



SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE BC

NEWSLETTER

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FLYING THROUGH SUMMER HOLIDAYS WITH SOS SOCIAL CIRCUS

By Kistie Singh
Village Director

SOS Children's Village BC in partnership with SOS Children's Villages Canada and Cirque du Soleil brought back another year of Social Circus with partners Vancouver Circus School.

This year the team focused on building skills and capacities through trampoline, group play and development, and aerials, which were a major hit this year!

We were able to support a group of 20 children in the program, running two days a week.

For our finale this year, our caregivers, stakeholders, and staff joined the group at the Vancouver Circus School in New Westminster to showcase the teamwork they built throughout the month.

We are looking forward to our continued partnership next year.





TTA PROGRAM HAS TEETH

By Rose Hamilton
Director of Community Partnerships & Donor Stewardship

And so – finally – does one of our Transition to Adulthood (TTA) kids!

A major challenge for children and youth in government foster care is the lack of continuity in pretty much everything that goes with childhood and growing up. School, education supports and plans, medical and dental care, sports, you name it.

When you have a new set of foster parents, addresses, schools, teachers, doctors, and social workers every 3 to 6 months – none of whom really know what happened with the previous set – something is bound to be missed. That especially goes for anything that requires an extra expenditure, such as major dental treatment.

It's hard enough to smile if you are a foster kid. Harder still if your teeth are chipped, broken, missing, discolored from pre-natal drug exposure and malnutrition.

Enter SOS Children's Village BC! Mikhaila is an amazing youth worker in the Transition to Adulthood program helping many young adults navigate education and other pathways to success.

Mikhaila has been mentoring a young woman, Charlotte, who was promised major dental care throughout her years in Ministry foster care. The Ministry never came through with the funding and then denied her request outright once she had "aged out".

Charlotte was left with health compromising dental problems and no way to cover the costs. She was also shy and tormented by and for her looks, contributing factors to not finishing her high school diploma.

Mikhaila recognized that there were multiple levels of

trauma involved, including the original abuse that landed Charlotte in foster care and damaged her teeth. There was also a written commitment from the Ministry.

Working together from a trauma-informed perspective, Mikhaila supported Charlotte in her fight to overturn the denial of funding. Along with some practice in negotiating, Charlotte organized her documents, overcame her fears, and made her case to a Ministry committee.

She also presented them with her final arts project for her graduation: a sculpture of the Ministry office with children picketing outside, holding signs with slogans such as "I am NOT a number!"

Charlotte is now receiving the decade-long promised funding ... and smiling all the way to the oral surgeon!





METRO VANCOUVER'S MOST MEANINGFUL GALA AWAITS

November 15th is the date to save in your calendar ... it's the 2018 SOS Children's Village BC - International Foster Awards Gala! Tickets at: www.sosbc.org/gala

Last year we debuted our re-imagined gala to rave reviews, and this year it features a fabulous new venue – Vancouver Marriott Pinnacle Downtown – to fit even more guests like you. The gala recognizes leadership and success in foster care, celebrating inspiring former foster children who have triumphed over adversity, and raising money to help current foster kids in dire need. Funds raised are also used to fight for a better model of care in BC.

We are thrilled that Hollywood film writer/producer Antwone Fisher is the keynote speaker for the event. Born in an Ohio prison to a teenage mother, Antwone became a ward of the state and was placed in foster care. He spent two years in a loving foster home, but was subsequently moved and suffered 12 years of abuse at the hands of his new foster family.

As of 2018, Antwone has worked in Hollywood for 20 years as a writer and producer, with an impressive 14 writing projects with the major studios. Among those projects is the feature classic, *Antwone Fisher*, directed by and starring Oscar-winning actor Denzel Washington, written by Antwone and based on his own life. The film garnered numerous nominations



and awards. Antwone received the renowned Humanitas Prize, the Screenwriter of the Year Award from the National Association of Theater Owners, and was listed in Variety's "Fifty People to Watch."

Local singer Desirée Dawson will serenade guests. Desirée's single "Hide" helped her win the title of CBC Searchlight winner and is her first single, garnering 1 million streams on Spotify. Her second released single, and title track to her album, "Wild Heart", spent many weeks on the CBC Top 20 and was remixed by over 2,000 producers from all corners of the globe.

If you would like to learn more about the winner of this year's award, simply Google "Rapping Dad".

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SPECIAL THANK YOUS

- ♦ **ALS Environmental** team for their kind donation of \$1,200
- ♦ **CIBC Children's Foundation (CIBC Wood Gundy)** for lovely grants totaling \$2,500 from CIBC Miracle Day
- ♦ **Cloverdale Chamber of Commerce** for a kind gift of \$2,000 from the Clovies Awards Night
- ♦ **Ecclesiastical Insurance** for a kind sponsorship of \$2,500 for our fundraiser hosted by Princess Salimah Aga Khan
- ♦ **Envision Financial Community Endowment** for a \$9,900 grant of infrastructure support
- ♦ **Knights of Columbus - Council No. 4767 North Surrey** for a kind gift of \$2,700 toward our Transition to Adulthood program
- ♦ **Kwela Leadership and Talent Management** for a kind donation of \$4,600
- ♦ **Malabar Investments** for a kind sponsorship of \$8,800 for our fundraiser hosted by Princess Salimah Aga Khan
- ♦ **PPI Global** for a lovely \$5,000 gift
- ♦ **Rebekah Assembly of BC (IOOF)** for a donation of \$1,500
- ♦ **Royal Canadian Legion #229 - Whalley** for a kind gift of \$1,000
- ♦ **Sasamat Foundation** for a generous \$25,000 grant
- ♦ **Softlanding Solutions** for a gift of \$2,000 towards our Backpack SOS campaign
- ♦ **Surrey Fire Fighters Charitable Society** for a kind donation of \$5,000 toward our Backpack SOS campaign
- ♦ **Vancouver Westside German School** for a lovely gift of \$1,000 that the students raised
- ♦ Karim Chandani generously donated \$7,500
- ♦ Otto Holzapfel generously donated \$500
- ♦ Thelma Lloyd generously donated \$500
- ♦ Azadali and Yaszmin Shamji generously donated \$500
- ♦ Orion Yuen generously donated \$400 in tribute to Jamie Yuen

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT THE VILLAGE: YOUTH LIFE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

By Kistie Singh
Village Director

Summer is always a nice time to relax and enjoy.

While some of our younger kids were excited about the summer camps, many of our youth were thrilled to be transitioning into independence in the Youth Housing Year Intensive and Transition to Adulthood programs.

From our yearly housing program a total of three youth are in the midst of transitioning and completing the program.

This means the youth will be able to leave with all the furnishings that came with the suites and \$1,200 in savings, a benefit coming from each month they successfully paid rent. Together we are ensuring our youth get a good start to figuring it out on their own!

The TTA program also saw a big shift as youth earned their GED's and progressed into busy professional lives working in communities close to home. Our programs have always been a safe place for youth to figure out their next steps in life.





CAMP, RECREATION, AND CULTURAL EXPLORATION THROUGH FEATHER

By Carmen Chandler
Village Educator

This summer our Village children embarked on a 23-day expedition of the Lower Mainland.

The first stop was Galiano Island where the majority of our time was spent cycling, visiting organic farms, and learning about marine biology.

The next stop was Whistler, the traditional territory of Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw. In Whistler we were lucky enough to be guided through the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre by an Elder.

The third location of our adventure was Squamish where we spent 3 days swimming in 4 different lakes! We then went across Howe Sound to Gambier Island. There we built forts, went on nature walks, foraged for berries, swam in the ocean, and got to relax away from the city.

The final stop on our epic journey was North Vancouver where we spent the week cooking (and eating!) with a professional chef. This journey, which we are calling Feather, was the first of its kind here at SOS BC. We have the intention to continue it every summer...stay tuned to hear about our next adventure!

When asked: "What does Feather mean to you?" one of the children said: "To me it means learning new things and doing new things. It makes me happy and crazy."





ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE ON FEATHER: WILDERNESS GATHERINGS AND WOODLAND GOURMETS

By Rose Hamilton
Director of Community Partnerships & Donor Stewardship

When the kitchen is four trees and a firepit ... kids thrive!

Not only did the Feather21 Wilderness Camp teach skills such as hiking and canoeing (and of course campfire safety), it brought out many hidden talents in our kids.

Indigenous foods expert Allie from Trent University, Barbara from Sprouting Chef, and the Forest Gourmet program worked with the kids in learning how to plan and prepare three healthy, mostly wild sourced meals per day for 3 weeks! Included in the communal meal experience was 30 seconds of quiet during which kids might propose a thought, express gratitude, or think ahead to tomorrow's adventures.

Before the camp, one of our "tweens" was struggling with disorganization, poor emotional communication, and very poor eating habits. Olivia's first contact with Barbara was difficult as a result.

However, Olivia made a goal of becoming more organized, accountable, and learning new things – including food flavours. Over the summer, Olivia began to thrive in the kitchen and it became her favorite place to be. Trust and responsibility blossomed under Barbara's mentorship.

Olivia ate better by choice and encouraged others to follow suit. Among the many signs of Olivia's growing emotional safety have been that Olivia has made big strides in managing and expressing her emotions clearly, and showing empathy for others. Olivia continues to lead the Village kids in healthy habits of all kinds. She has developed a quiet confidence that is a complete turn-around from the angry, reclusive child she used to be.

Our Village caregivers have noticed a big difference in their kids.

Part of the camp experience was regular "debriefing" – sharing vulnerable moments with their peers in a circle of respect and understanding, with adults who understood their needs. Kids experienced safety in those moments. At the same time they were pushing other boundaries such as physical fitness and personal development, learning the thrill of "pushing through" and achieving more than they thought they could.

Doing this as a group together has bonded them in ways most foster kids can never experience – they are a community, belong with each other, have each other's backs. Especially for the high school kids, this bonding has been crucial for overcoming attachment disorder, while learning to compromise and negotiate in their new, more positive, intentional friendships.



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VILLAGE**
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A STIMULATING PRESENTATION BY DOUG WEST AT A CONFERENCE IN QUEBEC

This past May 2018, Doug West, our Director of Parent Driven Autism Services (PDAS), presented at the NeuroOptimal Conference in Montreal, Quebec.

Doug reviewed the results of 20 autism spectrum clients who had received neurofeedback training with PDAS.

On average these clients saw a greater than 35% reduction in their symptoms of anxiety and frustration, which were closely tied to self-regulation.

Doug's presentation was extremely well received and created momentum for a larger study, one that we hope to complete over the next year with 100 autism spectrum individuals.

The end goal is to create a published piece of research concerning the benefits of neurofeedback for individuals with autism. We will be looking for participants for this upcoming research in the next few months.



ORANGE SHIRT DAY: EVERY CHILD MATTERS

By Carmen Chandler
Village Educator

This year at the Village and at the office we took part in Orange Shirt Day on September 28th along with the local schools and other community organizations.

This is one of our many efforts towards our three year commitment to reconciliation. Orange Shirt Day started over 5 years ago to commemorate the legacy of the St. Joseph Mission residential school in Williams Lake, BC.

The idea was sparked by Phyllis Webstad's story of having her brand new orange shirt taken away on her first day at residential school and it never being returned.

Orange Shirt Day is now observed in provinces around Canada. Orange Shirt Day provides teachers with the time to plan events that will include children, as we want to ensure that we are passing on the story and learning to the next generations.

Orange Shirt Day is also an opportunity for First Nations, local governments, schools, and communities to come together in the spirit of reconciliation and hope for generations of children to come. www.orangeshirtday.org





AN A+ TO OUR COMMUNITY FOR BACKPACK SOS CAMPAIGN

Did you know that Surrey has 126 schools across the district with more than 1,000 children aged 6-18 who are in need of school supplies every September?

The goal of our Backpack SOS campaign (back to school supply drive) was to fill 100 backpacks to benefit foster kids and other underprivileged students within the community. We are pleased to let you know that our goal was met with the help of some wonderful and caring people!

Thank you to our sponsors Surrey Fire Fighters Charitable Society, Softlanding Solutions, Surrey Central Lions Club, Fas Gas Plus on King George Blvd, and Grandview Corners branch of Coast Capital. Also to Heritage Steel, Midvalley Rebar, and the Surrey School District. Plus all the individuals who donated to the campaign!



BRAND NEW WEBSITE FOR SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE BC

We are proud to present you with our new website that is mobile-friendly and much more clean and modern in style with easier navigation.

Our previous website was created in 2010, so it's been 8 years since we've had a refresh.

We are extremely grateful to Longevity Graphics in Coquitlam, who chose our charity for 2018 to make a new website free of charge as part of their strong community involvement.

This has allowed SOS BC to redirect money that would have been spent on a new website to our programs for foster children and youth in need.

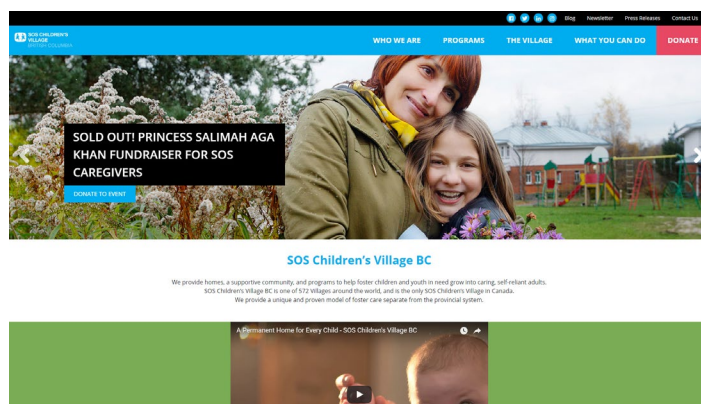
Heartfelt thank you to owner Lindsay and project manager Srdjana.

We hope you enjoy our beautiful new website and share it with your friends and family.

www.sosbc.org



Longevity Graphics
web design + online marketing





IN MEMORY OF EARLY FRIENDS WHO PASSED ON RECENTLY

By Lois Bouchard
Co-Founder of SOS Children's Village BC

Barrie McNamee, 90, was treasurer of the SOS BC board of directors for several years. He and his wife, Lee (deceased) were personal friends of ours who contributed so much to the founding years, he with his accounting background and Lee with her background in finance, also. Theirs was the task of taking charge of all fundraising event monies, relieving me of the tedious undertaking of counting and balancing, and banking the proceeds.

At the time, we were doing 7 events a year – some small, others large, all essential to survival. Barrie supervised the annual budget and financial reporting. His background was with the federal government and Lee's was with Woodward's department store, where she handled money counting in their head office; she loved the task and carried a rubber finger in her purse at all times!

Ray Martyniuk, in his late 50's, was a Steveston 'personality': a Steveston-raised businessman, owner of the original Steveston Cannery Café, a Fraser River piloting boat service, and the bicycle shop now operated by his sons. Ray hosted Devine Elden's two annual SOS BC fundraising Jet Lag Travel Boutique fashion shows at Cannery Row for many years.

When we searched for a location for our first thrift shop, we found the building owned by Ray (now the bicycle shop). He offered it to us at a very reasonable rent on a handshake: "Give it a try; if it doesn't work out, no worry." No lease, no contract, just month-to-month.

Both of these dear men were true gentlemen, great hearts, with a wonderful sense of humour, modesty and simplicity. They brought grace to everything they did, and smoothed the path of early SOS Children's Village BC in countless ways.

THANK YOU TO OUR ESTATE DONORS FOR THEIR LEGACIES OF LOVE

Over the last few years many caring supporters of SOS Children's Village BC have passed on, and with great generosity have remembered SOS in their estate planning. One of those is Lois Boyce.

Lois was a WWII Royal Canadian Air Force veteran Women's Division. For 60 years, Lois was a volunteer and activist representing the United Church of Canada traveling the world addressing environmental, social, and senior issues. She co-founded Canada's first environmental group, The Richmond Anti-Pollution Association and helped start the cable TV show Pressure Point, one of the longest running community shows in Canadian TV history.

She received numerous awards, one being The Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal presented by the Governor General. A proud member of Clan Sinclair, she loved Scottish country dancing, gardening, travel and was a determined Scrabble player.



Please Note:

*The names of youth mentioned in this newsletter have been changed to protect their identity and confidentiality.

*Some of the photos used are meant to illustrate our work and are not images of the children or youth in our Village or programs.