



2021 Final Report

Prepared for:



The 2021 Environ-Mentoring Program was quite successful given our position at the beginning of the year. Due to the pandemic lockdowns and physical distancing restrictions in place, we began by offering virtual education and exploration sessions for online groups of children and volunteer mentors. These included planting and growing beans, nature show and tell, nature-based trivia contests, and craft projects involving items from the wild surroundings.

As the year progressed, we were fortunate to receive additional assistance from the Guelph Outdoor School, who opened their facilities to small in-person groups in September. We took advantage of their services for two sessions during the scope of this project. The focus of these sessions included an introduction to their land and facilities, Indigenous land acknowledgements, nature walks, wildlife investigation, plant identification, fossil finding, tree planting, and friction-based fire building. In addition, we undertook a Hallowe'en-themed in-person Environ-Mentoring session of our own, which involved a nature walk and scavenger hunt, as well as carving and painting pumpkins.

In all, we were able to offer 198 opportunities for virtual and in-person participation between January and December 2021. We are greatly pleased with the success of the sessions and the responses that we received from the children who attended. The Environ-Mentoring program is still one of our greatest achievements, and we are keen to see how it will continue to grow in the future. We believe strongly in the values it imparts to our youth and that the disruption from this pandemic will be seen as a minor inconvenience that allowed us to innovate and improvise our program delivery. We are truly grateful for the enduring support that the Ontario Wildlife Foundation has shown us over the years, and we are eager to continue developing the Environ-Mentoring Program with your assistance.



## Program Evaluation

We created an online survey focussed on evaluating the effectiveness of the virtual sessions, as they were the most recent addition to the program. The collected data showed positive trends:

1. When asked to rate each session out of five, the responses ranged from three to five, with the majority of the sessions being rated at four out of five. This indicates that the sessions are generally received well, and allows us to determine which sessions we will keep for future Environ-Mentoring programs.
2. Survey responses indicated that respondents had attended all offered virtual sessions, demonstrating that the program held the attention of the participants and motivated them to keep coming back.
3. When asked whether they would like to return for another year of Environ-Mentoring, 100% of respondents replied that they would, showing that the program continues to provide long-term enjoyment and edification for the participants.

## Fund Usage Outline

The funds provided by Ontario Wildlife Foundation went fully towards the non-staffing line items of the program budget, as outlined in our application and shown below. Due to an underestimation of the necessary personnel and resources, the final cost of the Guelph Outdoor School sessions was significantly higher than anticipated (and as reflected in our OWF Grant Application earlier this year). Nevertheless, we did not waver from the breakdown of costs committed by OWF, and absorbed the overage out-of-pocket.

<b>2021 Environ-Mentoring Program Budget</b>			<b>OWF's Support</b>
Casework Staffing Costs	Portion of Salaries and Benefits of Program Coordinators	\$21,485.00	\$0.00
Program Design and Development	Align program outcomes with BBBS Core Values & Outcomes	\$1,591.40	\$0.00
Management	Administration and organization of Environ-Mentoring match activity	\$902.32	\$902.32
Session Costs	Two outings at the Guelph Outdoor School	\$847.50	\$800.00
Volunteer Intake	Training and interview materials, Police Checks, Reference Checks	\$1,274.00	\$1,274.00
Marketing/Promotions Materials	Cost to develop & print collateral to promote outings, recruit and communicate with volunteers	\$320.00	\$320.00
Transportation Costs	Trips to Session Locations (5 cars @ \$0.47/km each)	\$116.56	\$116.56
Session Materials	Seeds and other materials for virtual sessions	\$500.00	\$500.00
Food Budget	Snacks for Environ-Mentoring Sessions	\$175.00	\$175.00
<b>Total Costs</b>		<b>\$27,211.78</b>	<b>\$4,087.88</b>

We could not be happier with the success of the Environ-Mentoring Program! In particular, being able to keep the program running through the pandemic has helped the children we serve gain purpose and realize that they have a role to play in the protection of our environment. Our partners at Grand River Conservation Authority and Guelph Outdoor School have been crucial in providing direction and opportunity for our mentees to thrive in the outdoors. And we are especially grateful for community partners like OWF who make it all possible! With your help, our children are developing the skills and experience they need to become tomorrow's conservation stewards!



Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Darryl Blake'.

Darryl Blake, Development Writer  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Guelph