



It is with deep sadness that I share that Big Brothers Big Sisters of Rhode Island (BBBSRI) was forced to lay off 65% of its workforce today due to the financial impacts of Covid-19.

Cash Flow Concerns

66% of BBBSRI's revenue is generated from our Donation Center operations, which collects clothing and household items that are sold to a retail partner to fund the mentoring mission. On March 20th, our retail partner closed due to Covid-19. With that closure, 66% of our revenue stream came to a halt. The remaining 34% of our revenue comes from private donations and grant funds, which are both suffering due to this world-wide pandemic.

We are actively applying for federal and local aid while also working with our vendors to temporarily reduce expenses.

Because of this significant impact on cash flow, we must reduce expenses in order to keep our organization and mission alive in the coming months and years.

Our Mission

BBBSRI's mission is to create and support one-to-one mentoring relationships that ignite the power and promise of youth.

Through continued conversations with the children and families we serve, we know that this is a critical time when children and their parents/guardians need support to help combat loneliness, depression, anxiety, stress and much more. Because of our strategic planning efforts and sound financial policies, we are able to retain several employees at this time to continue the critical work of supporting the children and families enrolled in our program.

Enrollment for new children and mentors into BBBSRI is on hiatus due to social distancing guidelines. Our remaining team members will continue the important match support work that we do, which includes keeping in contact with, and providing support and resources to, the hundreds of pairs we support.

Our Donation Center

This situation evolves by the day. Today, Donation Center collections remain open. Our Driver Team is working with safety guidelines and we are collecting clothing and household items through our green bins and curb-side home pickups, with no in-person contact required. We hope to continue this operation for as long as possible so that we are prepared to resume full operations in the future.

Our Amazing Team

Our mission is our priority and our team members keep our mission going. When this difficult news was shared with our employees, resoundingly they were most concerned about the kids we serve. It was heartbreaking and heartwarming to hear their concerns, but not surprising. The BBBSRI team is incredible and I am so proud of this group of people. Those who remain employed with us for this time period will keep the mission alive.

BBBSRI will continue to provide health and dental insurance to those team members affected by the workforce reduction at no expense to them through the month of April, and our leadership team will be available to support everyone through this difficult period.

BBBSRI will remain in communication with employees who have asked to be communicated with in the coming days and weeks. Additionally, we have an employee assistance program that will be available to all team members who have been laid off to help them through the emotional stress of this circumstance.

How You Can Help

Board Member, Tom Furey of Furey Roofing Company, has generously agreed to match community donations to BBBSRI, up to \$10,000, in the hope that other's will follow his lead and support the work we do for children and families in Rhode Island. If you can help, visit www.BigsRI.org/Donate. Every dollar matters – especially now.

The Future of BBBSRI

Our mission is more critical than ever. Social anxiety is at an all-time high and children and teens are losing precious time interacting with their community. While they can't meet in person, we are fortunate that our mentoring pairs have a wide variety of digital connection options to connect with each other and with us. We also serve as a resource to parents/guardians during this time – those who need a break, need support, need resources, we are still here for them.

Our endowment fund has taken a significant hit, along with the world's economy, but remains intact to ensure the future of BBBSRI.

Our goal is to be operational when this pandemic ends and return to our previous level of productivity. I know that we all cannot wait for that day to come!

Stay well,



Katje Afonseca
Executive Director