

Local Big Brothers Big Sisters to hold online holiday auction, seeks donations

Written By PAULA BROWN

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dufferin and District is putting the call out to local businesses to help provide donated items for an upcoming fundraiser.

The local chapter will be hosting an online holiday auction starting on Nov. 12 at 9 a.m. and running until Nov. 20 at 7 p.m. Local residents will have the opportunity to bid on a variety of donated items while helping to raise much needed funds for local Big Brother Big Sister programming.

"It's a fun way to raise money for the programs and give people an opportunity to have access to some pretty cool prizes," said Natalie de Ruiter, fundraising and group program coordinator.

With less than two weeks until the auction's launch, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dufferin and District is looking for more items to include in the online auction.

"We're hoping to have items on there that would get people excited and want to buy to give as gifts or for themselves," said de Ruiter. "We're not specifically looking for any certain items. We're just happy if people are generous to contribute. So far, we have a lot of experiences in this auction and a lot of gift certificates. Services are a really great way for businesses to contribute to our auction, but also advertise their own company."

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dufferin and District has a goal of raising \$3,000 through the online auction.

The money raised from the holiday-themed fundraiser will support Big Brothers Big Sisters' core mentor program, where they match an adult volunteer with a youth in the community to provide guidance and support. The funds also go towards supporting the organization's school programs, group programs and their Big Bunch program, which is for children on the waitlist awaiting their big brother or big sister match.

"By contributing and donating to Big Brothers Big Sisters, you are directly investing in the future and the lives of the children we serve," said de Ruiter.

While raising donations to support their programming, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dufferin and District is also hoping to use the fundraiser to highlight their need for more volunteers.

Last year, the local chapter of Big Brothers Big Sisters served over 200 children. At the time of print, they served roughly 55 kids through their school mentoring program and around 24 through one-on-one matches; while 14 kids remain on a waiting lists for a match.

"The experience overall is deeply rewarding, not just for the child, but also for the mentor. A lot of our mentors enjoy the time they get to spend with a child and feel like a kid again themselves; they create these really beautiful bonds," said de Ruiter.

De Ruiter added that they've struggled to have enough Big Brother volunteers to match with Little Brothers in the community. In Shelburne, in particular, there hasn't been a Big Brother volunteer in the program since 2020.

"We don't have the volunteers for those kids right now, so we really need volunteers to keep coming out with us," said de Ruiter.

Inquires and applications to become a Big Brother or Big Sister can be done by visiting the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dufferin and District website.

Locally businesses looking for more information about Holiday Online Auction or who are interested in making a donation can contact Natalie de Ruiter by email at natilie.deruiter@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca.