



Spring 2023 Newsletter

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“Increasing access to resources, opportunities, and learning by meeting students and families where they are.”

2023 (so far!) at a Glance

8

Tutoring visits
to Abbey Lane

13

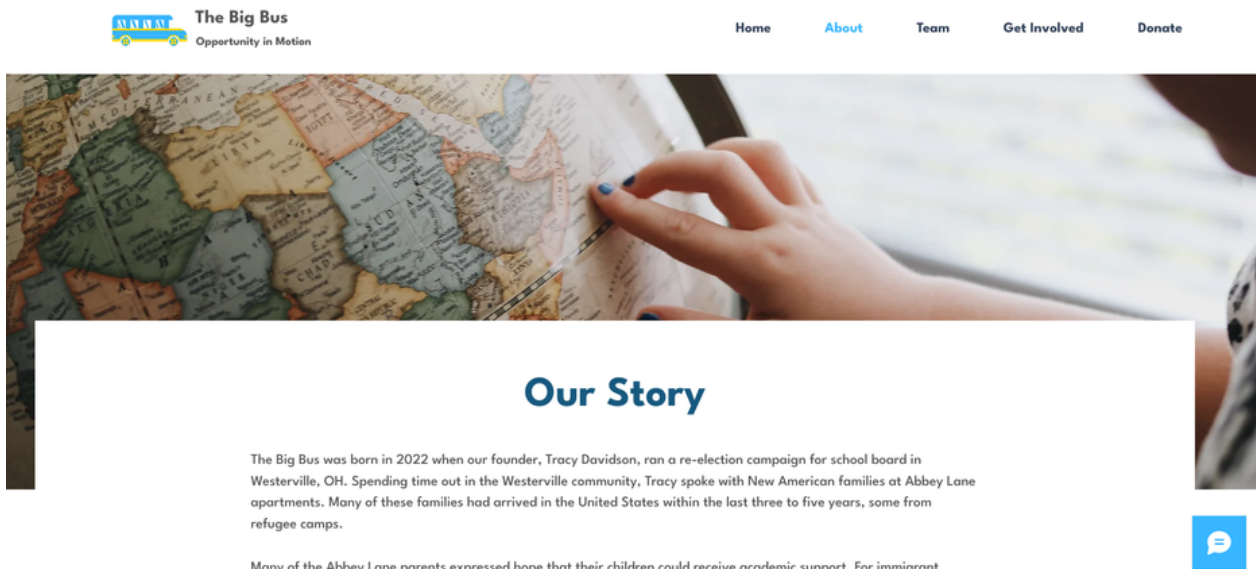
Unique volunteers
involved with visits

21

Average students
present per visit

1

Updated website
(Check us out at [TheBigBus.org!](https://TheBigBus.org))



Meet our Executive Director



Russ came on board as our new Executive Director at the end of November 2022.

An Ohio native from the Cleveland area originally, I've been immersed in the nonprofit and social enterprise communities in Columbus since graduating from The Ohio State University in 2017. I've spent time working with youth experiencing homelessness, developing programs to build pathways towards sustainable employment. I've also spent time in the nonprofit tech space, working on innovations to the donor experience and grant funding processes. I generally feel most inspired when working to build systems that can create powerful, sustained impact.

So far with The Big Bus I've really enjoyed working with the older students in the K-5 range, particularly with math tutoring. It's been fantastic to see some of the same students coming back week after week and watching them progress. I'm very excited that we'll be kicking off our programming with parents soon: English language learning is our goal, but I also think the opportunity for consistent dialogue around community needs will be a game-changer for our ability to support the students and communities we're working with.

Outside of working life I enjoy traveling, hiking, and cooking (when they can be combined, even better!). I've been lucky enough to have some wonderful extended travel experiences, ones that have helped shape my appreciation for diversity of culture while also giving me a fundamental understanding of how alike we humans all tend to be and how interconnected our world is. Working with The Big Bus feels like a natural extension of those experiences. I've really enjoyed diving into the world of EL learning, collaborating with teachers, and starting to get to know the Westerville community. I look forward to continuing to work with such a committed board of directors and seeing where the ride takes us.

Russ Kinstlinger

Volunteer Profile: Chelsie Lakeman

Chelsie is the K-5 ELL (English Language Learning) teacher at Mark Twain Elementary. She's been a huge help as a volunteer as we've established our Big Bus programming over the past few months.



How did you find your way into your role as an EL instructor?

I'm not sure where my passion for teaching language learners originally came from. I do remember asking about the English language teaching endorsement at the beginning of my first education course at Otterbein. I traveled to Uganda after graduation and that solidified my desire to teach language learners and give students a solid foundation in their English language education.

What have been your biggest or most surprising learning experiences in working with ELL students?

Every day is a surprise because every student's language learning journey is different. I think perhaps the biggest surprise is the joy that comes with the kids' smiles and light-bulb moments both for myself and for the students. There is just something magical about when they begin to be able to communicate in a new language.

What has your experience with volunteering with The Big Bus over the past few months been like?

It has been absolutely wonderful. It is amazing to see the commitment of both the volunteers and students and the connections that have already been made on the bus.

What excites you most when you think about how The Big Bus can impact the community as we continue to grow?

It is wonderful to think about how The Big Bus will become more and more a part of the Abbey Lane community and the larger Westerville Schools community. The more people you have that care about you the better, and the Big Bus will give students and their families even more people who care about them and are excited to see them grow.

Looking Ahead

There's a whole lot that we're excited for in the coming months with Spring here and Summer approaching. Here's a look at what's ahead for The Big Bus:



Parent & Pre-K programming beginning in early May! We're really excited about this, since our Big Bus vision focuses on programming for both students and parents.



Continued weekly after-school tutoring visits to Abbey Lane for the rest of the school year.



Monthly orientation sessions for new volunteers. We'll hope to see you at one!



Summer program plans. These are still in progress, and there are many exciting collaborations and opportunities shaping up. We're looking forward to seeing what a Big Bus summer can look like!

If you're hoping to volunteer with The Big Bus or get involved another way, visit thebigbus.org/get-involved or email us at info@thebigbus.org. We'd love to hear from you!