



**SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE BC**

# NEWSLETTER

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## TRANSITION TO ADULthood PROGRAM: HELPING YOUTH WHEN THEY NEED IT MOST

By Sheena Ram  
Youth Worker and Neurofeedback Technician

I have a short story to share about one of the young men I support who has really had the opportunity to spread his wings and fly this past year.

It's been amazing to watch Matthew work his way towards his goals.

Matthew grew up in the SOS BC Village, moved into the Youth Housing Year Intensive Program, and then took all his courage, skills and hard work forward to move out into the community independently!

I am so very proud of him. Matthew recently came back for a visit and looked so happy and proud, sharing how he is maintaining a job and earning an excellent wage.

Matthew has found happiness and he is truly carrying it with him.





## YOU ARE OUR VILLAGE OF CARING

By Rose Hamilton  
Director of Community Partnerships & Donor Stewardship

**Legacies of love:** SOS International was established to create generational change. Each SOS child brings their healing forward into their community, their relationships, and the next generation. Our donors understand this, and in some cases have lived it.

My conversations with all of you have made it very clear how deeply you believe in our model of care. What I find wonderful is how this commitment is as generational as our organization's work.

**Kids helping kids:** If you want to understand how true philanthropy works, watch how children do it. They are completely in it for the "helpee". The joy they get from knowing they made a difference is bright and pure.

I've already written about some of our high school fundraisers. Younger kids are also a powerful force for SOS Children's Village BC.

We are delighted by Vancouver's new SOS Children's Club, and astonished at all the ways they think to fundraise. The beautiful video on our home page was created by an 11 year old. At McMath Secondary in Richmond, the 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> grade Business Club held a "wildcat" market. And speaking of triple bottom lines, students at UBC's Sauder School of Business have organized a treasure hunt for SOS BC as their spring project.

**Passing the torch through generations:** As the kickoff event for our 'I ♥ SOS BC' month in February, the Vancouver Alpen Club, Concordia and Melody Choirs, and AVC Dancers held a very successful Benefit Concert. The performers and the generosity included (at least) 4 generations, from babies and toddlers to great grandparents.

All afternoon I heard stories about how this grandparent donated to the first SOS Children's

Village and that grandchild's 1<sup>st</sup> grade class was helping a fundraiser for their SOS Children's Club.

All month, donations have been coming in commemorating births and memorials. It is beautiful to see how families continue traditions of culture and caring, including children they might never meet as part of their family.

**Building the future:** There is only one part of my job at SOS BC that is really hard – when I get the news that a beloved donor has passed away. Some of them have become cherished friends, some have helped SOS BC since the beginning. Some have themselves lived through the kind of healing and transformation that is the SOS story.

When one of these elders takes that extra step to leave a bequest or estate, or bless us with a life gift, we are deeply humbled. They are ensuring a better life for generations of children to come.

As one dear lady said when she gave us a life gift, *"I haven't got much. I haven't got much time left. But I can help you make a difference to one child, and they will make a difference for many others."*

To honour and support those who would like to 'watch over' our Village's future generations, we are joining the Free Will month in May. Through this wonderful network, our donors over 55 can access free Will-writing and updating services, via referrals to lawyers in their local area. We will be posting the details on our website, or you can ring our office.

It takes a Village to raise a child – and many hands to build that Village with a strong foundation. Thank you, for all of your support, enthusiasm, spreading the word, and motivating us every day!

**I ♥ SOS BC**





## NEW INTERNATIONAL FOSTER AWARDS GALA A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

Our inaugural SOS Children's Village BC - International Foster Awards Gala took place in late November. After endless days of rain, the skies cleared and we had a beautiful evening in downtown Vancouver at the Law Courts Inn.

Our star-studded guest list included Amber Belzer, from Global News Morning, who was the wonderful Master of Ceremonies for the evening, and the captivating keynote speaker CFL Legend Michael 'Pinball' Clemons!

Local singers Madison Bell and Richard Tichelman did a masterful musical performance. Malcolm Parry of the Vancouver Sun also dropped by. In case you didn't know, he's the most influential events columnist in Vancouver, and this is the first event of ours he has attended.

Businessman Tom Watson, who lives in Surrey, won the first ever SOS International Foster Award and brought guests to tears with his heartfelt acceptance speech. Tom 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.

At the gala, there were also video messages from 15 SOS Children's Villages from around the world, and a video vision of an old school being transformed into an SOS Village. We had a silent auction and live auction featuring the amazing Marco Iannuzzi of the BC Lions.

Thanks to everyone who made this event possible! We raised a total of \$70,000, which is the second highest in our annual gala's 23 year history.

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## SPECIAL THANK YOUS

- ♦ **Able Auctions** for a kind donation of \$1,000
- ♦ An **Anonymous** Foundation for a grant of \$8,750
- ♦ **Arlin Foundation** for a generous gift of \$3,000 in memory of their founder Art Bucholtz
- ♦ **Army, Navy, and Air Force Veterans - Steveston #284** for their kind donation of \$1,500
- ♦ **B & D Autobody** for a kind gift of \$1,000
- ♦ **CIBC Children's Foundation** for lovely grants totaling \$2,145 from CIBC Miracle Day
- ♦ **Concordia Choir** for a kind gift of \$2,480
- ♦ **Connor, Clark & Lunn Foundation** for a kind donation of \$5,000
- ♦ **Consular Christmas Market** for \$4,330, a donation of all their entrance fees
- ♦ **Hedden Chong Chartered Professional Accountants** for a kind gift of \$1,000
- ♦ **North Surrey Lions Club** for a kind grant of \$1,000 towards our music program and a general donation of \$1,000
- ♦ **PRS Family Fund** for a lovely \$5,000 grant
- ♦ **Recreation Excellence** for kind gifts totaling \$4,500
- ♦ **Sook Ching Foundation** for a \$2,360 grant
- ♦ **Tag Pubs** for a kind donation of \$1,500
- ♦ **Tenmore Property Services** for a \$1,000 donation
- ♦ **Werner & Helga Hoing Foundation** for a lovely gift of \$3,000
  
- ♦ Gayle Dueckman generously donated \$1,000
- ♦ Margaret Hewlett generously donated \$1,250 in memory of Chris Morris
- ♦ Otto Holzapfel generously donated \$2,000
- ♦ Sydney Kreitzman generously donated \$1,000
- ♦ Kelly Scarrow generously donated \$1,500
- ♦ Randy Sigouin generously donated \$3,000 to our Transition to Adulthood Program
- ♦ Rudolf Tize generously donated \$1,000
- ♦ Clayton White generously donated \$1,000
- ♦ Paul Verhoeff generously donated \$1,500
  
- ♦ SOS Cameroon, Cape Verde, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Somalia, Sri Lanka, and UK for sending us awesome video greetings to show at our gala

## HELLO FROM THE SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE THRIFT STORE FOUNDATION

By Barb High  
Manager of Retail Fundraising and Volunteer Resources

At this time of year, I always have some reminders to share with our supporters. Spring is getting closer, and with that comes spring cleaning and going through your closets. Also, don't forget those soft cover novels in your bookcase gathering dust. Both stores will always welcome the result of your spring cleaning: gently used clothing and household items.

I also want to introduce you to some great new staff members. Steveston is happy to have Bea Gordy as a new manager – she sure is on fire, the store has never been so organized and clean! Kerrisdale is about to welcome Ann Clouston as part time manager. Ann has lots of thrift store management experience and Vera, Gad, and I are looking forward to working with her. Managing a thrift store is hard work and can be discouraging at times, but what makes it worthwhile is knowing that we are helping children and youth have a better life and loving home.

2017 was the best year ever for both stores, however, we are struggling with getting volunteers. The need is particularly acute in Kerrisdale so please spread the word as 4 hours a week is all we ask and the benefits are endless - and it's fun, I promise!

Thank you to all our hard hard working volunteers, you are so appreciated!





## BOY MEETS DOG ... AND THINGS GET COMPLICATED!

By Rose Hamilton and Farah Collier



One of our youth has a real gift with animals of all kinds. Joshua is wonderful at caring for them, and pets respond in kind. So when Joshua spotted a dog in need of a home, he was on the case in a flash. No ordinary puppy, this was a full grown Rottweiler! And as responsible as we knew Joshua was, we had some real concerns. Large, strong, and with an unknown history, the dog's safety around kids was not clear. There was another concern as well: Joshua had recently experienced a major emotional trauma, and was in a fragile state. If ever a kid needed stability and support in his life, this was it.

So our team went to work on finding a solution in the emotionally supportive and trauma-informed way that is our model. For us, no 'extra miles' were involved. This is who we are, at home and at the Village. As a team with Joshua, we worked through researching the dog's history, ensuring child safety, and supporting Joshua in managing his emotions while creating a solution that involved and honoured everyone. Our staff treated this unexpected 4 footed member of our community with the same respect, caring, and advocacy as any child or youth. Joshua saw and experienced that what is important to him is also important to SOS: he matters.

As we progressed through hours of counselling, research, and calls, it became apparent that as much

as we all loved him, this sweet Rottweiler needed a different home than our Village. With Joshua's help, we found RainCoast Dog Rescue Society, who specialize in finding foster and forever homes for difficult-to-place dogs. RainCoast found a great foster home for the dog, and he has been adopted by the same family. They really helped Joshua negotiate this emotional situation, with enormous kindness and understanding.

Meanwhile, Joshua discovered more about the people who had been advertising the dog. We helped him to notify the BC SPCA, who are now investigating the case as animal cruelty. Joshua advocated for having a therapy dog at the Village, because he saw that – like himself – kids need somebody to love, be responsible for, help them heal. Again, everyone put their heads together and located a therapy dog who will make regular visits to the Village.

This story demonstrates some of the things that set SOS Children's Village BC apart from other foster care situations. Sadly, agency social workers are not given the support, time, resources, or training to deal creatively with these situations. Because children move frequently, there is no structure or protocol to respond to such needs.

At the SOS BC Village, our environment offered Joshua continuing support for learning, negotiating, and creating solutions that will benefit his whole community. Of course Joshua is grieving. He sure did love that dog. However, he has the whole Village to help him through. Between the therapy dog initiative and his new pet ferret, he has a new purpose for his love of animals. In addition, Joshua is a hero: BC SPCA, RainCoast Rescue, the dog's new family, our Village, and most importantly ... one happy Rottweiler! Through this process, Joshua has grown his capacity for research, social justice and animal welfare advocacy, emotional maturity, and collaborating with others to achieve a greater good.

Sometimes losing is winning.





## CONSULAR CHRISTMAS MARKET RAISES A FESTIVE \$10K FOR FOSTER KIDS

Dear Dienske, Gerben, Sara, Elena, Dudoc Vancouver, World of Walas, all the vendors, chefs, and other helping hands who created The First Annual Consular Christmas Market:

You achieved an amazing result of \$6,526 raised for SOS Children's Village BC - with a further top up from Walas Concepts to make it \$10,000 after the photo below was taken. THANK YOU!

Big dreams do come true, especially when the hands of angels get together and weave with love, light, humour, and passion. You all have started a beautiful tradition of cooperation and collaboration among nations on behalf of the young lives in our programs.

Every child saved is hundreds of other lives helped as well. Every one of us feels blessed by your incredible dedication and commitment.



## IT'S A BEAUTIFUL THING

Grand Arc studio at 1150 West Hastings Street believe beauty is more than skin deep. True beauty comes from the heart. With the blessing of their enthusiastic clients, they donated an eyebrow-raising \$1,000 to SOS Children's Village BC from their December 2017 sales.

Not only that, but now the partners are donating a continuous contribution of 5% of their earnings each month to SOS BC!

*Grand Arc*  
Jen Tung Nancy J Liang Locinda Wong



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VILLAGE**  
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## CHOIRS SING THEIR HEARTS OUT AND DANCERS ENTERTAIN, BRINGING IN A MELODIOUS \$11K

Our February 'I ♥ SOS BC' month got off to a great start.

With a full house and heartfelt generosity, the Benefit Concert at the Vancouver Alpen Club was a roaring success. Our strong and steadfast friends and families in the German-speaking community made this one of their largest fundraising events in years!

The AVC Edelweiss Dancers included lively folk dances, hilarious mischief by their younger members, some audience-participation cowbell ringing, and gorgeous Alpen horn music.

The Concordia and Melody Choirs and Zither soloist Leo Kresitschnig all performed beautifully. The Alpen Club graciously hosted the event and many volunteers provided valentine decorations, cookies, raffle items, and (wo)man power.

The afternoon was perfectly in the spirit of SOS Children's Village BC: a loving community of caring people coming together to help children, and having a lot of fun doing it.

All in all, the event raised an impressive \$11,389.80 from the very generous audience.

The largest donation of the day was from Werner Hoing, who supported SOS BC with a cheque for \$3,000.

We also understand that many audience members brought in donations from friends and family who were unable to attend the event.

Every donation comes from a loving heart – it really does take a village! We are so grateful for everyone who organized, attended, and donated.







## ANNOUNCING OUR ACCREDITATION

SOS Children's Village BC is thrilled to announce that we have been awarded national accreditation through the New York-based Council on Accreditation (COA).

This achievement provides you with the confidence that our services are among the best in the nation. We provide the following services to children in foster care, youth aging out of care, and at-risk youth:

- ♦ The SOS Village in Surrey
- ♦ Transition to Adulthood Program
- ♦ Youth Housing Year Intensive Program
- ♦ Counselling, Expressive Art/Play Therapy
- ♦ Neurofeedback Training
- ♦ Learning Club Program
- ♦ Camp, Recreation, Cultural Exploration Program
- ♦ Sounds of Learning Music Program
- ♦ Caregiver Support Program

We also have a fee-for-service program called Parent Driven Autism Services, available to anyone.

**Entire Organizational Effort:** It took us 9 months of hard work to achieve accreditation. Organizations pursue accreditation to demonstrate the implementation of best practice standards in the field of human services. COA evaluated all aspects of our programs, services, management, and administration.

COA accreditation is an objective, independent, and reliable validation of an agency's performance. The COA accreditation process involves a detailed review and analysis of an organization's administration, management, and service delivery functions against international standards of best practice. The standards driving accreditation ensure that services are well-coordinated, culturally competent, evidence-based, outcomes-oriented, and provided by a skilled and supported workforce.

"We are so proud to have join the ranks of COA accredited agencies and look forward to embracing an organizational culture of continuing quality improvement in all aspects of our operations," said

Douglas Dunn, executive director of SOS BC.

**Nerve-Wracking On Site Visit:** To achieve COA accreditation, SOS BC first provided written evidence of compliance with the COA standards. Thereafter, a group of specially trained Peer Reviewers confirmed adherence to these standards during a series of on site interviews with board members, staff, volunteers, and clients over two days. Our staff were understandably on edge. Everything had led to this two day on site evaluation.

Shortly after the visit, and based on their findings, COA's volunteer-based Accreditation Commission voted that SOS Children's Village BC had successfully met the criteria for accreditation. Our staff (pictured below) were very relieved that everything went smoothly and their extra work for accreditation - on top of their normal work - paid off.

The biggest achievement was that SOS BC had no out-of-compliance ratings and was expedited through the final process, meaning there was no pre-commission review report required. Less than 10% of organizations going through the process achieve this feat. The reviewers told us afterwards our rankings were one of the best they had ever seen.

An endorsement of COA is reflected in it being named by the U.S. State Department as the sole national independent accrediting body under the Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption to accredit intercountry adoption service providers.







## **VOLUNTEERS BUILD A NEW PATIO FOR OUR VILLAGE**

A spectacular team from Envision Financial spent tireless hours painting the SOS BC Village homework room and therapy office, as well as junk removal and digging, setting, and layout of the new Village Centre patio area. THANK YOU to the morning and afternoon crew of Envision employees for volunteering at a fantastic Make A Difference Day!

We also want to thank the Home Depot store at 2525 160<sup>th</sup> Street for donating \$310 worth of supplies/gift cards for the project, and Lands Integrity Inc. for donating \$223 worth of crusher dust.

Additionally, our gratitude goes out to BURNCO Landscape Centre at 19779 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue for a donation of bricks so the amazing patio project could be completed.

With donations such as these and volunteers who truly make a difference, our children and families really feel their home is part of a loving community.



## **HSBC'S HUGE GRANTS GENERATE GLEE**

THANK YOU to HSBC and their Youth Opportunities Programme for a generous \$66,700 grant this year to our Learning Club Program, Neurofeedback Therapy Program, and Transition to Adulthood Program!

HSBC has been a consistent supporter of SOS Children's Village BC for the past 10 years - their grants have been invaluable to the continued operation of our high-demand programs for foster children and at-risk youth. Every child in our Village gets one-on-one tutoring at least once a week.

The schools participating in our Learning Club Program have all given us great feedback and are so pleased that inner-city kids who are academically and/or socially challenged are receiving special support from SOS BC. Our program targets the most vulnerable schools and kids, with a focus on Indigenous students (only 12% of Indigenous kids in care graduate).

Our programs champion true sustainability: we don't just provide a 3 year program that ends after the standard 3 years of funding is up.

