Your gift creates a brighter world for children
COVID-19

2020 started out like every other year. We had The Big Gala in February and plans were underway for our annual Camp Bob Waldorf Golf Tournament in June. Camp was in full planning mode for the summer. When COVID-19 hit in March, we didn’t know how it was going to impact us, we just knew we were facing a huge challenge. As quarantine continued through each successive month, we did everything we could to keep fundraising.

Our kids come from low-income families who were severely impacted by COVID-19. Many parents/guardians were laid off during this time, or had to work multiple jobs, which created uncertainty and anxiety for our kids. With the support of our incredible donors, we were able to provide 100% of our programming to our kids and families without any cutbacks, giving our kids a sense of stability and happiness during these trying times.
Teen mental health was a growing problem before the pandemic and COVID-19 has only exacerbated and intensified the crisis. Teens have been isolated from their peers at a time when their growth and development is dependent on peer support and relationships. Most youth feel anxious as their family faces loss of income, food insecurity, lack of healthcare, anxiety, and mental health challenges due to the pandemic. Studies show that there is an unmet need for mental health treatment among teens. This unmet need is due to lack of access to treatment or associated stigma that holds teens back from seeking treatment. Teens have an intense need for support, yet many find themselves navigating alone, reluctant to ask their parents for guidance. Instead, teens instinctively seek help online. Teen Talk provides the exact support teens want – advice from their peers in an anonymous forum, using their mobile device.

Teen Talk is a free mobile app in which teens who are struggling, anonymously receive emotional and social support from teen advisors trained by JBBBSLA. Since its inception three years ago, teen advisors have served 27,000 teens and responded to over 20,000 posts. Currently, Teen Talk has 141 active teen advisors and on average, we have 60-70 app users a day.

Teen Talk trains teens to become advisors through a comprehensive 50-hour course. Teen advisors are trained on difficult teen issues such as depression, suicide, self-harm, family relationships, abuse, sexuality, and gender identity. Teen advisors gain the skills necessary to guide their peers through crisis situations. The training embodies Jewish values such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, kindness, and community.

Self-harm - “I got the feeling I want to start cutting my skin, to I guess make myself feel better. But I tried today, and I only slightly grazed my skin no cut or blood appeared. But I still feel that mark where I grazed it where I wanted to cut initially. After I did that, I cried and it felt like I want to maybe try again later in the day or tomorrow.”

Fear and isolation - “The stuff happening in the world is so scary. It started to go back to normal but now they made more stupid rules, and if we get quarantined again idk how I’m gonna be able to handle it, sports is one of the only things I can still do and if they take it away idk what I’m gonna do, I’ve been in sports my entire life they can’t take that away from me.”
Camp got off to a strong start in 2020, hosting Camp Bob Waldorf, Kibbutz Bob Waldorf and Social Justice retreats at our beautiful campus in Glendale. Then COVID-19 hit and our Camp team had to think fast and come up with a new approach to summer camp. That’s when Camp-In-A-Box was born. Staff packed up over 200 boxes, specially designed for three age ranges, and hand-delivered the packages to our campers. Over the summer, we held six weeks of virtual camp. Each virtual session included activities three times a day for different age ranges, from 8-18. Boxes included pre-set activities such as science kits, art kits, models to build, puzzles, and notes of encouragement from counselors. Campers enjoyed special guests and instructors from around the country and even from Mexico!

Here are some key stats from 2020:

**Nearly 800 campers served**

- **286** youth at our in-person winter retreats for Camp Bob Waldorf, Kibbutz Bob Waldorf and Social Justice
- **227** youth at our fall virtual retreats for Camp Bob Waldorf and Kibbutz Bob Waldorf
- **213** youth attended our virtual summer Camp Bob Waldorf

We also had **25** CITs for virtual camp, **10** junior counselors and **27** youth attend a virtual Witherbee program.
College Guidance

Even amid the pandemic, College Guidance continued to be an important program for our high-school students. Offering free professional counseling before and throughout their college application process, our students worked with professional guidance counselors one-on-one via Zoom and through virtual sessions to:

- Develop personalized lists of colleges
- Improve their essay-writing skills
- Master the college interview, now with the added aspect of doing it via Zoom
- Tailor their college applications towards each college
- Find financial aid and scholarship opportunities

This year also saw the launch of our Make an Impact Now (MAIN) Coach program. This program matches highly-motivated students with professionals who advocate for them while they pursue their academic, professional and personal goals. MAIN Coaches nurture and challenge their students, helping guide them based on their interests and talents, often sharing their own experiences of college, fields of study and how they embarked on a specific career path.

Scholarship

Our scholarship program continues to provide vital financial assistance to students in a variety of our programs. Students who have participated as “Littles” in our mentoring program are encouraged to apply for scholarships through the JBBBSLA Scholarship Program. Camp Bob Waldorf campers who participate in the Witherbee Wilderness Backpacking Program are eligible to apply for the Arnold S. Nelson Scholarship. The Rising Leaders Scholarship Program is specifically for our teen campers and Counselors-In-Training. Students may, and are encouraged to, apply for scholarships each year of college.

In 2020, we awarded $248,650 in scholarships to 89 recipients:

- JBBBSLA Scholarship 38 recipients
- Arnold S. Nelson Scholarship 43 recipients
- Rising Leaders Scholarship 8 recipients

Overall, our Erwin Rautenberg College Guidance program helped prepare 74 students for ongoing success in college.

100% of our college seniors graduated in 2020

97% of our recipients persisted through their Fall 2020 semester/quarter and are successfully enrolled into their Winter/Spring Term.
A Big Impact

In 2020, our Bigs provided vital support and connection with their Littles. With Littles quarantined at home, connecting with their Bigs in safe and engaging ways became even more crucial. We made sure our Bigs had the resources they needed to continue the relationship and provide comfort, safety, and support. Bigs also provided a needed distraction, helping their Littles to focus less on issues at home and more on having fun.

Our Littles have said that when they are with their Bigs they feel safe, acknowledged and happy. These relationships often are one of the most important ones in our Littles’ lives and our Bigs work to ensure this. As one Little put it “Having a Big means there’s someone out there to look out for you” and our Bigs have said this is one of the most rewarding things they’ve done in their lives.

238 MENTOR AND MENTEE MATCHES SERVED

27 NEW MATCHES MADE
Match Events – Bigs/Littles (Mentorship)

Just because we couldn’t meet in person didn’t mean our Matches didn’t have fun! When the pandemic forced us to cancel all in-person events, we quickly pivoted to safe virtual events to keep our kids connected. Throughout the year, our Youth Mentoring program offered 18 virtual events for our Bigs and Littles to attend “together” on virtual platforms including Zoom. Over 300 Bigs and Littles attended these virtual match activities including:

- Magic Classes with a Magic Castle magician
- Cooking and Baking Workshops Classes, including challah, pasta, and muffins
- HIIT Workout and Dance Classes
- Sweet Farm Animal Sanctuary visit
- Petersen Automotive Museum Tour
- Improv Comedy Class with the Bible Players
- At-Home Scavenger Hunts
- Harry’s Magical London Walking Tour
- Meeting Tigers and Tiger Trainer Q&A
- Hanukkah Menorah Lighting Celebration