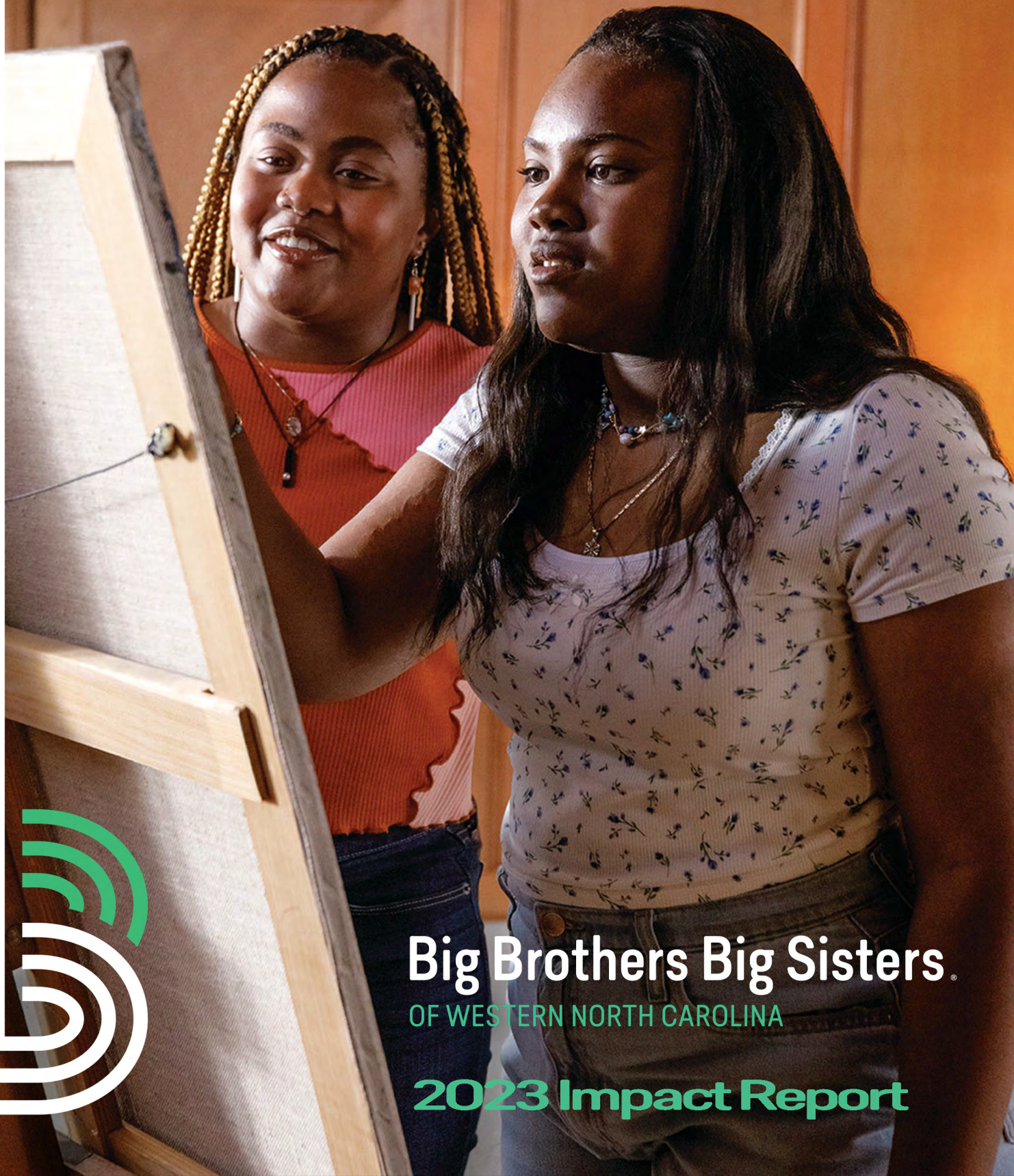


IT TAKES **LITTLE** TO BE **BIG**



Big Brothers Big Sisters
OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

2023 Impact Report

Friends and Supporters,

We're grateful for the past year's progress in creating life-changing relationships for children in our region. Big Brothers Big Sisters achieved remarkable growth, thanks to our dedicated team, volunteers, and the support of our community. Our Board of Directors has been a driving force in our journey. It is with great pleasure that we share our successes and initiatives with you.

Our commitment to innovation led us to expand Group Mentoring opportunities, provide fun learning opportunities, and develop programs like Big Futures to meet the unique needs of our youth, ensuring their future success. We successfully launched a mental well-being initiative in response to unprecedented challenges, providing vital support through partnerships with mental health professionals.

None of this would have been possible without the support of our community partners, strengthening our programs and community ties. We express deep gratitude to our volunteers, staff, board members, and partners for their unwavering support and passion. Their collective effort, joined with yours, propels us to provide opportunities for our youth and make a difference in their lives.

Thank you for being part of the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Western North Carolina family. Together, we inspire potential, ignite possibility, and defend the promise of our community's youth.

Sincerely,



DEBBIE CHARLTON
Chair, Board of Directors



LELIA DUNCAN
President and CEO, BBBSWNC



Leadership

2023-2024 Board of Directors

Debbie Charlton, Board Chair
Allen Helms, 1st Vice Chair
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Lane Perry, PhD
Deborah Posner, EdD
Brandon Priester

Robin Ramsey
Bill Smith
Bruce Waller
Lindsay Wells
Shelley White, EdD

469

YOUTH SERVED

Avg. match length

33 months

Community-Based Matches

BBBSWMNG

2023

STATISTICS

These are our kids

- 66% Live with moms or female caregivers
- 56% Receive subsidized lunch
- 20% Have a parent in prison or jail

- White 61%
- African-American 26%
- Hispanic 9%
- American Indian, Asian, and Other 4%

310

WAITING FOR BIGS

250 boys 60 girls

(As of October 2023)



Back To School

Pivotal to our success over the last year has been strengthening relationships with school superintendents across our 18-county region.

“Whether it be launching the High School Bigs program, tabling at sporting events, or being a part of our annual backpack giveaway, we know BBBSWNC will show up for the kids and families here and across WNC,” says Dana Ayers, Jackson County Public Schools superintendent.



And, we enlisted Western Carolina University’s cross country and volleyball teams to help us welcome kids back to Jackson County Public Schools - part of our regionwide “Go Back Big!” back-to-classes initiative.

Summer is bittersweet for BBBSWNC, as we say goodbye to our high school graduates. Though many stay in touch with their Bigs far beyond graduation, this year a half dozen Littles matriculated out of the program. The joy and sharing they and their families experience with their Bigs never leave, however. “Big Brothers Big Sisters has been a blessing to my family,” says Shetayga Cline, whose daughter Kyla was matched with Big Sister Kathy Peters (at right). “You have always been there, no matter what the situation was,” Shetayga told Kathy. “You will always be a part of us.”



Robin Myer Realizing Potential Award

Focusing on health and leadership development, Tyber Lowe received our 2023 award. Tyber was recognized for showing outstanding ability to engage his aptitude and interests and make a difference in his community, Transylvania County. Despite losing his father and a close friend, he persevered, improving his academic skills and grades. “I am impressed with his positive attitude, his focus, and his ability to set and complete goals,” Big Brother Jim says.



Goodbye, Grads!

We recognize that saying we are committed to JEDI (justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion) is not enough.



Our words must be backed by action. Because our Equity team strives to serve all community neighbors, we educate staff and mentors so that cultural sensitivity and awareness stay at the top of our priorities, right next to child safety. **JEDI**



Project MARS

With more than 48,000 hours of service, Project MARS/AmeriCorps served 1,437 children at 10 WNC schools by the end of the 2023 school year, and with stellar results - 89% of the children behaved better and improved attitudes at school. Project MARS started the 2023 fall term with 26 full-time and 25 half-time members, its largest cohort ever. It doubled the number of sites served and placed three members as school engagement coordinators in Burke, Buncombe, and Cherokee counties. "We have a tight-knit team that brought a lot of energy into the start of this new year," says Program Coordinator Karl Schloegel.

Big Futures

Fueled in part by a grant from the Asheville Merchants Fund, our Big Futures program helped Littles build life skills. We took our Big and Little Sisters to

GE Aviation Asheville for Girls in Aviation Day. With Uncomplicated Kitchen, we demonstrated budget basics and good nutrition in Cashiers-Highlands by going shopping with Littles and cooking what we bought. Our partners at Haywood Community College taught Littles basic car maintenance. In Cherokee County, Littles learned to read construction blueprints. And thanks to Lakievia Johnson of Steps Academic and Advising, our Bigs and Littles identified their natural strengths and created "vision boards" to help them define their futures.





Smiles that say it all

Landon had a blast with Big Brother Josh playing the djembe in Rutherford County. Our Littles learned about aquatic macroinvertebrates with RiverLink. They rode horses at Cedar Creek Stables in Polk County. Snow tubing, river floating, pool parties and baseball games got our kids outside and active, as did the High Ropes Course Challenge with Outward Bound in Pisgah Forest. These and other experiences taught matches how to trust one another while working together.



During National Mentoring Month in January, BBBSWNC hosted U.S. Rep. Chuck Edwards in Swain, Graham, and Cherokee counties to talk about the work we do for mountain youth.



Bowl For Kids' Sake was huge this year - we raised more than \$166,000, way past our goal! Bowlers, sponsors, and supporters made our events a smashing success. Thanks to our literacy partners, we promoted reading through the theme, "Once Upon A Time."



Here's an example of the many activities our matches did this year - J'Ro and Big Brother Renick built a gingerbread tower for the annual national gingerbread competition put on by the Omni Grove Park Inn, a BBBS supporter. "It was a lot of fun to snack on the various candies and share some laughs along the way," Renick says.

Supporters and sponsors kept the fun rolling at Roaring '20s-themed fundraisers in Burke, Cherokee, and Henderson counties this fall.

"We are so thankful for all who came out and those who sent well wishes from afar," says Erin Erickson, Program Coordinator in Henderson County.



Biggs of the Year

BBBSWNC salutes Karla and Bill. Karla, of Jackson County, walks the walk when it comes to Kira. During one match outing, she zoomed down a 100-foot zipline. "I want to teach Kira it's OK to be afraid and push your boundaries," she says. "You just have to keep trying to get better." Bill, of Polk County, is helping JJ finesse the transition into adulthood. "People have to trust you - I just hammered that every day," he says. Having a Little has changed him profoundly. "You realize you are going to be wrong and you better be ready to grow."



This year we partnered with the Buncombe County Sheriff's Office to launch Biggs in Blue/Biggs with Badges, programs created to foster positive, public matches with young people and the families who love them. Paired one-to-one with peace officers, Littles are mentored by professionals trained in conflict resolution.

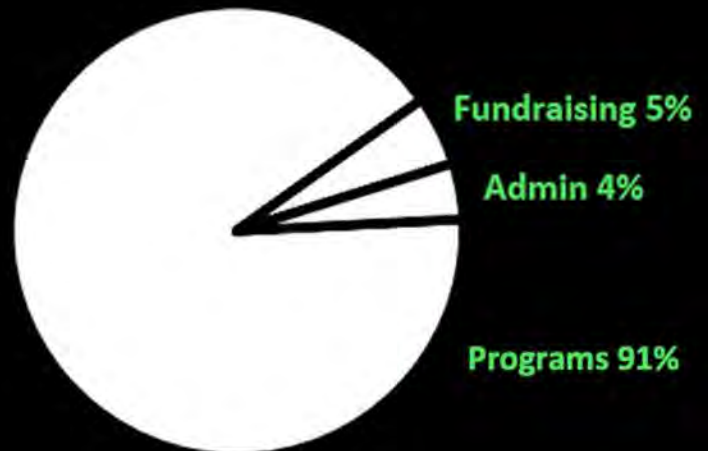


Our High School Biggs are getting more opportunity to mentor younger students while enhancing leadership skills and college and job prospects. Tapping their hearts and skills, the program took a big leap forward in Burke County this year. It has been started or is growing in Buncombe, Henderson, Polk, Swain, and Transylvania counties, as well as on the Qualla Boundary. Cherokee County's program continues to grow, with more than 50 matches.

High School Biggs



Revenue



Expenses

IT TAKES **LITTLE** TO BE **BIG**



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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