



Big Brothers race for awareness ; Tour to reconnect alumni with service organization

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• Big Brother, Tom Thornton and his "Little" of 40 years, Ron Bartleet, shown with Surafel and Jordan (both Little Brothers), are about to drive across Canada to compete at Targa Newfoundland, a gruelling 2,200-kilometre road rally in September.

Former Big Brother, Tom Thornton, and his "Little," Ron Bartleet, are setting out on the adventure of a lifetime by competing at **Targa**, a gruelling, 2,200-kilometre road rally that winds through eastern and central Newfoundland from Sept. 13 to 18.

And along the way to **Targa**, the two will be shining a spotlight on the power of mentoring to help children in need and inviting past and current Bigs and Littles to join them as they set out from St. Catharines on their epic journey on Sept. 7 by registering on www.thebigrace.ca.

Past and current Bigs and Littles who register on www.thebigrace.ca to follow Thornton's and Bartleet's progress will have the chance to win an expense-paid trip to St. John's including free airfare from WestJet, to witness the two cross the finish line at **Targa**.

Called The Big Race, the youth mentors' journey to reconnect with Bigs and Littles is part of a broad initiative by Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada (BBBSC) to strengthen ties with its former volunteers and raise awareness of the rising demand for youth mentoring services right across Canada.

On their journey and at **Targa**, Thornton and Bartleet are driving a SIRIUS Satellite Radio-equipped, decade-old Mini Cooper S Clubman, provided courtesy of Mini Canada, from Niagara Falls, Ont., to Newfoundland and the two will make pit stops in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City, Moncton, N.B., and Halifax. Mini is also providing financial support to make the Big Race possible.

Thornton volunteered to be Bartleet's big brother 40 years ago. Bartleet, now a successful financial advisor, credits the mentoring he received as being the cornerstone of his success in life.

"Tom took me under his wing when I was six years old and showed me a clear path to happiness and success through consideration for others and hard work," said Bartleet.

"We are particularly excited about helping thousands of lost Bigs and Littles reconnect with each other through our website."

For Thornton, being a Big Brother has been a source of tremendous satisfaction and fun over the years.

"There is no thrill greater than seeing a child's eyes sparkle with happiness and excitement, and there has been no experience in my life as rewarding as being Ron's Big Brother and friend." said Thornton.

"Our journey to **Targa** is the latest chapter in an adventure that began 40 years ago. We challenge every former and current Big and Little in Canada to register on our website to experience our **Targa** adventure. Together, we can make sure that every child who needs a mentor has one."

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