



Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada
Les Grands Frères Grandes Sœurs du Canada



DONOVAN BAILEY'S REMARKS

to

THE CANADIAN CLUB OF TORONTO

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Check against delivery

Good afternoon everyone.

My name is Donovan Bailey, and I am honoured to be here today on behalf of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada.

I was delighted when Rod Phillips, the President of your Canadian Club, extended the invitation for me to be your luncheon speaker today. The timing could not have been better. September is Big Brothers Big Sisters Month in Canada, and today marks the kick-off of the EDULINX Mentoring Awareness Tour that will hit Burlington, Toronto, Edmonton, Regina, Ottawa and Halifax ~ all in just 5 days.

I want to thank George Hopkinson, President of EDULINX Canada, for making this tour possible, and Bruce MacDonald, President and CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada for giving me the chance to represent this first-class organization, and the 20,000 children it serves, on this cross-country journey. Both George and Bruce are here at the head-table with me today.

Some of you may recognize me as a five time World and Olympic track champion. I have made history, and I have made an impact in the competitive world of athletics. As an athlete and as a member of the business community, I enjoy pushing myself to new limits and striving for excellence. And I also know what it takes to be world class at anything:

it takes a lot of heart, resiliency, and drive.

[Donovan Bailey speaks about his personal experiences about what it takes to be world class at anything!]

So yes, drive, heart and resiliency are all crucial to achieving success. But above all, it takes an incredible network of support. Whether that support comes in the form of a coach, family members, friends or other people we admire, the truth is that no one can succeed without a positive role model in their life.

[Donovan Bailey speaks about the importance of positive role models in his life.]

In short, it doesn't matter who you are or where you aspire to be, you will reach your goals faster if you have a mentor.

I certainly knew that as an athlete. But, as I've said, it is no less real for me now that I'm a business man. In fact, as early as 1978, the Harvard Business Review noted (and I quote): "Everyone who makes it has a mentor". Today, 76% of Fortune 25 companies offer mentoring programs. If you want to climb the ladder of success, you need to find yourself a mentor.

And whose success is more important than the success of our children? Nothing should be more important to us as a society than the healthy development of our children and youth.

And that is why I have joined forces with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada.

- ✚ Big Brothers Big Sisters is Canada's leading youth mentoring organization

- ✚ They have proven results and have made an impact in more than 300 communities for more than ninety years

- o Children involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programs are less likely to use drugs or alcohol;
- o they are more likely to graduate high school and pursue post secondary education;
- o they are less likely to engage in high-risk behaviour;
- o they have better peer and family relations; and
- o they are less likely to rely on social assistance.

Those results are facts – Big Brothers Big Sisters works!

- ✚ The organization is ambitious and driven: Over the next eight years, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada has established the goal of serving 100,000 children – that's five times the number of children currently being served!

I am excited to be working with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada.

Together we are committed to winning the race and ensuring that:

“Every child in Canada who needs a mentor has a mentor.”

My own involvement with Big Brothers Big Sisters began informally when I was 14 years old. I would go with a friend and take Little Brothers who were on the waiting list to shoot some hoops at the local Y. Seeing what a powerful impact such a simple act of friendship could have, only strengthened my commitment.

After the Athens Olympics, I established a scholarship fund with Big Brothers of Halton, and have since been working with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Toronto on their annual Bowl for Kids Sake event.

Working with Big Brothers Big Sisters has been a tremendously rewarding experience. In fact, I firmly believe that the volunteers benefit as much as the children and youth do from their association with Big Brothers Big Sisters.

As a businessman, it is important to me to give back to the community. I know the same is true for most of you in this room. Corporations have long been involved in charitable activities. But often, their programs have existed at arms length from the company: corporations

would make financial contributions to charities, and they knew that those investments would generate a community return. This was all a part of a corporations' social responsibility.

More recently, though, strategic philanthropy has demanded that there not only be a community return, but that the investment generate a corporate return as well. Consequently, a winning formula now is that a charitable cause benefits the community, enhances the image of the company and enhances the workplace environment. To that end, more and more employers are willing to give their employees time off from work to volunteer. The benefits to corporations are an increasingly motivated staff who have a positive image of, and increased loyalty to, the company.

George Hopkinson, whom I introduced to you earlier as the President of EDULINX Canada, is also a former Big Brother. George has encouraged his staff to participate in the In-School-Mentoring Program of Big Brothers Big Sisters for the last 5 years. In this program, employers allow participating employees about one hour off once a week. During this time, these employees volunteer in a local school where they are matched up with an identified child. The purpose of this time is simply to undertake activities together and to have fun. The concept is simple, but the impact is profound:

in-school mentees significantly improve their attitude towards school, their peer relations, and their academic performance.

Dr. Susan Weinberger, an internationally acclaimed mentoring expert, studied EDULINX as a case study in employee volunteerism. Instead of focusing solely on the benefits to the children, however, she also looked at the benefits to the mentor, and by extension, to the employer. This is what she found:

- 80% of EDULINX employees felt that participation improved employee morale
- 80% said they learned about themselves
- 94% of mentors said that the program made them proud to work at EDULINX
- 100% felt that the program showed that EDULINX cares about the community; and
- 100% said that small social and educational programs can make a difference

In short, providing employees with release time to volunteer meets all of the goals that the nations' largest corporations want: retention, productivity, satisfaction, improved morale, leadership, pride and social responsibility.

And that's why I'm so proud to be associated with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada. Not only do all of their programs make a real difference in the lives of Canada's children and youth, but the benefits to the adult volunteers are equally profound.

I hope that all of you here today will join me in supporting this great cause. In Canada today, there are still 10,000 children on the waiting list hoping to be matched. It is for them that I'm traveling across the country to recruit new volunteers. George, Bruce and I have already committed to making sure that every child in Canada who needs a mentor will have a mentor. We need you to join with us to share a little magic.

In fact, that is the call to action of this very special month. As I said at the outset, September is Big Brothers Big Sisters Month in Canada. Municipalities from coast to coast to coast are supporting our effort by passing proclamations and flying the Big Brothers Big Sisters flag at their city halls. Mayor David Miller signed the proclamation in Toronto over a month ago. And just this morning, I was at the official flag raising ceremony at Burlington City Hall.

By sponsoring my tour, EDULINX Canada is also contributing in a meaningful way to help us raise awareness of mentoring. And MasterCard Canada has issued a challenge of its own: if we can drive 25,000 hits to our

website www.ShareALittleMagic.ca on September 23rd, they will donate \$75,000 to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada to support their mentoring work.

So, if you do nothing else, please click on www.ShareALittleMagic.ca THIS FRIDAY. And encourage a hundred of your closest friends to do the same.

Or better yet, come talk to Bruce, George or me about how you can get your company involved. We'd love to help you help children.

Together, we can make sure that every child in Canada who needs a mentor has a mentor.

Together, we can make sure that, like me before them, every child in Canada has the opportunity to achieve gold!