

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada Gets Priceless Boost from MasterCard

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MasterCard Canada to sponsor In-School Mentoring program, run 'Priceless' TV and national print advertising to drive donations and recruitment of volunteers

Toronto, September 24, 2008 - MasterCard Canada today announced that it is providing Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada (BBBSC) with marketing and funding support to help raise awareness of BBBSC's In-School Mentoring program and its urgent need for more mentors. MasterCard Canada employees are also getting involved by volunteering for various BBBSC programs.



A Priceless Gift: Toronto, September 24, 2008 – (top left) Bruce MacDonald, President & CEO, Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Canada, (top right) Mike Martin, Mentor and Big Brother volunteer, (seated L - R) Little Brother Kevin Wang and Little Sister Emily Ball are on hand to receive funding from MasterCard Canada President Kevin Stanton (top centre), to help BBBSC's In-School Mentoring program and its urgent need for more mentors. MasterCard is also producing national print and TV advertising using its 'priceless' theme to encourage volunteers to get involved with the program.

Currently, more than 10,000 children in Canada are waiting to be matched with a mentor. In addition to the financial gift, MasterCard is also producing print and TV advertising using its award-winning 'Priceless' theme to drive donations and encourage volunteers to get involved with the program.

BBBSC's In-School Mentoring program brings together children in need with adult volunteers. Each volunteer mentor is matched with one child and they get together for one hour per week at the child's school during the school year. The exposure to a positive adult influence and the opportunity to talk through problems or just spend time together is invaluable to the child's esteem and development.

"As part of MasterCard Canada's ongoing efforts to make a difference in our local communities, we saw an opportunity to support a great organization such as Big Brothers Big Sisters and help ensure that every child in Canada who needs a mentor will have one," says Kevin Stanton, President, MasterCard Canada. "Not only is MasterCard funding Priceless ads to raise awareness about Big Brothers Big Sisters' need for volunteers, our employees are also getting involved and becoming mentors."

BBBSC research demonstrates the positive impact of the in-school mentoring program:

- 90 per cent of mentors report positive changes in the child
- 88 per cent of students showed improved literacy skills
- 64 per cent had developed higher levels of self-esteem

"We're thrilled to have such a long-standing and committed partner in MasterCard. Hopefully their actions will inspire other organizations to do the same," says Bruce MacDonald, President and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters Canada. "Our research shows that in-school mentoring can have a big impact on a child. A little bit of time from your schedule can make a huge difference."

"I was about nine years old when I was matched with Elaine," says former "Little" Vivienne Reid from Oakville, Ontario. "At first I was very reluctant to participate but at the same time I was in an abusive family and needed the support so I welcomed the referral. Elaine made me feel as if I truly had a friend, she would listen to my problems and would spend time with me roasting pumpkin seeds after we would design and carve the pumpkin, and would...make me feel as if all of my problems were swept away, if only for a moment. Although I am currently a 30 year old and mother to children of my own, I often think of Elaine and still have a picture of us in my home." The benefit of the program is not just felt by the child. The mentors get a great sense of accomplishment by making a difference in another person's life.

"I wanted to do something constructive with my free time, so that's when I decided to get involved with BBBSC as a Big and an In-school Mentor. The time spent with my Littles was fantastic, and I saw first hand what a BIG difference sharing a little bit of time can make," says Andrew Price, a former "Big" from Halifax, Nova Scotia. "So, the question that anyone interested in joining BBBSC should ask themselves is - how much is time worth to you? If you need help answering this question, then just talk to a Big or a Little and they'll tell you - it's priceless!"

A 'Priceless' print ad promoting the In-School Mentoring Program is currently appearing nationally to coincide with the start of the school year, while a TV advertisement will run later this fall in both English and French and will encourage consumers to make a donation to BBBSC during the key holiday spending period.

About Big Brothers Big Sisters Canada

Big Brothers Big Sisters Canada is the nation's largest youth mentoring organization providing quality adult mentoring services for 20,000 children in more than 900 communities. For more than ninety years Big Brothers Big Sisters organizations in your community have been there to help provide a positive influence in the life of a child when one is needed.

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada believes in a future where Every Child In Canada Who Needs A Mentor Has A Mentor. Join our effort to help Canadian children and youth, visit www.sharealittlemagic.ca to find out how you or your organization can get involved.

About MasterCard Worldwide

MasterCard Worldwide advances global commerce by providing a critical economic link among financial institutions, businesses, cardholders and merchants worldwide. As a franchisor, processor and advisor, MasterCard develops and markets payment solutions, processes over 18 billion transactions each year, and provides industry-leading analysis and consulting services to financial institution customers and merchants. Through its family of brands, including MasterCard®, Maestro® and Cirrus®, MasterCard serves consumers and businesses in more than 210 countries and territories. For more information go to www.mastercard.com.

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Contacts:

For MasterCard Canada

Don Blair / Olivia Yu

[dblair@environicspr.com](mailto:d Blair@environicspr.com) / [oyu@environicspr.com](mailto:olivia.yu@environicspr.com)

416-969-2726 / 416-969-2718

For Big Brothers Big Sisters Canada

Bruce MacDonald

[bmacdonald@bbbsc.ca](mailto:bruce.macdonald@bbbsc.ca)

905-639-0461 ext. 18