



Sade & Alexa



Tamati & Bailey



Nick & Hayden



Alexia and Tagan

Four of our 29 new matches for 2017

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT 500 MATCHES?

BY KIRSTY NEWBERRY (MENTORING SUPERVISOR)

It's interesting when we think about the quantity of something.

\$500 dollars may seem a lot for some, and not so for others. 500 seconds might seem short, but in some situations, it may feel like 500 minutes. So, what about 500 mentoring matches?

We had been edging closer and closer to reaching that milestone all year: the big 5 – 0 – 0.

A number, I am sure Matthew wouldn't have dreamed of when he started the Christchurch programme 13 years ago! In the lead up to reaching that target, we would often talk about it in the office. I would think how cool 500 sounded, while at the same time, it sounded just like another number. Then, one day last month, it happened: we hit the milestone. We made our 500th match.

It was a pretty special first meet. The child had been waiting for over a year for a mentor; he had no male role models in his life, but a loving mother who just desired more for her son. A child so keen to meet his mentor that he came running out, shook his hand and greeted him as if they were both grown men. It was an unforgettable moment – not only for the mentor, the child or the family, but also for me. It made me stop and think...

500 matches – it is so much more than a number! It's 500 children, and 500 mentors. It's 500 individual and unique relationships that wouldn't have happened without Big Brothers Big Sisters: It's the match that burns cookies together; the one that loves to rock climb; the one where the child earned his "tea license"; the match that stayed connected through 3 significant moves.

It's the match that cooks together once a week; the match that feels part of each other's family; the match that feels most comfortable singing in the car together; the match where the child learned to look people in the eye; the match that had their own pretend school camp; the one that gave the child a place where she felt safe; the match that wrote and performed a puppet show; the one where the child was a flower girl in her mentor's wedding; it's the match where the mentor gained a new perspective; the match where the child knows the name of every person in the mentor's family; the match where when they first met, the child said "you're my new big brother".

It's 485 others.

It's 1000 lives entwined; 500 new beginnings – some endings – but many that will remain endless. It's 500 people with the desire to give, and the belief they can make an impact.

It's 500 children who have benefited from just one more person in their lives. It's 500 pairs that became a different type of family. It's a few little struggles, but countless little victories. It's the beginning of 1000 stories, the ends of which we are unlikely to fully know, but the evidence makes us believe that the impact can be profound.

This afternoon, we are making our 509th match. The beginning of one more story, and the connection of two more lives. We don't know where they'll end up, but just like the 508 that came before it, we believe enough and hope enough to 'Start Something'.

MANAGER'S REFLECTIONS

BY MATTHEW BUTTON



How can one person make such a difference? A friend had been struggling at work and dealing with frustration for years and I asked him why he stayed there. He answered by telling me about the one manager who had become his advocate. The one man who had taken the time to understand him; the man who now wanted to write an account of how poorly my friend had been treated.

As he told the story of this man, I could sense his spirit lift. It was clear, this man believed in him. And this belief had taken a strong foothold in my friend's life. He stayed in the role because of the faith this one man had in him.

How easy it is to forget how much our lives are built around the people who believe in us. We're quick to recall all the things we have done to make ourselves who we are, but we are slower to remember all those who make us who we are: parents, siblings, friends, teachers, mentors.

As these people believe in us, it is as though an extra few bricks have been added to the foundations of our lives, shoring us up. Not only are we made resilient by the bricks, we can feel bolder with their strength beneath us, allowing us to explore more of life. Or in the case of my friend, it enabled him to persist in his role and find a new way to work that was much more bearable.

500 young people have had a mentor through Big Brothers Big Sisters. As I reflect on that milestone, I am encouraged. I know so many of them have had one extra person who believes in them and has become their champion. In some cases, the mentor and young person are still in touch, but for many the contact has finished. Either way, the belief the mentor had in their young person can continue for a lifetime. It might be the extra brick or two that keeps their life together, it might be the brick that gives them confidence to try new things. Like my friend, it might be the belief one man has shown, that enables him to stand taller.

Our Supporters

The greatest thanks to: Our Regular Givers and Individual Donors, Blogg Charitable Trust | Beacham Foundation | RICOH | Cuninghame Taylor Law | EB Millton Charitable Trust | Events 4 Good | George Sevicke Jones Charitable Trust | Clyde Graham Charitable Trust | Maurice Carter Charitable Trust | Rotary | St. Aidan's Church | Steve Clancey (IT Support) | Alistair Bean & Assoc. | St. Andrews College | David Robertson Decorators | Rubicon Valley Cafe | Police Southern Communications Centre | Ristretto Cafe | Alpine Jet

OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE GOLD!

The unifying motivation our mentors have is that they want to make a difference for a young person. Outside of that, there is diversity in backgrounds, ages, stages, and the strengths these mentors bring. We are currently processing around 25 new volunteer applications:

- A young business owner wants to mentor because he desires more balance in his life;
- A retired primary school teacher still desires to expose a child to some positive, fun experiences;
- A high school teacher wants to invest at a younger age;
- A CEO looks back on his life and sees that a mentor was missing;
- Someone knows the value of giving time to others after losing a family member;
- A man with much to give and no children of his own.

These volunteers will be matched with a child, chosen specifically to fit them. Initially they will share something, an interest or similar personality trait. This will be the foundation for their relationship to grow. A Big Brothers Big Sisters Supervisor will provide nurture and support for this budding friendship and encourage its very own unique qualities.

Our challenge is finding the funds to provide these volunteers the mentoring opportunity they seek. The cost to starting and supporting these 25 new applicants on their mentoring journeys will be around \$45,000 per year. This amount often perplexes people: "The mentors are volunteers, right?"

Yes, they are. But what is often misunderstood, is that to ensure the safest practice and best long term outcomes for young people, Big Brothers Big Sisters provides a trained and experienced Supervisor to each match. They firstly screen and train the volunteers, then find children who need mentoring the most. After making the match, they provide ongoing support as the pair navigates through the young person's developmental stages and the volunteers development as a mentor. The Supervisor also provides the much needed accountability to caregivers, schools, funders and the wider community.

(See the back page for further match cost breakdowns).

Merry Christmas

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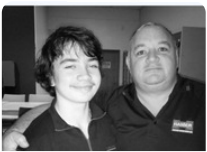
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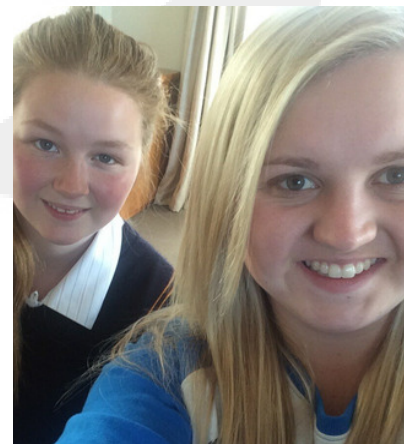
Chantelle - fourth from the right

MY EXPERIENCE WITH BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

BY CHANTELLE BRENSSELL (MENTEE)

Ever since the first day I met Lilly (my mentor) she has been amazing and an inspiration for who I want to be! She looked after me when I needed it most, but not in the expected way. It was where I could escape and be myself with someone completely different and over the course of time, she became family to me.

It's been over six years now, of knowing Lilly, my mentor, my friend and my sister. She has changed the world I live in, helped change the way I see things and who I am for the better. She has always been there to help me and guided me through the good and the bad times and I am so grateful. She has also helped me get involved in things I would otherwise never do. I've joined football for Halswell United and after watching Lilly complete a course at Outward Bound, I completed a 21 day Mind, Body, Soul course there as well and I've gone on many adventures with Lilly that all started with our first Big Brothers Big Sisters event!



Lilly & Chantelle met over six years ago when Chantelle was only ten years old.



Lilly and Chantelle sold chocolates to help fundraise for the Outward Bound fees.

Thank you to everyone who bought chocolates and helped Chantelle get to the course!

OUTWARD BOUND - JULY 2017

I was so scared when I first arrived at Outward Bound. I didn't know who was going to be there or what we were going to be doing but after the 21 days, I was so glad to have been given the opportunity.

I am incredibly grateful to Lilly, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Outward Bound and the supporters who helped cover the \$4000 course fees because it was an experience I will never forget! I learnt how to push myself to the absolute limit, not only in my mind but with my body as well. I learnt no matter how hard something is you can ALWAYS do it!

"Comfortable with the uncomfortable" was my watcher's saying.

It pushed us and made me think, how far can we really go? Yes, we were hurting at some stages, especially our feet (after a full on two day tramp in wet boots), and it often felt like we couldn't do it anymore... but then we did, we kept going as the watcher said. We helped each other at our lowest points and celebrated at our highest. I have come away from the 21 days - looking for so much more in life!



THANK YOU TO ROTARY SUNRISE, OUTWARD BOUND AND BLOGG CHARITABLE TRUST FOR ENABLING CHANTELLE TO HAVE THIS LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE!



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you?

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www.givealittle.co.nz/org/bbbschch

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Programme
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