

BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS HAWAI'I RECEIVES UNPRECEDENTED DONATION FROM PHILANTHROPIST MACKENZIE SCOTT

Honolulu, Hawaii, May 24, 2022 — Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai'i (BBBSH) announced today it has been selected to receive an unrestricted donation from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott, enabling the organization to expand valuable one-to-one mentoring and support for youth during an especially vulnerable time in their lives.

Scott's \$1.9 million gift is the largest donation from a single individual in BBBSH's 59-year history. It serves as a powerful message in recognizing the importance of investing in youth mentorship to build and strengthen communities and society as a whole.

"We are humbled and extremely grateful to MacKenzie Scott for her tremendous generosity and support for youth mentorship in Hawai'i," said Dennis Brown, Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai'i President and CEO.

The funding comes at a crucial time for BBBSH, which, due to pandemic restrictions over the past two years, was forced to cancel its *Perfect Pairings* and *Bowl for Kids' Sake* events, two of its longstanding and largest annual fundraisers. "The past two years have been extremely tough for many nonprofits, as well as the youth we serve. The timing of this gift is critical to the future of our organization and will enable us to enhance the quality and breadth of our mentoring services to benefit even more of **Hawai'i's youth and their families** when they need it most," Brown said.

Today, nearly 11 million children live in poverty and more than 13 million young people experience emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions like depression. During the height of the pandemic, 20 percent of youth served by Big Brothers Big Sisters nationally lost contact with an important adult in their lives. In Hawai'i, there has been a rise in teen mental health issues and related consequences, such as depression and even suicide.

The goals of BBBSH's one-to-one mentoring programs are to:

- Create and support healthy connections through **high-quality youth mentoring relationships**;
- Ensure that children who have experienced trauma have at least one **caring, safe relationship** early in life;
- Provide youth with **tangible resources**, access and greater exposure to college and career options; and
- Educate and empower youth, parents, volunteers and the community about the life changing impacts of **positive relationships**.

No one individual, gift or event alone can sustain the important work of BBBSH. It takes a village of mentors, volunteers and donors to ensure the social and emotional needs of youth are being met and that every child has an opportunity to reach their full potential. We are BiggerTogether.

To learn more about Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai'i and get involved as a mentor, volunteer, donor, or community partner, visit www.bbbshawaii.org.

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About Big Brothers Big Sisters

Since 1963, Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai'i has helped children facing adversity (mentees) to reach their fullest potential by matching them with caring volunteers (mentors) in a one-to-one mentoring friendship. Every match is supported by highly-skilled staff members (case managers) each step of the way – assessing, coaching, advising, and guiding. This is to ensure a fun, safe, meaningful, and long-term friendship. Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai'i is a statewide organization that serves over 1,400 keiki and mentors each year as Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai'i, Big Brothers Big Sisters Kaua'i, and Big Brothers Big Sisters Maui. Our staff, board and volunteers are committed to practice Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion throughout our policies, systems, programs and services. Join us to make a positive difference by volunteering as a mentor, enrolling your keiki, becoming a community partner, or making a donation at bbbshawaii.org.