

PRISM MENTORSHIP: Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ Young People



**Big Brothers
Big Sisters**
OF OTTAWA

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PRISM MENTORSHIP: EMPOWERING EVERY IDENTITY, EVERY STEP



BBBSO's PRISM program is a groundbreaking, intergenerational, one-to-one mentoring initiative specifically designed for 2SLGBTQIA+ children and youth. This unique program pairs 2SLGBTQIA+ youth with adult mentors who share similar identities, fostering a meaningful and supportive mentoring relationship.

As the first program of its kind in Ottawa, PRISM serves 2SLGBTQIA+ youth aged 6 to 24, providing them with a safe and supportive space to explore and discuss their identities with a trusted 2SLGBTQIA+ adult. PRISM focuses on promoting self-confidence, nurturing pride, and supporting the mental health and overall well-being of young people.

Through regular outings and activities during the year, 29 matches formed strong, empowering friendships that are both supportive and fun, while also creating important intergenerational connections within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

After a successful pilot year, the goal for PRISM's second year was to establish it as a core offering of BBBSO, ensuring that more youth in Ottawa have access to this vital resource and the positive impact of mentorship.

THE PURPOSE OF PRISM:

Meaningful Mentorship Matches

PRISM connects 2SLGBTQIA+ children and youth with adult mentors who share their identity, fostering strong, supportive relationships. These one-on-one connections provide mentees with a trusted role model who understands their experiences and can offer guidance, encouragement, and friendship.

Safe and Affirming Space to Thrive

PRISM mentorship creates a judgment-free environment where youth feel safe to express themselves fully and authentically. By having a mentor who validates their identity and lived experiences, mentees gain the confidence to navigate challenges and embrace their personal journey.

Building Confidence & Community

PRISM helps 2SLGBTQIA+ youth build self-confidence through positive representation and meaningful intergenerational connections within the community. These relationships foster a sense of belonging, showing mentees they are not alone and that they have a supportive network to rely on.

School-Based and Community Programs

PRISM supported Meet You In School (MYIS) matches and one Mentoring in School (MIS) match, directly impacting young lives. These mentorships have helped mentees feel seen, valued, and empowered to embrace their true selves while receiving the support they need to thrive.

COMMUNITY BASED MENTORSHIP



The PRISM program delivers significant benefits to 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and the wider Ottawa community by focusing on community-based program delivery. Through mentorship, PRISM provides 2SLGBTQIA+ youth with the support they need to feel a sense of belonging, develop resilience, and improve their mental health—resulting in an 80% increase in positive outcomes for those engaged in community and school-based mentoring.

The relationships between mentors and mentees create a safe, nurturing space where youth can explore their identities, gain validation, and receive emotional support free from judgment. Mentors have played a crucial role in helping mentees advocate for gender-affirming care, empowering them to thrive in an environment where they feel seen, heard, and supported.

PRISM's outreach initiatives further enrich the local community by strengthening connections with key organizations such as the Ottawa Rainbow Service Providers Network (RSPN). These partnerships enhance visibility, trust, and access to vital resources, ensuring that young people can rely on a network of support.

EXISTING MATCHES

There are currently twenty active Community-Based (10) and In-School (10) PRISM matches (2024/2025) that continue to thrive and grow in the program.



NEW MATCHES

A new active Community-Based PRISM match (2024/2025) has transitioned from PRISM MIS to PRISM CB. The mentee and mentor connected so well that they are now meeting regularly within the community.



SCHOOL BASED MENTORSHIP



Since September 2024, PRISM mentors and BBBSO Mentoring Coordinators have made 42 contacts with GSAs and Rainbow Clubs in schools, reinforcing the program's deep commitment to fostering inclusive and supportive educational environments. This intentional engagement ensures that 2SLGBTQIA+ youth have consistent access to mentorship, resources, and safe spaces where they can be themselves without fear of discrimination or isolation.

PRISM's presence within schools is instrumental in reducing the emotional labor often placed on 2SLGBTQIA+ students to educate their peers and staff about their lived experiences. Through structured programming and mentorship, PRISM helps shift the responsibility of advocacy onto a broader, more informed community, alleviating the pressure on marginalized youth while simultaneously increasing awareness and understanding. Currently, five PRISM mentors are in active matches, providing critical one-on-one support to youth navigating their identities and experiences. These mentors act as trusted guides, helping young people build confidence, resilience, and connections within their school communities.

By engaging with allies, including non-2SLGBTQIA+ students, educators, and school administrators, PRISM cultivates a network of support that extends beyond mentorship. Through education and collaboration, the program fosters empathy, reduces stigma, and strengthens peer relationships—creating a school culture where all students, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, feel seen, valued, and empowered to succeed.



THE FACES OF PRISM



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



As we reflect on the success of the PRISM program and its profound impact on the lives of young people in our community, we want to extend our deepest gratitude to our funding partners—The Ottawa Community Foundation and Telus Friendly Futures. Your generous support has been instrumental in making this program a reality and ensuring that we can continue to provide crucial mentorship to youth in need.

Thanks to your partnership, we've seen firsthand the transformative power of mentorship. Through PRISM, we've been able to create lasting connections, empowering youth to overcome challenges and reach their full potential. Your belief in our mission is helping to shape the future of these young individuals and positively impact our community as a whole.

Your commitment to making a difference has enabled us to break down barriers, inspire growth, and provide opportunities that might otherwise not have been possible. We are truly grateful for your trust in our work and for your continued dedication to creating a better future for youth in Ottawa.

Together, we are creating a lasting impact, and we look forward to continuing this journey with your support. Thank you once again for your generosity and commitment to building a brighter future for young people.

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