



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Information:

Elizabeth Bly, Director of Corporate Relations

Elizabeth.bly@bbbsps.org

206-456-9806

COMING TOGETHER FOR YOUTH AND MENTORS

CHARTER CONSTRUCTION AND BIG GALA EVENT DELIVER FOR BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF PUGET SOUND

SEATTLE, WA, OCTOBER 22, 2021 – In a nod to how COVID has changed our way of life, Big Brothers Big Sisters transformed its annual BIG Gala fundraiser into a livestreamed event to boost youth mentoring in the Puget Sound.

Before the pandemic, the annual Big Brothers Big Sisters BIG Gala would draw hundreds of business and community leaders to a downtown Seattle ballroom.

The 2021 version sent the crowd to their cell phones and laptop screens. Solo viewers and small gatherings joined the virtual BIG Gala from Seattle and Bellevue—and from as far afield as Las Vegas and New York.

Presenting partner Charter Construction was proud to headline a list of businesses and local leaders who backed the event. Chairman Peter Saladino said his company supports Big Brothers Big Sisters because of the organization’s concrete impact on local youth.

“Because of Big Brothers Big Sisters, thousands of kids have a friendship with a trusted adult mentor. A connection like that defends against anxiety, which is so high among young people right now,” said Saladino.

“If Big Brothers Big Sisters can continue mentoring during a pandemic, Charter Construction can definitely support a virtual fundraiser to make it possible.”

Throughout the evening, host Ian Lindsay interspersed games and dancing with live feeds from eight locations where supporters had gathered to celebrate Big Brothers Big Sisters. One gathering doubled as a welcome party for new Big Brothers Big Sisters President and CEO Alonda Williams.

“I am thrilled to be joining Big Brothers Big Sisters at such a pivotal time, both for the organization and for our community,” said Williams.

Board chair Maurice James, a former Little Brother himself, joined gala chair Gavin Bartlett to reflect on the challenges and triumphs of the past year.

“We all hoped 2021 would bring an end to the pandemic,” Bartlett said. “But instead we received a gift: the knowledge that even in difficult times, our community will pull together and pull us through.”

At the BIG Gala, the Big Brothers Big Sisters community was ready to give. A live auction began with a bidding war over two luscious desserts, which immediately hit the road to the winning bidders via the “Dessert Dash.” The fun continued with bidding on wine, sports, and travel packages—interspersed with good-natured dancing and games.

The evening drew to a close with a family that has been part of Big Brothers Big Sisters for 11 years. Mom Renee spoke about what the mentoring program has meant to her sons and to herself as a single parent.

“Big Brothers Big Sisters gives parents a break,” she said. “And it really gives kids another person they can go to if they need something.”

Renee’s three sons—Zech, Noah, and Jay—reflected on their relationships with their mentors. Each came to the same conclusion: they may have been strangers in the beginning, but not now.

“He is family,” said Zech, speaking of his mentor Owen. “There’s no basically about it. He is family.”

You too can join the Big Brothers Big Sisters family, igniting a child’s potential and providing tools to transform their potential into success. Donate or volunteer at InspireBIG.org.

About:

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF PUGET SOUND creates and supports 1-to-1 mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

Big Brothers Big Sisters’ innovative youth development programs include community-based and site-based mentoring, with special options for Black and African American boys, LGBTQ youth, and career and college prep. With the help of a mentor, youth maximize their academic performance, improve their self-esteem, deepen relationships with peers and family, and make positive behavior choices.

Big Brothers Big Sisters has provided 1-to-1 mentoring in the Puget Sound for 64 years.

###

Attachments:



Big Brothers Big Sisters Board Chair and former Little Brother Maurice James discusses a high point from the past year.



Little Brother Zech and his mentor Owen reminisce about their longtime friendship.



Host Ian Lindsay welcomes guests to the annual BIG Gala benefitting Big Brothers Big Sisters of Puget Sound.



Livestream partygoers celebrate Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring and a successful BIG Gala with a confetti cannon.