

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Windsor Essex continues to serve the children and youth through the COVID-19 pandemic.



We have gone virtual!

Despite the COVID-19 global pandemic, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Windsor Essex (BBBSWE) has "PIVOTED" to continue to serve the children and youth of our community. Physical Distancing protocols have introduced some significant barriers for mentorship activities to continue in the same manner they have proceeded traditionally. We have adapted our programs to become virtual and we continue to strive to provide the children and youth with the crucial mentoring relationships they need in these challenging times.

Did you know our services have gone virtual?

Ask us about how to support kids
in a time when they need it most.

#BiggerTogether #BBBSWindsorEssex

PROUD FUNDED PARTNER OF



**United Way
Centraide**
Windsor-Essex County



Big Message from the Executive Director



Hello everyone and welcome to our very first e-newsletter, designed as a quick way to keep you up to date on our latest news – COVID updates, new programming changes, fantastic new staff and fantastic matches. All of our agency news! Did you hear that? That was the sound of some really BIG blasts – nearly 500 to be exact, the sounds of igniting the power and potential of nearly 500 children and youth right here in Windsor Essex since COVID lockdown last March. Our Community is open, we're closed, we're open again....we're closed. If there's anything this year has taught us, it's the importance of COMMUNICATION. You need to know how to reach us – who to contact, latest match protocols and most of all – how to stay safe.

You can expect to hear from us in this format frequently and hopefully with a quick glance at your phone you'll have all of the information you need. We're very excited to share these with you but we also know that you're busy too and only have so much time to scroll – not to worry. ALL of our staff continue to work full time and full tilt maybe not in our building at present – but be assured working at home with everything they need to fulfill our promise – to ignite the power and potential of young people. Whether in the office or at home, our staff all have remote access to our server files, printers and some even have taken home their own office chair! Call anytime to speak to whomever you need at their regular extensions.

It's a Challenging Time. Noise-making aside, we know really well how challenging this has been for our young people, our volunteer mentors, our parents and our community partners. As much as we've been rocking the virtual mentoring game, we're all (you and me, our staff, parents – volunteers, all of us) are still really struggling – sometimes measuring our days' successes in baby steps. We know it can feel exhausting. The good news is that nearly 500 young people are being supported by the adults who care about them during this really awful time. Nearly 500 young people have someone they can reach out and talk to, face time with, message or even just have fun playing a game of Virtual Battleship when they're feeling stressed. Couldn't we all use someone like that in our lives right now? I know I could. Even though we have a lot to be concerned about at present – we have nearly 500 reasons to be really grateful.

This Newsletter is yours. We hope this newsletter will help you feel informed and supported. We hope it might even serve as a way to feel inspired. For a quick pick me up, check out our Mentoring Corner – highlighting heartwarming and inspiring stories about mentors both famous and not so famous. If you want to laugh, have a look at Things Heard on Zoom or for a chance to win an Amazon Gift card – take a stab at our BBBSWE trivia question!

If you have any ideas about information you'd like to see here, please don't hesitate to reach out to either Vicki Hedge vicki.hedge@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca or myself becky.parent@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca. We'd love to hear from you!

Until then, or until we can meet again, stay safe.

Becky Parent

BIG NEWS

(Bigger than it is now)



Good bye and thank you to Salina Ciccone!

We are very sorry to say goodbye to Salina Ciccone who has been a Community-Based Mentoring Coordinator with us for a short time and has been a very long time member of the BBBSWE team. Salina was an In-School Mentor for many years and facilitated the Summer Camp program for two summers. We appreciate her very dedicated service and wish her well as she begins her full time employment with the Regional Children's Centre. Thank you Salina and best wishes!



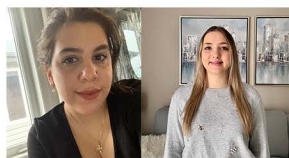
Welcome Marissa Lepera!

Marissa is a new full time Community-Based Mentoring Coordinator who is not that new to BBBSWE. She began with us in the Fall of 2019 as a placement student from the University of Windsor, stayed on as a Summer Camp Program Coordinator and then was hired part time in the Fall of 2020 to coordinate our Beautiful Words Book Club! Welcome Marissa! We are so happy to have you as an official member of the BBBS Team!



Welcome Paiton and Emily!

Paiton Del Monte and Emily Ackle are no strangers to BBBSWE as they have also been students and long time volunteers who now join the BBBSWE team as part time Group Mentoring Coordinators. Thank you Paiton and Emily and welcome aboard!



We would also like to welcome and acknowledge our student interns who provide support and hard work in assisting us to deliver programming during these unprecedented times.

(BSW) Bachelor of Social Work students from The University of Windsor Ethan Nelson and Laura Parent.(CYC) Child and Youth Care students from St Clair College Cole Enlow, Vanessa Russell, Kirsten McNichol, Katlyn Schuurman, Brooke Schulz, Kayla Vizcaino, Kaitlyn Ewing. We couldn't do it without YOU!!! We appreciate your involvement and patience as we persevere with our new approach to virtual programming.



Big Brothers Big Sisters Annual Holiday Party Pivots to a Holiday Gift Drop Off

The children and youth at BBBSWE look forward to our holiday party every year as do our volunteers, sponsors and staff. This year we had to think outside the box in order to ensure the children and youth in our programs still received a holiday surprise from BBBSWE.

Our staff worked hard to make sure this would happen. The children and youth received a holiday gift bag filled with many fun and exciting gifts and surprises delivered safely to their porch. These items included holiday mugs, hot chocolate, marshmallows, hats, gloves, Tim Horton gift cards Jiffy Pop, board games and gingerbread houses. We wanted to fill the bags with items they could share with their family and activities they could do at home.

A big thank you goes out to Flood Chiropractic P.C. and Rova Machine Inc. for donating to the holiday gift bag drop off. It is because of the support of generous donors like you that we could make this a huge success.





February was Black History Month

In 2020, it was announced by the Greater Essex County District School Board that the new elementary school would be named James L. Dunn Public School. Have you ever heard of Mr. Dunn? The son of formerly enslaved people from Kentucky, James Llewellyn Dunn was the owner of Dunn Paint and Varnish Works right here in Windsor.

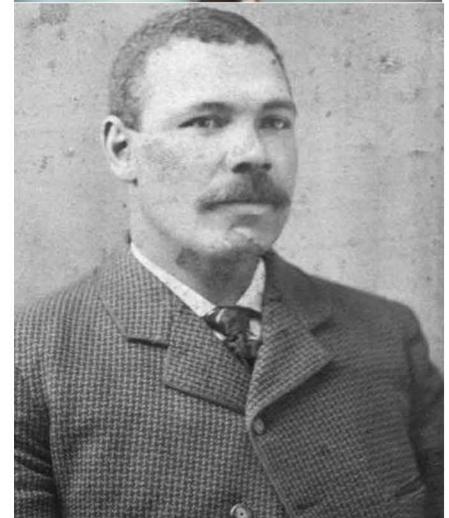
Despite being a local business owner and well-to-do, respected member of the community, he was not able to secure quality public education for his daughter. By 1883, Windsor had three schools: a Roman Catholic School, the Public Central School, and the Coloured School. James Dunn's daughter Jane Ann attended the Coloured School during the 1882-83 school year. The following school year, Mr. Dunn and his wife Lucinda wanted Jane to attend the Public Central School instead of the Coloured School. He brought Jane to the Public Central School where the headmaster refused to receive her as a student. Dunn was instructed to make application to the school trustees for permission to have her admitted. He did, but his application was refused, so he secured a lawyer. The Board's lawyer claimed that race was not a factor, the school was simply full. He also claimed that Mr. Dunn had not made his request the proper way. Dunn was not successful in his legal endeavour. But the story doesn't end there.

The story attracted media attention in both Windsor and Detroit. The Windsor newspaper reported that "Some of the trustees were shocked at the idea of having their kids sitting beside colored children..." while the Detroit newspaper said, "The privilege the colored people ask is not a social but a civil right."

Dunn used the resulting celebrity status to get elected to the Windsor Board of Education in 1884, the first Black person to do so. Ultimately, he was able to affect change to benefit all Black children in Windsor.

In addition to legally challenging school segregation right here in Windsor and subsequently becoming the first Black school board trustee, Mr. Dunn was also Windsor's first Black Town Councillor, serving two terms.

BBBSWE recognizes that we have a lot of anti-racist work to do right here in our own organization. If you want to participate in our Anti-racism Task Force or one of our anti-racism working groups contact: becky.parent@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca



BIG NEWS

(Bigger than it is now)



Due to the Covid-19 restrictions that went into effect in March 2020, fundraising efforts for BBBSWE have been challenging. We have had to cancel all of our events including our two key fundraisers Bowl for Kids' Sake and Battle of the Hors D'oeuvres. This is a huge upset not only to our fundraising efforts but we will also miss seeing everyone that participates at our events and help them to be such a great success. With the new Covid-19 measures in place, we have to pivot our fundraising efforts to an online/virtual approach.

Big Brothers Big Sisters Ontario Bigger Together 50/50 Raffle

Our first online fundraiser that started in November 2020 was our Bigger Together 50/50 Raffle. This includes 35 Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies in Ontario. We have joined together to host ongoing Bigger Together 50/50 raffles that will occur periodically throughout the year.

To date, there have been three BBBSO 50/50 raffle draws. The first was in October 2020 and the winner from Lindsay, ON took home \$178,000, the second winner from Kawartha Lakes, ON took home \$77,195 and the third winner from St Thomas, ON took home \$53,785. That is some Big Winning! Each agency receives 50% of the ticket sales sold in their area. By purchasing tickets, you have a chance to Win Big and Support the nearly 500 children and youth we serve locally at BBBSWE.

Our fourth Bigger Together Raffle has begun! Draw date Mar. 15, 2021

Ticket prices: 200 for \$40, 40 for \$20 or 10 for \$10

For tickets, please go to our website:

<https://windsor.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca>



Move for Mentoring

We're spending a lot of time at home right now – which is a good thing – but we need to keep moving, keep active and keep motivated. Why not MOVE FOR MENTORING?!?! This is a simple and fun way to make a difference in our community! Challenge yourself (and each other) to be active while raising pledges to support the young people here in Windsor, Essex. Stay tuned for more info on this great new virtual event!!! MOVE FOR MENTORING?!?!

Coming this Spring 2021



Become a Donor or Sponsor Today

BBBSWE is currently looking for program sponsors and donors. For more information on how You Can Do Something Big! Go to: <https://windsor.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/> or call 519-945-6232. Do Something Big!!!



VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING AT BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF WINDSOR ESSEX

When COVID-19 lockdown measures went into effect in March 2020, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Windsor Essex recognized that our children and youth needed us more than ever. It was vital to continue to nurture the trusting mentoring relationships that had been developed as they would provide our children and youth with reassurance and a sense of stability during these uncertain times. As a result, BBBSWE moved all aspects of service delivery to virtual platforms and made a commitment to maintain as much programming as possible while preserving the safety and well-being of all involved. BBBSWE appreciates the patience and support of our families, volunteers, community partners and most importantly, our children and youth as we continue to navigate this new virtual approach together.

Please continue reading for highlights regarding the impact of our virtual programming.

Volunteers Needed in West End Windsor

To further our goal of matching every child in Windsor-Essex who needs a mentor with a mentor, we are looking for Volunteers in West End Windsor. Bringing yourself and your lived experiences, we will match you with a mentee in West End Windsor so right from the start you will have a shared sense of community and experience. All you have to do is spend time exploring and learning together. Play sports together. Visit a museum. Sing karaoke. Play boardgames. Bake cookies. Or just give some advice and inspiration. Just as your options are unlimited, so is your mentee's potential. By spending time together on a regular basis, you can help a child succeed by being their friend and role model.

To hear more about all the amazing things you can do and learn how to get started in becoming a mentor, contact our West End Community Based Mentoring Coordinator, Jasmine Taylor at jasmine.taylor@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca or (519) 945-6232 ext. 26 or visit our website: <https://windsor.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/>.





Community Based Mentoring

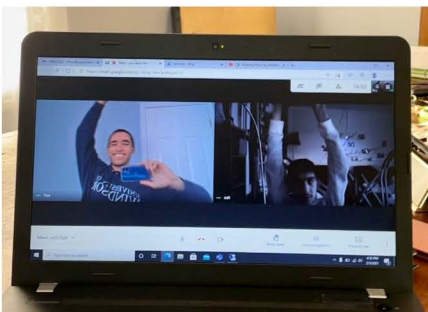
Our Community Based program was hard at work in 2020 continuing to support our matches in making strong connections and bonds. Matches have been staying connected through various virtual platforms and offering each other support. Not being able to connect face to face brought many challenges but our matches have been hard at work thinking of ways to stay connected and grow their friendships during this time. Some of the creative ways our matches have been staying connected include:

- ☒ Baking
- ☒ 6-week workout challenge
- ☒ Making friendship bracelets
- ☒ Creating a vision board
- ☒ HouseParty App
- ☒ Backyard.co

Although our matches are continuing to meet virtually at this time, they are eager to be reconnected. They have already started to plan for their future activities when they are together. Some of these plans for the future include:

- ☒ Attending concerts
- ☒ Skyzone
- ☒ Basketball
- ☒ Kayaking
- ☒ Career shadowing
- ☒ Bike riding
- ☒ And most important being together!

Ethan and Safi have been matched since October and have been meeting virtually. Ethan had this to say about his experience: "This experience with Safi has been great. We have made sure to still engage in as much physical activity as possible even though we are virtual. The virtual aspect has forced us both to be creative and open when trying new and unique activities. I am very proud of the relationship we have been able to build without ever meeting each other in person."





In-School Mentoring & Between Generations

Our In-School Mentoring and Between Generations programs have continued to adapt and thrive during the COVID-19 pandemic. We would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to our amazing mentors, incredible school partners and wonderful parents/guardians for their ongoing commitment and support to our programs. Because of their hard work and perseverance, the Mentors in our programs have continued to create environments and experiences that provide our Mentees with the opportunity to thrive and build new skills. Our Mentors expose, explore, inspire & empower their Mentees to build various developmental assets just by spending time with them, even virtually!



We know it can be difficult for matches to come up with new and exciting activities each week, especially in an online environment, so we have created a new online space for Mentors to share their ideas, resources and experiences with one another. We can't wait to hear more about the new and fun experiences our matches are having together online!

We look forward to continuing to support our ISM and BG matches this year. We know it hasn't been easy and we greatly appreciate the ongoing efforts of our Mentors. Read below for some testimonials from just some of our wonderful School-Based Mentors.

"Since becoming a part of the ISM and working with [my mentee] it has been such a great opportunity. We have been able to stay active and try new activities in the virtual setting. I cherish this chance to speak with a young child who looks like me, to share support and advice from a younger perspective."

Ethan, ISM Mentor

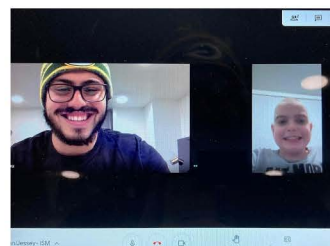


"I am glad that we have been able to continue the match virtually with the Covid-19 shut down, as it gives us a chance to stay in contact and continue to do fun things each week. I have enjoyed seeing Reionna grow and mature and am happy to be able to continue the match virtually."

Lucy, ISM Mentor

"...we're doing well!...his Mom says that he's very excited for our weekly meetings. I have really enjoyed this time volunteering and I want to thank you again for everything. I'm going to try and do this for as long as possible and hopefully make a difference in [my mentee's] life!"

Stefan, ISM Mentor



BIG NEWS

(Bigger than it is now)

Big Program Updates

Site-Based Group Mentoring Program

The year 2020 brought plenty of changes and adjustments for our Afterschool Group Mentoring Program. As the pandemic prevented our program from meeting in person, we quickly pivoted to an online format to keep our group connected. Utilizing an online platform, the Group Mentoring program continued to meet weekly online to finish our 2019-2020 program. Weekly activities ranged from doing art activities, escape rooms,

Pictionary and so much more. To celebrate the end of our program, each group member received their own cookie kit and art supplies to decorate individual puzzle pieces. These puzzle pieces were sent back to the agency and will be displayed in our group room to serve as a reminder of how we were able to stay connected during this time. Our 2019-2020 Group Mentoring program served 45 youth.

Continuing the experience in the online world, our 8-week Summer Camp program served a total of 33 children! Offered in a virtual platform, the program met three times weekly and included weekly porch drop-offs of supplies and snacks for the group members to enjoy. Group members participated in a variety of activities such as virtual aquarium field trips, science experiments, creating their own instruments, creating a Zen garden and so much more. Additionally, our Summer Camp program utilized local

facilitators to make our program engaging. These included a live animal show by Little Ray's Reptiles, a yoga session with Ali Ducharme of the Yoga House, a drumming session with Elissa Abboud, a guided planting session with Ainslee Winter, a guided art session with Julia Adams and finally a live magic show by NUVO entertainment. The program finished off with build your own ice cream sundae and tie-dyeing their own face mask and virtual summer camp t-shirt. Although our Summer Camp program did not look the same, this summer was fun-filled and provided all the participating group members with a lasting memory! A big thank you to all our community partners who supported us with facilitation or providing supplies as well as our summer camp staff, Paiton Del Monte, Marissa Lepera, Kenna Robb and Jesseka Good!



Afterschool Group Mentoring Program 2021 is BACK!

Back by popular demand, we are happy to announce that the Virtual Afterschool Mentoring Program is up and running once again!!!

The program is delivered virtually on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 6:30pm-7:30pm. for children between the ages of 6 and 11 years. We ask that a child pick one day to attend each week. All are welcome although attendance is always on a first come first served basis with priority given to children who are not matched to a Big Brother or Big Sister.



This is a great opportunity for children to engage in fun activities while socializing with their peers. We all know how important positive outlets are to a child's mental health during these unprecedented times! Some activities that group participants can look forward to are scavenger hunts, Zumba lesson, Mad Science presentation, virtual escape rooms, guided art session, planting, talent show, crafts, games and much, much more! Each child who participates will also receive a bin full of supplies and snacks. This session of our After School Group Mentoring program will be facilitated by Paiton Delmonte and Emily Ackle with the help of our CYC Interns, Brooke Schulz and Katlyn Schuurman. Thank you for your involvement ladies. We really appreciate your hard work and enthusiasm in making this a memorable experience for our kids!!

To sign up please contact Paiton or Emily at the following:

Paiton Delmonte
Telephone: 226-799-8610
Email: paiton@bigbrothersbigsisterswe.ca

Emily Ackle
Telephone: 226-455-4680
Email: emily@bigbrothersbigsisterswe.ca

Virtual Teen Group- Go Girls/Game On

For the first time, we are offering an after school group mentoring program Friday evenings from 4:00PM-5:00PM for youth age 12 and up waiting to be matched to a Big Brother or Big Sister! Youth matched to a Big Brother or Big Sister can participate if there is room in the group. Call or email us to find out! Utilizing our Go Girls and Game On program curriculum, this group focuses on promoting physical activity, balanced eating habits/nutrition and positive self-esteem. Two of our Child and Youth Care placement interns, Brooke and Katlyn facilitate this group. Brooke and Katlyn have enjoyed getting to know everyone thus far and look forward to making more memories together until June! The participants receive supplies/materials needed to complete various activities as well as snacks and a \$10 Amazon gift card! Join us in staying connected while staying apart. After School Group has also been made possible by the Government of Canada's Community Support Fund administered by United Way of Windsor and Essex County.

To sign up please contact Brooke or Katlyn at the following:

Brooke Schulz
Telephone: 226-345-0530
Email: brooke@bigbrothersbigsisterswe.ca

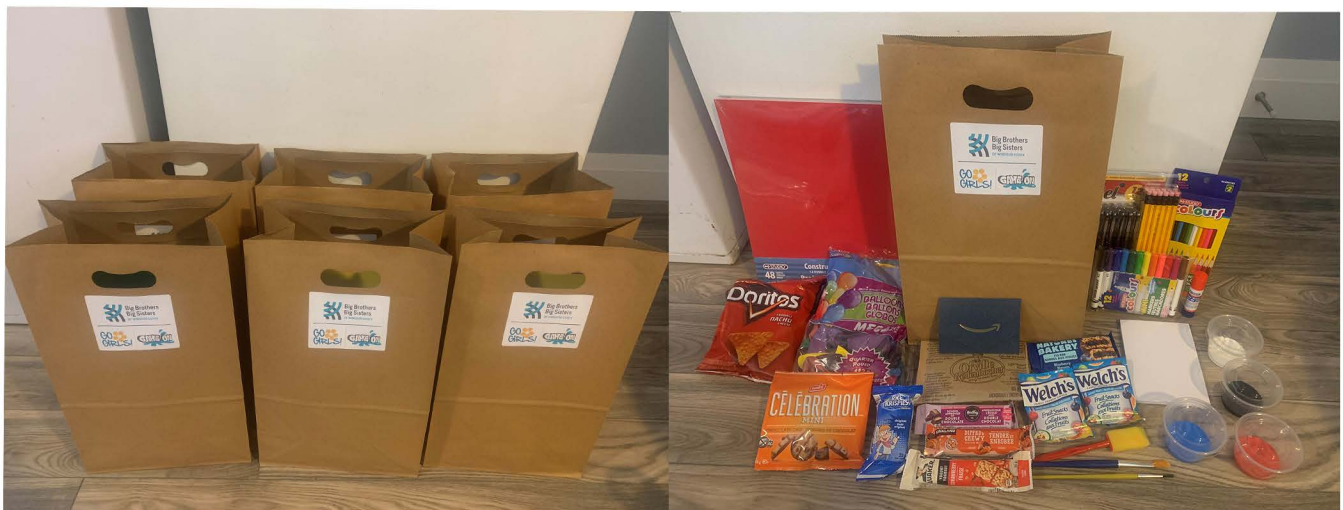
Katlyn Schuurman
Telephone: 226-840-2329
Email: katlyn@bigbrothersbigsisterswe.ca



Go Girls & Game On!

We are happy to announce that our Go Girls and Game On school-based group mentoring programs are happening again virtually! Since the pandemic affected programming last March, our agency had to become creative as it relates to supporting students throughout Windsor-Essex! The Go Girls and Game On programs focus on promoting physical activity, healthy eating habits/ nutrition as well as positive self-esteem!

Our School-Based Mentoring Coordinator Chelsie, has been working closely with the Public and Catholic Virtual Schools in order to receive referrals. With the help of the Child and Youth Care placement students from St. Clair College, school-based group mentoring programs are happening again! We are currently supervising seven student interns whose role is to develop mentoring relationships with the children/youth that we serve through intentional programming. BBBSWE has provided supplies/materials in order to participate in various group activities as well as snacks and an Amazon gift card delivered through porch drop offs! During a time of social distancing, the importance of belonging to a group and meeting new people virtually has never been more crucial to promoting positive mental health.



Please feel free to contact Chelsie Lefaive with any questions or concerns;
chelsie.lefaive@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca



BBBSWE- Beautiful Words Book Club

"We are excited to have paired up with Beautiful Words to create the BBBSWE- Beautiful Words Book Club! The Book Club has been funded by the Government of Canada's Community Support Fund and is being administered by the Windsor Essex Community Foundation. Throughout COVID-19, it has been challenging for matches to stay connected at times, which is why we will be offering book packages as a chance for matches to re-connect over the love of reading together! Community Based and In-School 1:1 matches will be able to choose a book of their choice from our partner, Biblioasis Book Store (located in Walkerville area) and they will be provided with a copy for both the Mentor and the Mentee as well as bookmarks containing fun, conversational discussion prompts about the book.

Everyone's lives present different demands and needs right now, and matches will be able to structure the reading of the book in a way that suits them best. Our goal for the BBBSWE-Beautiful Words Book Club is to allow matches to make their friendships even stronger and to ignite the love of reading in our community. In the future, we hope to structure the Book Club in a group setting to be facilitated by Service Delivery Staff, where multiple matches can connect with each other and read an awesome book together. For now, we see and believe the challenges that children and youth are experiencing regarding a lack of connection with those around them during COVID-19, and we hope that offering book packages will provide matches with an additional opportunity to stay safe, connected, and most importantly...have fun! "

Beautiful
WORDS



Virtual Learning Program

Big Brothers Big Sisters is pleased to partner with United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County to deliver a Virtual Learning Program to support educational outcomes for ten Grade 6 students from Brock Elementary School. The program is facilitated in a virtual classroom setting and is held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:15pm.-5:00pm. The youth engage in fun and interactive activities while enhancing their English and Math skills. We value our partnership with United Way in assisting these students to reach their academic potential!



A great example of our virtual mentoring activities: Mentor Emma and her Mentee Osaoghena had a baking challenge and mentee Osaoghena won by a landslide. Emma said "One of our baking adventures that highlights how much of a better baker she is than me! We made surprise cakes and let us just say hers turned out far better than mine! Hahaha, he's determined to make me a better baker!"





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BBBSWE TRIVIA CORNER

Correctly answer for a chance to win a \$50 Amazon gift card.

Email your answer to:
general.windsorsex@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca

Please include trivia in subject line of your email

In February of 2021, the City of Windsor announced the new name for a west-end park. It was named in honour of a female abolitionist who was also the first person to open a school for Black children in Sandwich and a co-founder of an anti-slavery newspaper with her husband. What was her name?



Left to Right:

Sandra Bortolin, Danielle Bombardier, Adam Frye (former chair), Joanne Soave, Laurel Brannagan, Becky Parent, Andy Sullivan (Chair), Brittany Rife, Paul Schaffner, Erika Sanborn and Nolan Goyette.

Missing: Steffan Brisebois, Anne Mullen