

Big Dreams Through Small Steps

2025 Annual Impact Summary

President & Founder: Misty Ritch

Website: www.bdtss.org

Contact: mistryritch@bdts.org

Our Mission

Big Dreams Through Small Steps is dedicated to empowering families and building stronger communities by connecting needs to solutions — one small step at a time.

2025 Impact Snapshot

In 2025, Big Dreams Through Small Steps (BDTSS) strengthened its role as a community connector, program leader, and trusted information source. Through strategic partnerships, grants, and grassroots collaboration, BDTSS delivered measurable impact while expanding visibility and trust across Manatee County and the Suncoast region.

Primary Focus Areas:

- Family safety and drowning prevention
 - Community information and public service communication
 - Inclusive initiatives and resource connections
 - Youth leadership and business development support
-

AQUALibrium Drowning Prevention Program

Water safety remains a cornerstone of BDTSS programming in 2025 through **AQUALibrium**, focused on reducing preventable childhood drownings.

Program Outcomes

- 50 children served through swim scholarships
- 500 swim lessons delivered
- 90% of participants advanced to a new skill level
- Majority of children served were under age 5
- Diverse participation reflective of the community

Lessons emphasized water confidence, self-rescue skills, and safety awareness, supporting families facing financial, cultural, or systemic barriers.

Grant Support

- Ritch Ventures
 - Step Into Swim
 - Bradenton Kiwanis
 - DeBartolo Family Foundation
 - Individual donors
-

Bridge Abilities

Bridge Abilities advanced in 2025 as an inclusion-focused initiative designed to increase awareness and access to mobility equipment for families dealing with special needs.

Key Highlights:

- Community advocacy and public awareness, including speaking engagements
 - Collaboration with **Goodwill Manasota** to support donation drop-off and warehousing needs, strengthening operational capacity
-

Community News & Communications: Pulse of Manatee

BDTSS operates **Pulse of Manatee** as a centralized hub for nonprofit visibility and public service information.

2025 Reach & Activity:

- 420 nonprofit-focused articles published
- 440 public service articles shared
- Steady growth in website traffic and Facebook subscribers
- Asked to consider expanding the Pulse into other counties

Pulse of Manatee also serves as part of the **Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD)** network, supporting post-disaster communication and public service announcements.

Community Trust & Collaboration

In 2025, BDTSS was invited to support and collaborate with multiple regional initiatives, reflecting growing confidence in the organization's leadership and communication capacity:

- Suncoast Safe Kids Coalition
- Juvenile Justice Circuit 12 Advisory Board
- Resource support collaboration with the School District
- Bradenton Downtown Redevelopment Committee

BDTSS is increasingly recognized as a trusted connector between families, nonprofits, schools, and public agencies.

Youth & Business Development

BDTSS leadership supported youth leadership development through engagement with **Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)**.

- Bobby and Misty Ritch served as judges, contributing expertise in business ethics, customer service, broadcasting journalism, and event planning.
-

Momentum & Looking Ahead

2025 brought increased visibility, expanding partnerships, and positive attention from potential funding sources. This momentum positions BDTSS for sustainable growth and deeper impact.

2026 Priorities:

- Expand drowning prevention and family safety initiatives
 - Grow Bridge Abilities collaborations
 - Strengthen Pulse of Manatee as a trusted community information platform
 - Continue connecting needs to solutions across the community
-

Big Dreams Through Small Steps continues to turn collaboration into action — strengthening families, supporting children, and building resilient communities, one small step at a time.