



## Big Brothers Big Sisters

### **Big Brothers Big Sisters Seeks Funding to Support Its Innovative Philadelphia Entrepreneurs Beyond School Walls Mentoring Program**

*With technology and innovation taking center stage in Philadelphia during Philly Tech Week, the region's leading one-to-one mentorship organization seeks donations to educate and inspire budding student entrepreneurs of technology and beyond*

**PHILADELPHIA, PA (May 2, 2016)** — Big Brothers Big Sisters Independence Region (BBBS Independence) today announced it is seeking donations in order to continue its Beyond School Walls Philadelphia Entrepreneurs one-to-one youth mentoring program. In this program, 20 high school freshmen and sophomores at George Washington Carver High School of Engineering and Science in Philadelphia (“Littles”) are paired with adult entrepreneurs (“Bigs”) to discover and develop the unique skills, talents and ideas that can lead to business success. The program was launched last fall, and funding has been secured only for the first year of the entrepreneurship program, which will end this spring. BBBS Independence is seeking to secure \$40,000 so that the one-to-one mentoring relationships may continue for the next academic year and to enroll new students in the program.

“As the sixth annual Philly Tech Week is underway, the convening of tech leaders in our region and the celebration of innovation and our entrepreneurial era is the perfect time to ensure we are cultivating the next generation of innovators and leaders,” says Marcus Allen, CEO, BBBS Independence. “The students in our Philadelphia Entrepreneurs mentoring program are learning essential skills firsthand from positive role models. It is critical that this program continues throughout the entirety of their high school careers and beyond, so that mentors can continue to instill the spirit of entrepreneurship in our youth.”

The entrepreneurship mentoring program is part of BBBS Independence’s flagship Beyond School Walls<sup>SM</sup> (BSW) workplace mentoring program. Children in these programs not only have a new adult friend and role model, but are exposed to inspiring and diverse career opportunities — something they may have never experienced before. This entrepreneurship program is the first BSW program to feature volunteers not all from the same company, offering students greater opportunity to experience a variety of career possibilities.

As part of this program, Bigs meet with their Littles every other week during the school year at Drexel University, and they also visit corporations throughout the City of Philadelphia to explore different workplaces. The Bigs represent several industries, including technology start-ups, application development, business consulting, and medical and community services. With an emphasis on leadership, critical thinking, problem-solving skills and emotional intelligence, the entrepreneurship mentoring program includes activities such as goal setting and action plans, career planning, how to turn hobbies into careers, mock interviews and resume writing. The Big Brothers Big Sisters curriculum encourages students to rise to their full potential, manage letdowns and challenge the status quo wherever they can — all key traits of successful entrepreneurs and leaders.

“You’re seeing someone grow, and that’s beautiful. It is incredibly inspiring to become a mentor, and through the Philadelphia Entrepreneurs program specifically, you have the opportunity to share your passions and help inspire someone else to follow their dreams,” says Big Brother David Hunt, who was instrumental in launching this mentorship program with BBBS Independence and serves as the main program liaison. He is the business owner and co-developer behind SPOR, a company that produces solar-powered battery chargers for mobile devices.



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Each match costs approximately \$1,500 to sustain for one calendar year. This amount includes recruiting and enrolling volunteers, conducting background and reference checks, regular guidance and support of the mentor and mentee, bus transportation and agency infrastructure costs. The current 20 matches require \$30,000 a year. BBBS Independence's current goal is to raise \$40,000 to support the current 20 matches for 2016-2017 school year and to enroll six more students in the program starting this fall.

In the 2016-2017 school year, the program has plans to explore different entrepreneurial backgrounds and paths, expose students to new projects and emphasize college preparedness. The inaugural year of the program has been generously funded by The Scott and Susan Bentley Fund. Similar to the tech start-up funding process, BBBS Independence is initiating a crowdfunding campaign to support the continuation of this unique program. Members of the community may support the initiative by visiting <http://www.classy.org/youngphillyentrepreneurs> to make an online donation, or contact Stephanie Gilmour, manager of school-based enrollment, at [sgilmour@independencebig.org](mailto:sgilmour@independencebig.org) or 484.482.1420 to make a direct donation.

### **About Beyond School Walls<sup>SM</sup>**

Originally started in 2006, the Beyond School Walls program has grown to 23 corporate partners, including Comcast NBCUniversal, QVC, Wawa, Wells Fargo and others. Through the program, corporate Big Brothers and Big Sisters have mentored more than 3,000 children in Philadelphia, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery Counties. BBBS Independence created this successful mentoring model first in Philadelphia, which has now been adopted by several other Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies throughout the country.

### **About Big Brothers Big Sisters Independence Region**

Big Brothers Big Sisters Independence Region is a donor-supported organization that enriches, encourages and empowers children to reach their highest potential through safe, one-to-one mentoring relationships. Volunteering as a Big Brother or Big Sister is about making a measurable difference in a child's life by sharing new perspectives and experiences. Serving Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties in PA and Burlington, Camden and Gloucester Counties in NJ, nearly 4,000 children annually are more successful socially and academically because of the work of Big Brothers Big Sisters Independence Region. Visit us at [www.independencebig.org](http://www.independencebig.org).

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