

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 7, 2016

B.C. Child and Youth in Care Week: Transition to Adulthood Program

Surrey, British Columbia Every year in British Columbia, more than 700 teenagers ‘age out’ of the foster care system. As soon as they turn 19, the only support system they’ve known is no longer available to them, and they’re expected to begin taking care of themselves. But at just 19, with no confidence, no skills, and no support or resources, it’s setting these kids up for failure. And far too many of them do fail – ending up homeless, living on the streets, addicted, or in trouble with the law. Indeed, over 40% of youth living on the streets have been in foster care.

Dead teen Patricia Lee 'Indigo' Evoy lacked support, say friends (CBC News – March 14, 2016)

B.C. coroner's report rules death of troubled foster youth was suicide (Vancouver Sun – May 10, 2016)

Twenty-four kids-in-care placed in B.C. hotels (Global News – June 1, 2016)

In British Columbia, the first week of June is Child and Youth in Care Week, and SOS Children’s Village B.C. is pleased to be a national trailblazer in advancing a more effective model of care for foster children and youth. With shocking news articles being published virtually every week about what critics are calling a ‘broken’ foster care system, SOS B.C. envisions a better way. British Columbians have said “Yes to the Village, No to the Streets!” through their passionate support of the charity’s two year capital campaign for transition suites.

The five topics for this year’s B.C. Child and Youth in Care Week are: caregiver training; the therapeutic & interactive village; transitioning to adulthood; the grand opening of suites for youth aging out of care; and a new Cirque du Soleil program – SOS B.C. will be the second SOS Village in the world to launch it.

The Transition to Adulthood program at SOS Children’s Village B.C. helps youth gain life skills, make meaningful connections with their community, and move in a positive direction in their life. Youth in the program are able to achieve their goals, gain independence, and begin growing into healthy and contributing members of society. The program provides one-to-one support for youth between the ages of 16 and 24 years in the Surrey area, and operates from a client-centered approach to meet the unique needs of each youth.

While most programs for youth end at the age of 19, SOS B.C.’s program fills a previously unmet need in Surrey by continuing to work with youth until the age of 24 – assisting them through the most challenging years of their transition to adulthood. In addition, most transition programs for youth require a referral through the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Our program accepts referrals from other professionals, schools, social workers, parents, and most importantly, from youth themselves.

Last year was transformational for the charity's Transition to Adulthood program as the year-long Intensive Transition program was developed, which will utilize the new transition suites at the SOS B.C. Village – three will begin operating on June 9th and two more will follow as funds are raised. This program will embrace young adults in the warmth of the organization's supportive village community while presenting a challenging curriculum of workshops and learning opportunities.

“Thanks to the Boag Foundation, there will be financial incentives to pursue education, and rewards from SOS B.C. including everything required for their own apartment: furniture, appliances, kitchenware, computer, TV, etc. – an ‘apartment in a box’,” said Douglas Dunn, executive director of SOS Children's Village B.C.

The charity's After Care plans have also been launched. **Once a child, youth, or caregiver has been part of SOS B.C., they are part of the SOS family forever.** ‘Alumni’ is what former children in care are referred to in the rest of the SOS world. This year, the organization will start to implement a program of life-long engagement with youth in their programs. Watch for their ‘Phone Home’ campaign to reconnect with the children and caregivers who have been part of the Surrey village over the last 17 years.

SOS Children's Village B.C. is changing lives for B.C.'s most vulnerable youth, one teenager at a time. The Transition to Adulthood program reaches out to vulnerable teens, working one-on-one with them to develop the skills they need to find safe housing, land and keep a job, and make a future for themselves – **giving them a helping hand when no one else will.**

About SOS Children's Village BC

SOS Children's Villages is the world's largest non-governmental, non-denominational child development organization for fostered, orphaned, and abandoned children. It has existed for over 65 years with presence in 134 countries and 568 Villages. British Columbia is home to the only SOS Children's Village in Canada. SOS Children's Village BC provides stable homes, a supportive and healing Village environment, and community-based family care programs to help foster children and youth in need grow into caring, self-reliant adults.

-30-

We hope that you will be inspired to pick up our ‘Say Yes to the Village, No to the Streets!’ press release series over B.C. Child and Youth in Care Week.



**SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGE**
BRITISH COLUMBIA

PRESS RELEASE

For more information please contact:

William Brennan, Manager of Communications
SOS Children's Village BC
T: (604) 574-2964 ext. 104
E: williambrennan@sosbc.org Web: www.sosbc.org

Please visit our Media Room: www.sosbc.org/news-events/media-room