



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Derek Clark Wins 2018 SOS International Foster Award**

**Vancouver, British Columbia** The local chapter of the world's largest non-governmental organization focused on supporting children without parental care is pleased to announce that motivational speaker, author, and 'Rapping Dad' **Derek Clark** won the 2018 SOS International Foster Award at the Vancouver Marriott Pinnacle Downtown last Thursday with 200 guests in attendance. SOS Children's Village B.C. was also pleased to welcome Malcolm Parry of *The Vancouver Sun* as a guest.

While raising funds for children in foster care and for homeless youth, guests were inspired by a keynote speaker who is also a former foster child, film and literary writer **Antwone Fisher**. Antwone has worked in Hollywood for 20 years as a writer and producer, with an impressive fourteen writing projects or assignments with the major studios. **Amber Belzer** of Global BC was Master of Ceremonies for the evening. Talented local **Desirée Dawson**, winner of the CBC Searchlight Competition, gave a moving vocal performance.

Messages of congratulations came from dignitaries and VIPs from around the world, including **Princess Salimah Aga Khan**. A letter from **Prime Minister Justin Trudeau** was read aloud at the event. The winner of the first SOS International Foster Award, Metro Vancouver's **Tom Watson**, was in attendance to present the award.

Derek Clark is a well-deserved award recipient. **His life is one of resilience and redemption.** As a child he suffered unthinkable child abuse, abandonment, and emotional distress before being turned over to the psychiatric hospital at age five. His 13 years in the San Francisco bay area foster care system reflected an early life of humiliation, aggression, emotional distress, overwhelming anxiety, and being wrongfully labeled.

**Eventually, with the help of loving foster parents and a fantastic social worker, he defied the artificial limitations imposed upon him.** Derek knows first-hand how to cope with adversity and overcoming hardship. His past has never held him back from accomplishing what he set his heart and mind to.

Derek is a motivational speaker, author, and has recently become a viral video sensation for his **"Rapping Dad" videos which have had over 200 million views.** He has also been featured on CNN Headline News, The Steve Harvey TV Show, and many other TV shows around the world. He is the author of seven books including "Disable the Label", "Never Limit Your Life", and the "I Will Never Give Up" book series. More can be learned about Derek Clark's inspiring story at [www.IWillNeverGiveUp.com](http://www.IWillNeverGiveUp.com).



The purpose of the SOS International Foster Awards Gala is to recognize leadership and success in foster care, to celebrate inspiring former foster children who have triumphed over adversity, and to raise money to help current foster children and youth in dire need.

“We were thrilled to have Derek fly in to Vancouver to receive this important award,” said Douglas Dunn, executive director of SOS Children’s Village B.C. “Congratulations to Derek and thank you to all of our corporate and community sponsors who made this gala possible. **Unfortunately the vast majority of foster children do not thrive in the way Derek has**, and we feel it is vital to recognize his triumph while raising funds to help more kids in care transition to adulthood successfully.”

Only 6% of SOS Children’s Village B.C.’s funding comes from the government, with the vast majority coming from individual and corporate donors. SOS B.C. uniquely focuses on lifelong engagement with foster children and embracing their cultural heritage, and is fighting to fix the foster care system in this province.

#### **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).

Nominations for next year’s award can be sent to [office@sosbc.org](mailto:office@sosbc.org).

#### **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 135 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.



**SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGE**  
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**PRESS RELEASE**



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***Please visit our Media Room: <https://www.sosbc.org/the-village/media-room/>***

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