

February 2020

Big Brothers Big Sisters Position information for the following position

MENTORING COORDINATOR



1. Background

There are literally thousands of children in Christchurch who, for one reason or another, find it difficult to cope with what life throws at them. Often lacking in self-esteem and self-confidence, these young people are longing for someone to take an interest in them, listen to what they have to say and to help them come to terms with life's challenges.

Why mentoring

Big Brothers Big Sisters is committed to the healthy development of young people. We recognize the challenges faced by young people in their growth from children into adults. One of the best things our society can offer its young people is a stable and caring relationship with an adult: one who listens, who is committed, who has a sense of humour, and is able to have fun. This isn't just a nice ideal, it has well researched and documented outcomes including improved well-being, self-esteem, academic achievement and attendance along with reduced risk of drug and alcohol abuse. The New Zealand Government has developed the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa which when summed says that well connected young people will be the most likely to traverse the difficult teenage years and become a well-adjusted adult. A further Ministry of Youth Affairs research review *Young Males* (2004) states that mentoring is one of three proven strategies to build connections for young males.



Objectives

The objective of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Christchurch is to build resilience in young people who are low in self-esteem and confidence, who lacks positive role models, in order to help them to achieve their potential. We work in primary and intermediate schools and in the community. We recruit, train and support volunteer mentors in order to enable them to have the skills necessary to make a significant impact on the social development of the young people. We find children aged between 6 and 12 most needing mentors. The relationship begins either in a school setting (School Based Mentoring) or in the community (Community Based Mentoring). Mentoring matches can last many years, and provide stability through a tumultuous time of life. Our coordinators provide regular ongoing, documented support and accountability and provide a necessary link between family, school, volunteer and young person.

Big Brothers Big Sisters around the world

Big Brothers Big Sisters was founded in The United States in 1904 and since has constantly been in the public eye. Recently, Oprah Winfrey has called for one million Americans to volunteer as mentors, Bart and Homer Simpson from *The Simpsons* have joined a "Bigger Brothers" mentoring programme, and past American First Lady, Laura Bush, has starred in television and radio commercials promoting Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Research has shown that young people who have a positive mentoring relationship are 40% less likely to use illegal drugs and alcohol, 52% less likely to skip school, are more confident in their schoolwork, and are better able to get along with their families. There is no question about the positive impact mentoring has on young people's lives. These benefits carry on into families, communities, and society, and beyond.

Internationally there are 280,000 young people with a mentor in 13 countries. In New Zealand, there are currently 15 Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies and there are new ones being established every year. In the calendar year of 2019, 179 young people benefitted from having a big brother or big sister in the Christchurch programme.

2. The Team

Manager - Vacant

This position is currently being filled.

Faye Higgins – Assistant Manager and Mentoring Coordinator

Faye works 38 hours a week supporting matches in the south-west and north-east of Christchurch. She has been in the role for 3 years, after a career supporting staff and students within special needs and early years education. She really nurtures and cares for the mentors she looks after and is always looking for ways mentors and their young people can have more fun experiences and opportunities together. She runs the group activities held termly for the mentoring matches and can always be relied on for a lovely staff morning tea.

Kirsty Newberry – Mentor Coordinator

Kirsty works 38 hours a week supporting matches in the south and east of Christchurch. She has been in the role for 4 years and has completed her Bachelor's degree in Psychology. She loves her dog (more than her job perhaps) and enjoys weekends away with her husband tenting. Kirsty loves gathering information and learning about what research can tell us about mentoring, and her curiosity extends to helping mentors reflect on their experience.

Eleanor Burghart – Mentor Coordinator

Eleanor works 32 hours supporting matches in the west of Christchurch. She has been in the role for a little over a year after completing her Bachelor of Counselling; prior to this she was a youth worker both in school & the community. She loves connecting with people, and is passionate about promoting and supporting good mental and emotional health practices.

Administrator

Our current administrator is on maternity leave so we have Anna filling the gap, working a few hours a week assisting with funding applications and finances.

BBBS Board

The board or trustees meet every six weeks. The board includes *Chair* Ali Khan (General Counsel) Rob Murfitt (District Court Judge), *Treasurer* Dan Harrison (Accountant), *Secretary* Vanessa Thompson (Previous BBBS Co-ordinator), Lydia Hemingway (Principal's Executive Assistant), Roger Sutton (Business Consultant), Sonia Mazey (Deputy Vice Chancellor of Business and Law at UC), and Duane Smithson (Sales Manager at Ricoh). The average tenure of most experienced board members is approximately 6 years. Our patron is scrum doctor and ex All Black forward coach Mike Cron and our ambassador is current mentor and All Black Jack Goodhue.

The Big Brothers Big Sisters has an office at St. Aidans Anglican Church at 63 Brookside Terrace (corner of Aorangi Road) in Bryndwr. Being based in a suburban environment means that the positions truly a part of the community around them and parking is never a problem.

3. The Big Brothers Big Sisters Culture

The culture at BBBS is dominated by an unwavering passion for mentoring. The thing we love the most is sharing stories about our mentoring relationships. Usually it's a comment from a mentor or young person that confirms why we do this and gives you that warm tingly feeling all over. It is rarely about achievements but more often a reflection of the how the relationship is valued. So the work we do naturally creates open and honest lines of communication within the team.

This work can also be tough, some of the difficult life experiences of mentees can be difficult to hear about and when a match doesn't work despite lots of planning and hard work, it's gutting. And so it is accepted that the support we offer to our mentors and young people sometimes needs to apply to our colleagues. We take time to slow down and talk, focus on staff wellbeing, and have some fun when it's really busy and a bit stressful.



4. The Risks

The position is permanent and long term. While we have been fortunate since the early days of having secured funding for at least the following six months and sometimes up to 10-11 months, you may be aware that traditional significant funding grants is less secure than they were. Some grant avenues are either changing their approach or having less funds available due to lower investment returns. All the positions at the Trust are reliant on grants, donations and the other fundraising efforts. The Trust does everything it can to ensure the sustainability of the positions and the Trust as a whole. In the event of any challenging financial times, the Board have a plan to manage this and to ensure staff are well informed along the way.

5. The Role

Mentoring Coordinator

The day to day tasks of the coordinator include:

Recruiting, screening and training mentors

Mentors are recruited from a variety of sources. The coordinators are responsible for raising the Trust's profile in the community by attending and speaking at various events and networking with relevant organisations. Once

potential mentors are found, the coordinators ensure their suitability through interviews and background checks before conducting four hour orientation training.

Finding the children who need mentoring

Sometimes parents directly refer their children to our programme but most often the coordinator will have developed relationships with community groups and schools in their area.

Facilitating mentoring that brings about good outcomes for young people by supporting the mentoring match

The coordinator makes the match between the mentor and young person and then serves as the primary liaison between parents, mentors and young people. Subsequently, coordinators conduct regular documented supervision contacts with mentors, young people and parents in person, over the phone and by email.

Documenting these contacts is necessary and significant aspect of the role. It is important that coordinators are sensitive to the concerns of volunteer mentors, who can lack confidence in their own ability to be a good mentor. These individuals are treated with the utmost gentleness and respect, with coordinators taking care to affirm their efforts and successes, without over-burdening them with additional tasks. The coordinators' role also includes helping to bring these relationships to a healthy close when required. All contacts are documented using a purpose built caselog system.

The coordinator's role is therefore varied and dynamic. The biggest reward is seeing the kids' faces light up at the sight of their mentor, hearing their feedback on the benefits of this relationship, and sharing in their family's and teachers' pleasure at watching these children bloom. The coordinator is a largely autonomous agent, who works closely with the other coordinators. Working in a small office and team requires all staff to step up and to help out as required with a variety of tasks. It is important that the coordinators might also serve as a mentor because this enables them to understand the issues faced by other mentors, as well as experiencing the results of such a relationship.

The role is anticipated to set between 30-35 hours, by negotiation between the employee and the Trust. We are looking for someone with the right experience and skills who is the right fit for our team.

There are times when the Coordinator will need to work evenings and a few hours in the odd weekend to supervise mentors, set up mentoring matches, volunteer trainings and group events. About 60% of the time will be spent in the office and the rest on the road, meeting with mentors, children, parents and other stakeholders.

This may not be in the Job Description but it is perhaps the most important...

BBBS are looking for someone who has an underlying passion and understanding of people; as well as the attitude and personal drive to become a key member of the team. The coordinator's success depends on their interpersonal and communication skills. The most valuable skill will be the ability to listen with the third ear, especially when supporting our fantastic volunteers, both to support them in their mentoring and their own personal development. Coordinators must feel at home in a variety of social situations but especially in their supporting of individual mentors. The most common form of communication is over the phone. You will enjoy having lots of human contact be it face-to-face, over the phone or by e-mail.

It is likely the successful applicant will come from a background in psychology, counseling, youth work, social work, teaching or customer care. They will have experience working with young people, adults and volunteers. In such a small organisation, being a team player is critical, and open communication with everyone is a priority. Equally important is the ability to use your initiative and work independently in meeting goals. Basic office and computer skills are needed to create and maintain the systems that ensure the organisation continues to function and grow efficiently. Knowledge of Microsoft Excel would be helpful.

This position will excite people who want to make a genuine contribution to the young people of Christchurch by being an instrumental part of the mentoring programme. Who says individuals can't make a difference!

Salary

The hourly rate for this role is \$24-\$28 per hour. All staff start at the lower end until their training is complete and the top end is when staff have supervision over other staff. Despite the Trust having one work vehicle, coordinators need to have access to a vehicle and will be reimbursed for travel expenses.

6. Practical Exercise

An essential part of the recruitment process is to demonstrate the key competencies for each position. Please cut and paste the problems below and include your answers and submit as a document called Practical Exercise with your first and last name e.g. "Practical Exercise – Joe Bloggs". **Applicants that do not submit answers to the questions below are unlikely to be successful in demonstrating sufficient ability to operate in this position.** We anticipate you will spend approximately 20 minutes completing this exercise. We thank you for taking that time.

Be sure to answer the correct practical exercise for the position you are applying for. (Feel free to use bullet points or short sentences.)

Practical Exercise for the Mentoring Coordinator

A mentor contacts you and says the parent of the child they mentor has asked them to help pay for school uniform as they can't afford it

1. What are the issues you need to consider? (no more than 70 words)
2. In order to resolve this situation, what would you do next? (no more than 80 words)

7. Submitting Your Application

To apply for the position, please email your application to faye@bbbs.nz or if this is not possible you can post to:

The Manager
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Christchurch
PO Box 20045
Christchurch 8543

Please attach three documents

1. Your cover letter
2. Your curriculum vitae
3. Your practical exercise as detailed above.

Your curriculum vitae should include evidence or example of your ability to meet the key competencies as well as answers to the scenario questions above. This is a big ask but give it a go. Please address your cover letter to Faye Higgins explaining **why** you are interested in this position. Try and forget everything the so called experts tell you to do when applying for job. Instead show us your true colours.

Queries to faye@bbbs.nz in the first instance or (03) 358 4019 / 022 075 7453

Applications close 5pm Wednesday 18th March, 2020

Your application **will be** acknowledged no later than 23rd March and we intend to conduct interviews within 3 weeks of our closing date.

Thank you for your interest and we look forward to hearing from you.

Regards

Faye Higgins
Big Brothers Big Sisters Assistant Manager

Alexia Khan
Big Brothers Big Sisters Board Chair
