



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES
ILLINOIS



click to download our
**influencer
digital tool kit**

This April and May, we are creating a brighter vision for foster care.

At SOS Children's Villages Illinois, we are committed to the work of preventing child abuse and family separation, supporting siblings in foster care, and forging paths towards loving, forever families. Centered on the Village model of care, we are dedicated to providing programs, services, and advocacy year-round for the unique needs of the communities we serve. During April and May specifically, we honor Child Abuse Prevention Month and Foster Care Awareness Month by amplifying our voices with the help of our friends and supporters. As Influencers, you provide the important work within your own networks, peer groups, and workplaces to not only educate others on what we do at SOS Illinois, but to further the conversation on the ever-transforming landscape of foster care. In this kit, you'll find important dates, statistics, and strategies that will be helpful as you join us in the #Voices4FosterCare Campaign in the months ahead. It is only with your words that we are able to tell our story, and it is only with your love that we are able to transform lives.

Thank you for your dedication to furthering our mission and helping us build the future of foster care. **We could not do it without you.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim McCormick', with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

Tim McCormick, Chief Executive Officer



important dates & hashtags

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

April 1 - Beginning of "Hands are for High Fives" campaign

April 3 - Wear Blue Day #WearingBlueForSOSIllinois
Snap a photo for social media of you in your best blue

April 10 - National Sibling Day: #SuperSiblings
We've got them, and we know you do to, tell us why you think your siblings are super

April 28 - National Superhero Day: #RaisingSuperheroes
Join us as we celebrate the heroes of our community!

May is Foster Care Awareness Month

May 5 - National Foster Care Day: #SOSIllinois

May 11 - Birth Mother's Day: #BirthMothersDay

May 12: Mother's Day: #MothersDay



important stats & talking points

about SOS Illinois

- SOS Illinois has celebrated a 100% high school graduation rate for fifteen years in a row, compared to the national average of only 48% of teens in foster care.
- 75% (or 3 in every 4) siblings are separated in foster care. SOS Illinois' model of care keeps siblings together.
- SOS Illinois' Casa Tepeyac program helps keep at-risk families in the community strong before a child is required to enter into foster care.
- SOS Illinois cared for over 500 children and families last year, making a major impact.
- SOS Illinois trains professional, full-time Foster Parents who care for up to six children at one time in a Village home. Each Village is staffed with on-site case managers, clinical therapists, activity and educational coordinators, and more.
- SOS Illinois Foster Parents work in the home full-time; they do not have outside employment because caring for up to six children in foster care is already a full-time job!
- SOS Illinois Foster Parents serve, on average, five years in their important role. In traditional foster care, parents only serve an average of one year.



important stats & talking points

about SOS Illinois

- SOS Illinois operates three Villages where siblings are united in foster care: two in Chicago and one in Lockport, Illinois. SOS Illinois also operates a preventative services center in Chicago.
- SOS Illinois Foster Parents undergo extensive background screenings, training, and on-site experience before they are hired as Foster Parents. This is to ensure all SOS Illinois children and families are safe, secure, and well loved.
- SOS Illinois is based off of an over 70-year-old, international model of care first developed in Austria in response to the need to provide care to children who lost their parents during World War II.
- SOS Illinois has supporters all around the country, including many notable names in entertainment, music, advocacy, and more.
- SOS Illinois is in the process of constructing its third community center, the Roosevelt Square Community Center, which will serve the SOS Illinois families at Roosevelt Square Village as well as over 5,000 individuals in the community.
- At the heart of the Roosevelt Square Community Center will be a culinary kitchen, which will provide classes and training in the hospitality industry for community teens and adults.



important stats & talking points

about SOS Illinois

- SOS Illinois accepts donations all year, including gifts made online at sosillinois.org/giving.
- SOS Illinois is among only 25% of charities nation-wide to receive a 4 Star Rating from Charity Navigator, the top resource for evaluating charities and nonprofit organizations in the U.S.
- SOS Illinois celebrates a birthday every other day of the year. Choosing SOS Illinois as your Facebook Birthday Fundraiser is an easy way to honor our children's birthdays with your birthday!
- SOS Illinois is accredited by the Council of Accreditation, ensuring that we provide the best level of care to the children and families we serve.
- SOS Illinois is currently celebrating its 30th Anniversary, having cared for thousands of children in families for over three decades in Illinois.
- SOS Illinois has corporate supporters from all across industries.
- SOS Illinois works closely with biological parents in order to reunite the children in our care with their biological families whenever possible.



important stats & talking points

about U.S. foster care

- There are over 450,000 children in foster care in the United States.
- Children enter foster care when a parent or parents are unable to provide the type of care that keeps a child healthy, happy, and thriving. The most common reason a child enters foster care is neglect.
- Though children can enter foster care at any age before 18, the average age of a child in U.S. foster care is eight.
- Each child in foster care has a "permanency plan," a plan created to help a child reach a forever home through reunification with biological parents, adoption, or independence.
- Though adoption through foster care is important, reunification with biological parents or family is often the permanency goal for a child in foster care.
- About 25% of children in foster care are currently eligible for adoption. Infants are far more likely to get adopted over other age groups, while teens are least likely to get adopted. Adopting older children and teens is always a great need.



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**ways to promote
#Voices4FosterCare
in April and May**



#10

SHARE OUR STORIES ON SOCIAL AND BEYOND

During Child Abuse Prevention Month and Foster Care Awareness Month, we will be sharing important information and statistics about child safety, violence prevention, and the foster care system. Our reach can go far beyond our friends and followers with your help. Commit to sharing one, two, or more posts a week on each platform on which you are active. This is an easy way to raise brand awareness, while also spreading important resources that can make a major impact! Links to all of our social platforms can be found by clicking on the icons on the final page of this kit.



#9

LEND YOUR VOICE TO OUR #SUPERSIBLINGS

Up to 75% of siblings are separated in foster care. At SOS Illinois, we know how important brothers and sisters can be. We unite siblings in care to preserve familial bonds and help safeguard children from further trauma. Join us in spreading our message about the importance of siblings by sharing why your siblings are important to YOU! On April 10 -- National Siblings Day -- create a quick video on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or YouTube about the important bonds you have with your brothers and sisters, making sure to use the hashtag #supersiblings in your post. Don't forget to tag us so we can share it with all our followers too!



#8

CREATE VISIBILITY OF OUR MISSION

We love when supporters ask how their workplaces can join up with SOS Illinois during Child Abuse Prevention Month and Foster Care Awareness Month. One of the many ways to be involved is by offering us space to display resources and promotional materials in your lobby, storefront, or entryway which can create an awesome visual impact. You may also choose to include information about us in newsletters, email blasts, and publications during this time. We would love any exciting way to show off our partnership in support of this important time of year! Let us know your ideas for collaboration by reaching out to info@sosillinois.org.



#7

TAKE OUR CAUSES TO THE STREETS

Getting the word out about SOS Illinois, Child Abuse Prevention Month, and Foster Care Awareness Month means hitting the streets. This April and May, join us as a Volunteer Advocate to spread the word about our community across the city of Chicago and beyond. You will be supplied with awareness materials to pass out to people commuting through the city, and will share why we are asking for their voices this spring. Whether you grab a group of coworkers during your lunch break, head out on your own on a busy Saturday afternoon, or participate in an SOS Illinois Takes the Streets event, we are grateful for your willingness to network face-to-face with those in our community. To sign up as a Volunteer Advocate or Advocate Group, contact us at tcisarik@sosillinois.org.



#6

HOST A DRIVE TO BENEFIT OUR COMMUNITIES

Child abuse and the foster care cycle can often be traced back to a lack of accessible resources. As we work to break the cycle of foster care, having necessary resources available can help strengthen families at-risk of separation or preparing for reunification. This April and May, consider hosting a drive at your workplace, local library, fitness center, or other communal location where friends and supporters can contribute. Necessary items include bed linens, professional clothing, children's books, and much more. Need ideas on wish lists for drives? Contact our Director of Advancement, Amy Kaczmarek, at akaczmarek@sosillinois.org.



#5

PARTICIPATE IN WEAR BLUE DAYS

On April 3 and May 5, we will be wearing blue to show that we stand against child abuse and are working towards making Illinois a safer, healthier state for families everywhere. Join us by wearing your favorite blue outfit or accessory, and snap a photo of yourself for social media. Tag us to let us know that you are [#WearingBlueForSOSIllinois](#) and are doing your part to end child abuse.



#4

HOST US AS VISITING SPEAKERS

SOS Illinois offers a wealth of information and expertise on child welfare, fostering in Illinois, and our unique model of care. Looking to bring in guest speakers for a "lunch and learn", community involvement fair, or parent education class? Let us know how we can support your needs, while also sharing great information about our mission. We would love to collaborate on programming or speak in front of a group of your peers! Reach out to us at info@sosillinois.org to request a speaker.



#3

EMPLOY THE TEENS & ADULTS WE SERVE

Building work experience now helps to prevent furthering the cycle of foster care later. Consider reaching out to SOS Illinois regarding internship and entry-level opportunities fit for high school students or recent graduates. In addition, families served through Casa Tepeyac also benefit from learning about sustainable employment for adults of all ages, especially opportunities that request Spanish-speaking or bilingual professionals. Reach out to info@sosillinois.org to let us know you're hiring!



#2

TURN YOUR FACEBOOK BLUE FOR A WEEK

Online and social media visibility is so important as we work to spread the word about SOS Illinois, Child Abuse Prevention Month, and Foster Care Awareness Month. This April and May, commit to "turning your Facebook or Instagram Blue" for a week in honor of our mission. Download the profile and header graphics by clicking [here](#) to let your friends know that you are helping to raise awareness this spring. Don't forget to tag us in your photo so that we can count you as our advocate this April and May!



#1

SIGN UP TO BE AN INFLUENCER ALL YEAR

While April and May are major months at SOS Illinois, we need Influencer support all year. From our Graduation Celebration in June, to Mental Illness Awareness Month in October, to Holiday Giving in December, the power of your influence can extend far beyond these two months! Join us as Influencers throughout the year to help us build our brand, spread our mission, and keep our children and families safe no matter the time of the year!



CONNECT WITH US

Click each icon to be connected to our platforms and pages

