

Association of **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Israel (NGO)**

Summarizing a Year

Marking 20 years of activity

Empowering children, youth, and young adults through long-term relationships with significant volunteer mentors.

2023 in numbers

In 2023, the Association of "Big Brothers Big Sisters of Israel" (NGO) accompanied **1,896** children, adolescents, and young adults at risk through a variety of unique programs. Additionally, the association participated in a project in which 300 children from the evacuated Gaza Envelope (Otef Aza) and their families were flown to Hungary for a week as part of the "Victory in Blue and White" project.



volunteer applications



participants of the "Leaders of Change" program



participants of the "Fathers and Sons" project



young brothers and sisters



participants from the Gaza Envelope who were evacuated from their homes, as part of the "Blue and White Victory" project



team members



new programs



activity centers
14 of them are new



3
national events

157,000
volunteer hours

This year, we had the privilege of accompanying **1,896 children**, adolescents, and young adults through our variety of programs

Why is this significant? Because since 2003 until 2021, we supported **2,795** children.

About 20% of our mentors serve in the reserves.

We wish all our volunteers a safe and swift return.

Our Oved, the coordinator of the "BIG Brothers BIG Sisters" program in Hod Hasharon and Herzliya →



A Word From the CEO

Dear partners and volunteers,

We are going through challenging days, during which we have encountered a concept that is new to all of us: routine of war.

The effort to continue and promote needs—some of them new and some adapted—amidst a multitude of struggles and challenges is not simple.

We present the annual report with pride in our achievements during this period, and with hope for the return of the captives, the safe return of the soldiers, and comprehensive care for the physical and psychological victims of the security events.

Thank you to all our partners for their belief in the organization's activities, assistance, and partnership.

**Nati Kashi, CEO of the association
Management and staff of the Association of Big
Brothers Big Sisters of Israel (NGO)**



About the association in brief

The background

The Association of "Big Brothers Big Sisters of Israel" (NGO) has been operating since 2003 with the aim of providing children, adolescents, and young people in situations of risk and distress with professional and personal support, placing them at the center and empowering them to develop into well adjusted adult. The core activity of the association is based on pairing a volunteer mentor - a "big brother/sister" - who serves as a mentor figure for children, adolescents, and young people in need of such support - the "little brother/sister". Every year, the association receives referrals of children, adolescents, and young people from various walks of life, including: children and adolescents in risky situations, those lacking family support, children and adolescents with disabilities, siblings of children with disabilities, and more.

Vision

The association aspires to lead society and all its sectors in Israel towards a reality where every child, adolescent, and young person has equal opportunities for self-actualization, while strengthening their sense of belonging and capabilities, for the continual improvement of the quality of life of both individuals and society as a whole.

Our goals

Empowerment and providing relevant and tailored responses to the diverse needs of children, adolescents, young adults, and graduates through mentoring processes and meaningful activities, facilitated by mentors, instructors, and group facilitators, who serve as role models for inspiration.



A moment of history

The first pairing of a Little with a mentor in Israel occurred in 1973. Following the Yom Kippur War, the "Big Brothers" association operated to provide emotional and social support tailored to children who lost a parent in the war. In 2003, the "Big Brother Big Sister Israel" association was established, which merged with "Big Brothers" in 2013 and adopted its activities. Over the years, the association has developed and recognized the diverse needs of many children, adolescents, and young people - striving to tailor support to each child's needs.

Our programs

To provide the best service, the Association of “Big Brothers Big Sisters of Israel” operates 11 different programs tailored to the needs of the target population, under two models:

Individual model

We recruit and train big sisters and brothers (i.e. Bigs)- mentors, who accompany Little sisters and brothers (i.e. Littles)- children, teenagers and young people who need accompaniment.

The long-term response focuses on empowering the younger brother and helps him:

- Point out his strengths and abilities.
- Understand the importance of studies and help him succeed.
- Recognize the importance of giving and helping others.
- distinguish between good and bad.
- to relieve feelings of loneliness
- Maintain physical and mental health.

Someone to
Read With

Yated Program

The 100 Program

Mentorship
for orphans

Core Operation

Group model

The association operates several programs that provide group support for Littles who need emotional, social and/or educational support. The programs respond to varying needs:

- Improving behavior patterns and instilling positive habits.
- Acquiring social skills and social integration.
- Improving communication and strengthening the relationship between the young brothers and sister to their families.

Young adult
mentorship

Connect

Father
and Sons

Leaders
of Change

Youth clubs
in Karmiel

Youth
leadership

Our programs- Individual model

In 2023, the association accompanied 1,896 children, teenagers, and young people at risk. The association accompanies children from a wide variety of populations, backgrounds and unique needs. Read about our special programs:

1 Big sister and brother

this is the core Activity guiding children, youth and young adults at risk through the pairing of a mentor in volunteering - a "big brother," aiming to prevent risky behaviors and develop a positive future reputation for them.

2 Mentorship for orphans

In Israel today, it is estimated that there are about 35,000 orphans under the age of 18. Most of these children are not recognized by social services departments and therefore do not receive assistance from welfare agencies. In a joint initiative with the Ministry of Education, the IDF Widows and Orphans Organization, and the Jewish Agency for Israel, we provide these children who have lost one or both parents risk preventing social and emotional support. Throughout the year, the association mentored dozens of orphaned children, with many more pairings currently in progress.

3 The 100 Program

The program has been operating since 2019 in collaboration with the Tel Aviv Municipality. For this program, the mentoring model of our core program has been adapted to the target population, in which the association accompany dozens of children with disabilities and siblings of children with disabilities each year. We are pleased to announce that in 2023, an additional 70 families were supported as part of the program.

4 Yated Program

A national program for young adults at risk. Accompanying young adults from ages 18 to 25 since 2019, in order to advance and help them achieve Satisfaction of existential needs, personal development and a suitable integration for them in society and in their community. This program emphasizes achieving a secure future on a personal, occupational and familial level. Children and youth benefit from personal connection and proactive activity in leisure time which prevents the development of negative behaviors and phenomena.

5 Someone to Read With – a leadership program and reducing gaps

The program was built as an emergency response during the Corona epidemic for elementary and high school students, and has 2 main goals:

- 1- Reducing academic and emotional gaps among elementary age children: mentoring includes placing emphasis on the student's strengths and abilities and practicing reading and writing skills.
- 2- Developing leadership skills and strengthening the sense of competence of teenage boys and girls, by training them as tutors for elementary age children. The youth are empowered by their activity: as mentors, they are a "role model" for the child they help.

In the 2022 academic year, we provided support to 253 elementary and high school students in 10 groups. In the 2023 academic year, we opened 11 groups and accompanied a similar number of children.

6 The Youth Program

The Youth Program has been operating since 2012 with the aim of empowering youth from the social periphery for meaningful military and national service, as active and socially engaged citizens. The program focuses on acquiring skills and practical tools to help them integrate into society, with an emphasis on education and employment.

Our program- Group model

7

The program for social and emotional support for children fleeing the war in Ukraine

We're proud to be part of the "Hour of Need" initiative, aiding children and youth who fled their war-torn homelands and came to Israel. Led by the Ministry of Welfare and Social Services, along with the Israel Volunteering Council, this effort supports Ukrainian refugees, many of whom are aged 6-18 and attend schools nationwide. These youth have left everything behind and, in response, our association has provided stable mentorship to 50 of them. Mentors visit schools weekly, engaging with the children in their language, offering support, and being a positive, stable presence.

8

Fathers and Sons

During 2023, the association collaborated with the project "Fathers and Sons", which was developed by Eli Kushnir and Michal Ettinger. The purpose of the project is to promote the quality of the relationship and communication between fathers and sons through educational-sports activities and group guidance sessions. The program produces positive changes in the conduct of fathers with their children as well as in the social conduct of the children, and it has the potential to prevent and reduce risky situations in the family and risky behaviors among teenagers, and through it accompanied 480 beneficiaries in 49 groups.

9

Connect

In this program, which is managed by Koren Maor, the association accompanied 90 children and youth from the south of the country this year. The purpose of the program is to teach a second language in a creative and enriching way. Through the language studies, it is possible for the trainees to gain a broader perspective on the world, to get to know other cultures and to improve the abilities of inclusion and acceptance of the other. Another goal is the development of leadership among veteran "connectors" - teenagers who will educate younger "connectors" in group settings and individual.

10

Accompanying teenagers in Karmiel clubs

The association operates 2 youth clubs in Karmiel where 36 youths are accompanied, in cooperation with the welfare department in Karmiel. The purpose of the clubs is to prevent vagrancy and provide a permanent and positive educational and social framework. The clubs advocate for providing tools to improve behavior patterns, instilling positive habits, and improving the relationships of the youth with their family and circle of friends.

11

Leaders of change

Since 2020, we have been partners in the operation of the 'Leaders of Change' program, of the Director of Settlement Education in the Ministry of Education, under the leadership of Dr. Jacob Malkamo. The program provides a unique response to the students of the Ethiopian community by social integration, strengthening the relationship between the trainees and their families, and understanding the culture and tradition of the Ethiopian community in Israel, the program operates in 25 boarding schools and youth villages, and as part of it, around 500 children and youth are accompanied by 6 staff members.

The big brother **Hanoch Lerer**, who celebrated 10 years this year with his younger brother, says: "In the middle of July 2013, I met Sa'ar, a blue-eyed 6 years-old boy, just before first grade. From then to this day, an amazing bond and connection of shared experiences, sports activities, trips, ice creams at the port, connection to soccer and watching games of Maccabi Tel Aviv, and endless shared activities. A bond of affection, concern, friendship, personal conversations, consultations, and the worries of adolescence.

Today Sa'ar is part of my life and I am part of his life. and for that I am grateful."



The younger brothers and sisters

Referrals to the association are made by social workers, school counselors and therapists who know the child and his need for contact with a significant adult.

The association's staff carries out a process of getting to know the child and learns his needs through a home visit and a conversation with the professional referrers. We support children, teenagers and young people regardless of religion, race and gender, while striving to provide a quality response to an increasing number of beneficiaries.

A young sister tells



The story of Orian, a Little sister:

At the end of 2021 Orian first met Roni, her mentor. Roni, who also received a certificate of merit for her volunteering in Tel Aviv, has become a big sister in all: they go to cafes, talk, it's more than volunteering for them. **They are friends, sisters.**

This year Orian went to 12th grade and Roni was determined to help her find a meaningful role in the army. After a lot of deliberation and thoughts, Orian decided that she wanted to be a warrior. And not for nothing - a search and rescue fighter. This month she received her final placement - exactly what she had hoped for.

The older brothers and sisters

Competent and committed mentors form the core of the association's activities. Every mentor accepted into the association is a reliable and sensitive volunteer committed to helping young people in risky situations. The process of hiring the mentors includes a thorough screening and training throughout the entire mentorship - in order to ensure a quality and empowering response for the younger siblings.

A big sister tells



Avia Cohen, a big sister, tells:

"Zohra and I meet on Sundays, at our last meeting we sat down to drink hot chocolate and Zohra told me, **'Today they asked me at school what I want to be when I grow up and I told them I want to be a Big sister, like you.'**

I was not ready for this at all, I was so excited - this sentence of Zohra flooded and filled my heart. Zohra has a rare syndrome that is characterized by developmental delay and a diagnosis on the autistic spectrum, she is an amazing 11-year-old girl and the queen of the neighborhood - everyone knows and loves her, she smiles with her big blue eyes and says hello to acquaintances as well as new people, loves to create a conversation, dance, sing, walk with dogs and play. It's been a year and a half that we've been together, it started with trips to the Meir Garden and spending time playing games and continued to occasional Friday dinners, birthdays and holidays. Zohra is an inspiration to me, she paints the world for me with her natural joy, emphasizes to me the great pleasure in the simple things and introduced me to her amazing and loving family - my second family, here in Tel Aviv. The volunteering and the association, which is the envelope for all this good, brought meaning to my Sundays and to life in general, I am grateful for the special and precise connection that the association created and the privilege I have to be a part of Zohra's life."

Impact

Current assessment and measurement procedure - 2024

We are excited to announce that we are in the midst of an in-depth quantitative research, made possible by the significant support of the Yad Hanadiv Foundation. The research is being conducted by a professional and independent measurement and evaluation agency. Upon completion, we will obtain a valuable and comprehensive understanding of the impact of the association's programs on the youth we accompany. This understanding will help us shape the future actions of the association.

A young brother tells



Orel Keniz, a young brother, says:

"My name is Orel, and I want to share my story with you: When I was a student in the eighth grade, I was paired with a mentor named Ron Muallem from the Big Brothers Big Sisters Israel organization. Ron and I would meet once a week and spend time together: we loved going to the park, to the movies, and even playing soccer. Ron also helped me with my homework and exam preparation, but the most important thing was our personal conversations—he dedicated his time to me and listened. After two years, Ron moved to Be'er Sheva for university studies, but our connection remained, and we continued our phone conversations until I finished high school. With my enlistment in the IDF, I joined the Givati Brigade and was even selected as an outstanding soldier on Israel's 75th Independence Day. Even during my military service, we maintained a strong bond, and when I told Ron about my achievements, he was very happy for me. Thank you, big brother."

The association's 20th anniversary celebrations

The "20 for the association" race in memory of Ofer Kam

In April 2023, an event was held to mark the association's 20th anniversary. As part of the event, we held a run-in memory of the late Ofer Kam, a valuable board member of the association from 2016 until his death in 2022. The race was open to volunteers, young and old brothers, members of the association and Ofer's family. The race had a 10 km course and a course adapted for children with disabilities. In this race, we continued the tradition of awarding certificates in the name of Ofer Kam to the volunteers of the association.



A country wide team building event in Sharona Garden

The purpose of the event is to celebrate the core of the association's activity - the special bond forged between the adult and young brothers and sisters. Pairs of Bigs and Littles came from all over the country and enjoyed a variety of activities, booths and refreshments, and had the chance to meet old and new acquaintances who also take part in the association's activities. Each pair received a gift: their photo from the activities printed on a wood block. In a short ceremony, we distributed the Ofer Kam volunteer badge to 3 volunteers.



Hanukkah Party

In December the association held a Hanukkah event for the for the Bigs and Littles. to help them find happiness in those dark days, to strengthen ties between pairs from around the country, to celebrate the ties forged so far and the incredible activity of the association's volunteers. The event had 4 activity rooms - trivia, decorating donuts, a JUST DANCE room and a "Give and Take" market room, and later also a joint, exciting and joyful Hanukkah candle lighting. During the event, computers were distributed to children who need them, as part of the computer project.



A significant assessment and measurement process that will bear fruit during 2024

we are in the midst of in-depth quantitative and qualitative research, which was made possible thanks to the significant support of the Yad Hanadiv Foundation. The process will bear fruit during 2024, and at the end of it we will get an in-depth and valuable picture of the impact of the association's programs on the young people we accompany.

We moved offices.

We renewed in new offices on Hamsagar Street in Tel Aviv, to adapt the offices to the growing number of employees. Come visit us 😊



The association's activity during the war

Like all the people of Israel, the association of Big brothers Big Sisters Israel entered a different reality from the black morning of October 7th. The brutal terrorist atrocities in the southern regions as well as the firing of thousands of rockets nationwide shook our world. As we began to grasp and process the magnitude of the tragedy, which touched every one of our volunteers and staff members, we acted immediately to help and support the families and volunteers of the association.

- Within two days of the brutal attack, we were able to contact most of the volunteers and provide them with support and guidance for adapting the mentoring activity to an activity that can take place from home.
- We trained temporary volunteers to help the young sisters and brothers whose mentors were recruited into the reserves.
- We provide volunteers and young brothers and sisters with full support by professional mental health experts to deal with their feelings of trauma, anxiety, fear, loss and depression.
- We provide the association's team with the training of professional experts, who will help them perform their duties in this complex period.

In addition to these, we initiated 3 new programs in accordance with the critical needs that arose because of the war:

1 Support for our soldiers

The surprising outbreak of war and its scope led to a shortage of equipment for many soldiers. We stepped in to assist by purchasing emergency equipment and transporting it, worth hundreds of thousands of shekels, to two military battalions in the north and south. We raised funds, procured, and transported the equipment to the battalions. The initiative aimed to assist thousands of IDF soldiers and enable them to effectively ensure their self-defense capabilities.

2 Computer project

The project's goal is to provide computers to approximately 80 children in the association so they can experience moments of fun and relaxation, alleviate worries, maintain social connections, and adhere to a learning routine amid the stresses of war. During wartime, the average Israeli household often spends long hours watching news broadcasts on television as a default. Children are limited in their ability to socialize with friends due to security concerns, and in many areas, schooling is conducted online. Without social or educational frameworks, television becomes the primary entertainment medium, with no option to disconnect. Prolonged exposure to news, especially graphic content, creates anxiety among children and adolescents and may have long-term psychological effects. We aim to provide computers through which children can disconnect from news updates and immerse themselves in a colorful, social playful world, which will better their emotional state in the short and long term.

The organization's activity during the war

3

"Victory in Blue and White ": children evacuated from the Gaza Strip are flown to the European Championship qualifiers

This significant initiative, which we were excited to participate in, brought a spark of joy and relief to the lives of 300 children and adolescents displaced from the Gaza envelope area. These children witnessed the horrors of war firsthand and experienced traumas that no one, of any age, should endure. These children urgently needed a break from the harsh reality of prolonged conflict. On November 15th, we flew the children to an experiential trip in Hungary. They attended Israel's national football team match in the European Championship qualifiers and even met the players personally. During the trip, they were also surprised by a visit from Noa Kirel, a beloved pop singer in Israel. The excitement was immense, and at the end of the trip, we received many touching messages from the program participants and their parents. The project was founded in collaboration with the Football Association, leading athletes, El Al, the Jewish Agency, and other partners.



We share in the sorrow of the bereaved families, wishing complete healing and recovery to the casualties of war. Our hearts go out to all those currently held captive, praying for their safe return, the safe return of the soldiers, and comprehensive care for those affected physically and emotionally by the security events.

Thanks

We express our heartfelt gratitude to our partners, donors, and volunteers of the association, who enable us to accompany hundreds of children, youth, and young adults. Your support, kindness, and partnership are the heart of the association. We would like to thank:

Our devoted Executive Board

Oded Agam(chairman) | Orly Gerti-Sarusi | Nimrod Gevah | Efrat Agmon | Jackie Amsalem | David Turgeman | Itamar Levi | Osnat Hazan | Tali Laufer | Safa Rabi | Magi Koren | Dr. Limor Sahar-Inbar |

the Audit committee:

Oded Ledrer | Estrella Cohen

To the families of the young sisters and brothers: for the trust and cooperation.

To the young sisters and brothers: who teach us anew about love and hope, allowing us not only to give but also to receive.

To our dear and dedicated volunteers: who dedicate their time, abilities, and immense sensitivity to mentoring children, youth, and young adults.

Special thanks:

Our legal advisors : Adv. Vered Sadot | Adv. Talia Danieli | Adv. Hadas Shahar Kam

Dear Yossi and Sarah Zarfati: Thank you for your significant support of the "Someone to Read With" program and for your willingness to fund the program from its inception until it became self-sustaining.

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our gratitude

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are proud Patrons of Big Brothers Big Sisters Israel

GANDEL
FOUNDATION

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for their swift response and support for the Computers Project

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for supporting activities for mentoring children and youth, with an emphasis on education.

the government ministries

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for your support of the association activities



the Municipalities

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ISRAEL **ישראל**
BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS





Connect with Us

Become partners with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Israel and helped us make a difference in the lives of children, adolescents, and young adults.

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JOIN US!

to leave contact details to volunteer,
and join the family
[click here](#)



can't volunteer? Round up in 30 seconds

[click here](#)



join our support circle

[click here](#)



see you around!





מטה המשפחות להחזרת החטופים והנעדרים



We, at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Israel, hope for the immediate return of all the captives held by Hamas.

