

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 24, 2017

**Lower Mainland Businessman Wins First Ever SOS International Foster Award**

**Vancouver, British Columbia** The B.C. chapter of the world's largest non-denominational child development charity is thrilled to announce that local businessman, best-selling author, international speaker, consultant, and television personality **Tom Watson** won the inaugural SOS International Foster Award yesterday in downtown Vancouver. The award ceremony took place at the SOS International Foster Awards Gala at The Law Courts Inn with 200 guests in attendance. SOS Children's Village B.C. was also pleased to welcome Malcolm Perry of *The Vancouver Sun*.

This exciting, new event featured sports celebrities including three Grey Cup champions: CFL legend **Michael 'Pinball' Clemons**, **Marco Iannuzzi**, and **Lyle Green**. **Amber Belzer** of Global BC was Master of Ceremonies for the evening.

Acknowledgement of the award came from dignitaries and VIPs from around the world, including special video greetings from 15 SOS Children's Villages spanning the Philippines to Jamaica.

Award recipient Tom Watson became a foster child at an early age. **He moved through 12 different foster homes** before being taken into the home of Jim and Edwina Watson at the age of five. The Watsons became Tom's SOS Village. **Tom has overcome tremendous odds and adversity in his life.**

Tom is the founder of **Recreation Excellence** which is a multiple award-winning recreation facilities management company. He is also the founder of **Your Better Life** which is an online lifestyles inspirational community. Tom is also the best-selling author of the book *Man Shoes*, and he is a sought after international speaker, consultant, and television personality.

Tom has volunteered significant time and resources to numerous organizations as a board member including the **Trinity Western Spartan Foundation, B.C. Recreation and Parks Association**, as well as numerous positions with provincial sport organizations including the **B.C. Summer, Winter, and Senior Games Societies**. Tom and his family have volunteered to work in significant ways with initiatives for foster children in British Columbia and they have selflessly worked with **foster children, orphanages, and the homeless in multiple countries including Africa, Costa Rica, and Mexico.**

Tom has given back to his community through coaching in multiple sport and his teams have won numerous tournaments, league championships, and he is a two-time **Provincial Champion Football Coach**. Tom has coordinated **Terry Fox Runs**, has participated in the **Ride To**

**Conquer Cancer** multiple times, and **has helped numerous non-profits raise millions of dollars for their causes.** Tom is the loving husband to Kathy Watson and the proud father of three sons: Brad (wife Lindsay), Kelly (wife Natalie), and Jordan (fiancé Daniela). He is a doting grandfather to two year old Keeghan Watson and he is a tremendous friend to many.

The SOS International Foster Award Gala Committee is pleased to recognize Tom Watson as the 2017 recipient of the International Foster Award. Funds raised at the gala are still being tallied and the final proceeds will be announced in the near future.

**AWARD NOMINEE CRITERIA:**

Nominees for the SOS International Foster Award must demonstrate competence in four distinct areas:

1. **Career:** Nominee has proven success in their chosen career path.
2. **Relationship:** Nominee has developed or has helped nurture the development of healthy supportive relationships.
3. **Community:** Nominee is personally active and engaged in their community.
4. **Philanthropy:** Nominee is an active philanthropist helping foster children, fostering agencies, or similar initiatives (“paying it forward” for future generations).

**About SOS Children’s Village BC**

SOS Children’s Villages is the world’s largest non-governmental, non-denominational child development organization and cares for fostered, orphaned, or abandoned children. It has existed for over 65 years with presence in 134 countries and 572 Villages. British Columbia is home to the only SOS Children’s Village in Canada. SOS Children’s Village BC provides homes, a supportive community, and programs to help foster children and youth in need grow into caring, self-reliant adults.

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