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SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES  
ILLINOIS

# building a legacy IN FOSTER CARE



Annual Report 2018



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## SOS Children's Villages Illinois is building a legacy in foster care.

At SOS Children's Villages Illinois, we build Villages that unite brothers and sisters in foster care, surround them with a community of hope, and help them grow into caring and productive adults.

For nearly 30 years, SOS Illinois has offered an innovative alternative to traditional foster care in emphasizing the following five components:

**1. Children live together with their siblings; 2. Children receive care and support from a full-time, professionally trained Foster Parent; 3. Children grow up in a private, single-family**

**home; 4. Children are supported by the Village, designed as an intentional community of care; and 5. Children and families in the community are supported through preventive services and resources.**

SOS Illinois operates as its own 501(c)3, with four sites in Illinois:



Lockport Village

Chicago Village



Roosevelt Square Village



Casa Tepeyac

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**SOS Children's Villages Illinois makes a significant contribution to the betterment of society through successes that are built year after year and is committed to building a legacy for children in foster care.**

The work our Foster Parents do along with supportive team members is a reflection of our founders and contributes to the betterment of society by helping children grow into happier, healthier, and more resilient individuals. While we can see the influence of our founders work still present in our community, we recognize our continued development is for the same purpose - to continue envisioning a new reality for our children, families, and communities.

In 2018, the collective strength of our community and corporate partnerships made it possible to gain greater exposure in the media and build a presence on platforms that encourage social networking and conversation. **We witnessed amazing accomplishments in education and celebrated a 100% high school graduation rate.** Our Foster Parents continued to show their exceptional dedication to the mission of the organization and the vocation of caregiver to sibling groups. Additionally, our focus of surrounding children with an intentional community of care was highlighted with the unveiling of the plans to build a Community Center at our Roosevelt Square Village.

In 2019, we see even more opportunity to reinforce the stake we claim in our ability to break new ground in our field and at our sites to contribute to the ongoing changes within the child welfare system. The impact of the Roosevelt Square Community Center will endure far beyond the doors of the building. The legacy of SOS Illinois comes not by the buildings we leave for people, but the love, the care, and the sense of community we instill in people. Your generosity is helping us make this lasting change.

Thank you for your commitment and vision to help us build a better world for those oftentimes forgotten. The Roosevelt Square Community Center is an enduring legacy of the values and principles we hold that every child is worth our attention. Thank you for helping us build a community center that can change the structure of the hearts, minds, and lives of those surrounding it. As we move forward, together we continue our notable and worthwhile legacy to use our time, effort, and energy to transform this world.







# PIECES OF OUR **LEGACY** top 10 snapshots of 2018

10. Raising Awareness of Youth Mental Health | 9. Celebrating the Illinois Bicentennial with Swissôtel Chicago at Harvest Day | 8. Summer Camps at Manito-wish YMCA | 7. SOS Illinois Hosts DCFS Quest for Permanency Conference | 6. SOS Illinois Youth Send Presents to New Friends in the Dominican Republic | 5. Zach Filkins of OneRepublic Shares the Good Life of Music with Youth at Lockport Village | 4. A Year of Landmark Donor Support | 3. The Roosevelt Square Community Center Announcement | 2. SOS Illinois is Re-Accredited by COA | 1. The Stars Came Out In Support of SOS Children's Villages Illinois

read about all these stories and more at [sosillinois.org/connect](https://sosillinois.org/connect)



# BUILT TO LAST

## an educational look into the

The legacy on which SOS Illinois is built resides in our ability to come together and not only transform a child's life, but to make a difference in the communities we serve and ultimately our society. As we share our 2018 accomplishments, we also share the trends in foster care, which impact our ongoing contribution to the child welfare industry. In February 2018, Congress enacted legislation that reshaped the notion of what it means to be a "child in care" with the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA).

This overview of the FFPSA will provide an insight into the effects the legislation will have on foster care and child welfare across the country. We also are happy to share the ways in which SOS Illinois is already practicing the policies and guidelines put forth in the FFPSA. Most important is understanding the needs of children in foster care and the ways in which SOS Illinois addresses them through its programs and services.

### **Impacts of the FFPSA on Foster Care**

Prior to this legislation, foster care organizations could only use Title IV-E funds to assist with costs of maintenance for eligible children in foster care as well as administrative expenses used to manage the programs, training for staff, foster parents, adoption assistance, and kinship guardianship assistance.

With the passing of FFPSA, any state, territories, or tribe with an approved Title IV-E plan has the option to use funds for preventative services such as in-home parent skill-based programs, mental health services, and substance abuse prevention and treatment services to allow children eligible for foster care to stay with their parents or relatives.

### **Additional Benefits of the FFPSA**

Another growing priority is to ensure that children in at-risk environments do not enter the foster care system. Since January 2012, SOS Children's Villages Illinois has been providing "in-home family services" to both children and families in the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) system, as well as to children and families outside of the DCFS system.



# FOREVER

## national focus on permanency

### THE NEED FOR SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES ILLINOIS

- On any given day, there are nearly 438,000 children in foster care in the United States.
- 75% of foster children will be separated from their siblings.
- Annie E. Casey Foundation reports that one in five former foster youth become homeless after age 18.
- 48% of foster youth graduate from high school by age 19.
- Fewer than 3% complete a four-year college degree by age 25.

The FFPSA looks to reduce the use of group care for children in foster care, instead focusing on the importance of family foster homes. While there are very few exceptions, the U.S. Federal Government will no longer reimburse states for children that are placed in group care settings for more than two weeks. Federal reimbursement will be allowed only if there are six children or fewer in a foster home. Additionally, a particular treatment model, known as the trauma-informed model, must be used, and each foster care home setting must employ registered or licensed

nursing staff along with other licensed clinical staff.

### SOS Illinois Incorporates the FFPSA

At SOS Illinois, our mission has always been to provide loving, nurturing homes and a family-like environment for children in foster care. As such, the requirements put into place by the FFPSA are a complementary fit with our model of care.

Not only are the children in our care placed with full-time Foster Parents surrounded by dedicated and supportive Village staff, but siblings are kept together in single-family homes that never have more than six children. Our Village environments allow children to reach their full potential and gain confidence, trust, and a renewed sense of hope.

The most important takeaway from this legislation centers on creating a shift in the system to emphasize “permanency” in the lives of the children in our care. We do this by reducing the length of time that children and teens spend in foster care. At SOS Illinois, the greatest legacy we can leave for any child is a safe, stable “forever home.”

# FROM VILLAGES TO LEGACIES

staff support commitment to permanency

**SOS Children's Villages Illinois has a model of care that sets itself apart from all other Chicago foster care agencies because we offer entire communities for our children in foster care rather than just a single home. We believe in developing strong, solid foundations for the children in our care. Our devoted and loving Foster Parents alongside our dedicated child welfare workers, clinical therapists, and Village staff all assist in creating a path for the children in our care to enjoy a place of healing, stability, and permanency.**

The Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) places significant importance on the shift from group homes to foster family homes with no more than six foster youth per home. Our full-time Foster Parents are at the heart of our care team for the children we serve. Together, they live in an SOS Illinois single-family home, which allows children to thrive.

## **SOS Illinois Staff Implement FFPSA Policies**

At SOS Children's Villages Illinois, our programs on education and mental health and wellness work hand-in-hand. SOS Illinois is proud of the youth in our care. Our supporting staff, full-time Foster

Parents, and loving community members all work together in order to support our children and encourage them in their academia. It is through this encouragement and the dedication of the youth in our care that we are able to celebrate 100% high school graduation rates. SOS Children's Villages Illinois has comprehensive programs put in place to ensure our youth have everything they need to continue to reach the milestone of graduation. Those programs include:

- *Essential STEM curricula for children ages 12 to 16*
- *College awareness and test preparation for youth ages 16-19*
- *Educational and training services to help young*

*adults ages 20 to 22 enter the workforce and pursue a career.*

## **Supporting Mental Health through the FFPSA**

While education is a substantial factor in helping to break the cycle of children in foster care, their mental health and wellness are equally important, if not moreso. SOS Illinois has a community in place that falls in line with the vision of the Family First Prevention Services Act in that we have licensed, clinical staff on-site at each of our Villages who are dedicated to helping the children in our care heal, regain hope, and recover from their traumas.





# CELEBRATING OUR LASTING LEGACIES

## the outcomes of permanency

**SOS Children's Villages Illinois is committed to finding "forever homes" for children in foster care, whether it is one child or siblings, through reunification with biological parents or family members, adoption, or helping a child move to independence.**

Permanency, or "permanency planning", promotes and advocates for a permanent living situation for every child entering the foster care system or for a child that is already in the foster care system. Permanency emphasizes three key practices:

- *A child or sibling group is placed with a biological parent, relative, or an adoptive parent*
- *The child or sibling group has a mutually beneficial relationship with the caretaker*
- *Placement takes place in the minimum amount of time possible*

### **Reaching Successful Permanence**

For those in foster care, successful permanence occurs when a child has a lasting, nurturing, legally secure relationship with at least one adult.

When children are able to return to their home, the process requires intensive, family-centered services that support a stable and safe home environment. SOS Illinois focuses on tailoring these services to each family's individual circumstances. In the cases where children are unable to return to their birth homes, adoption provides a stable and legally binding relationship. Oftentimes relatives will adopt the youth, but when that doesn't occur, SOS Illinois child welfare professionals recruit potential adoptive families.

### **The Impact of Successful Permanency**

Through our dedication to providing assistance, education, and support with our intervention services from Casa Tepeyac as well as our commitment to placing

the children in our care in permanent, healthy and stable environments, SOS Illinois is helping to shape the future of foster care, much the same as the Family First Prevention Services Act.

In 2018, one SOS Illinois Foster Parent adopted three children in her care. Of the three children, the eldest, Mara\*, said of coming to SOS Illinois, "I am finally in a stable place that feels like home, and now I feel like I can achieve my dreams to graduate high school, and go to college to become a nurse."

Achieving permanency for youth in foster care is only made possible with your support. With your help, we can continue building forever families for youth in foster care.

\*Name changed to protect the privacy of the youth



1. Ed Wehmer, Dining & Conversation Luminary | 2. All 2018 Dining & Conversation Luminaries | 3. Micah Materre, 2018 Dining & Conversation Emcee | 4. Dining & Conversation Celebrity Chef | 5. Sr. Mary Ellen Lacy (Board Member) with Gloria Steinem | 6. Guests listening to the evening's opening remarks | 7. Christian Bale, wife Sibi Blazic, and Tim McCormick, SOS Illinois CEO | 8. Tim McCormick with Micah Materre and Dining & Conversation Luminaries, Julia Stasch and Tom Skilling



# CONVERSATIONS THAT BUILD LEGACIES

## Dining & Conversation 2018

**Pictured above:** SOS Illinois Foster Parents Jenny Wray and Tony Moyet gather with Gloria Steinem and Christian Bale during a Roosevelt Square Village visit the morning of Dining & Conversation.

**On May 30, 2018, the stars came out in support of SOS Children's Villages Illinois. Serving as the culmination of Foster Care Awareness Month and as a foundational event for the Roosevelt Square Community Center Capital Campaign, Dining & Conversation offered the opportunity to gather alongside key supporters and friends during a milestone moment in SOS Illinois history.**

Our friends at Wintrust Financial helped kick off the afternoon of Dining & Conversation by generously hosting a leadership lunch for special guests and supporters of SOS Illinois, including Academy Award winning actor Christian Bale; Feminist Activist, Gloria Steinem; and President & CEO of Wintrust Financial, Ed Wehmer.

### **Celebrities Tour Roosevelt Square**

Following the luncheon, Christian Bale and Gloria Steinem joined a small group of staff to tour a Roosevelt Square Village home and visit

with two SOS Illinois Foster Parents. Bale and Steinem were able to hear first-person testimony from the Foster Parents on the rewards of our Village model of care, the daily challenges of caring for large sibling groups, and their hopes for the future of the organization.

### **Dining & Conversation**

That evening, SOS Children's Villages Illinois hosted Dining & Conversation, a unique event where 120 supporters met and conversed with Luminaries, well-known celebrities from various professional fields. Dinner

consisted of courses prepared by Celebrity Chefs from Chicago's most well-respected restaurants. Luminaries shared a course at each table so as to dine and converse with all guests in attendance. As the event progressed, each guest had the opportunity to talk with all the Luminaries. The night truly resulted in a wonderful evening of dining and conversation.

Special thanks to all our Luminaries, Celebrity Chefs, and guests! Read more at [sosillinois.org/connect](http://sosillinois.org/connect).



# BUILDING LEGACIES ALL YEAR 'ROUND

## A YEAR IN NUMBERS

*Alongside a star team of Foster Parents, staff, corporate partners, and generous donors, 2018 proved once again that legacies abound at SOS Illinois. We are proud to share the following figures that were achieved by the last quarter of 2018. These figures and all our successes are only achieved with your help. Thank you!*

**55,377 days of service provided to youth and families**

**501 children served through our programs and services**

**178 families served through programs at Casa Tepeyac**

**100% high school graduation rate**

**1,502 hours of training for staff and Foster Parents**

**5 years, on average, of service provided by Foster Parents**

# BUILDING A LEGACY RESPONSIBLY

<b>FY2018</b>	
<b>Assets</b>	
Current Assets	\$7,146,316
Property & Equipment Net	\$21,540,189
Other Assets	\$8,895,914
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$37,582,419</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	
Current Liabilities	\$1,864,000
Long-Term Liabilities	\$12,781,821
Net Assets	\$22,936,598
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$37,582,419</b>
<b>Income</b>	
Government Support	\$9,453,870
Private Support and Special Events	\$6,797,816
Total Other Income	-\$285,604*
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$15,966,082</b>
<b>Functional Expenses</b>	
Program Services	\$9,885,268
Management & General	\$1,424,027
Fundraising	\$827,880
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$12,137,147</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	
Change in Net Assets	\$4,061,810
Beginning Net Assets	\$18,847,788
<b>ENDING NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$22,936,598</b>

\* Total "Other Income" includes factoring in an unrealized loss on investment assets.

# BUILDING A LEGACY FOR **DREAMERS**

**YOUR TREMENDOUS GENEROSITY HAS HELPED  
INSPIRE THE DREAMS OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

*SOS Children's Villages Illinois strives to help the children in our care reach their full potential. Even with our successes, there still is more hard work to be done. With the support of our dedicated partners and donors, we are able to continue our commitment to helping children in foster care grow into caring, productive, and self-reliant adults.*

**340** new donors

**\$2.62M** raised  
from private  
support and  
special events

**Over 100**  
volunteers  
at special events





*With its unique structure, SOS Illinois is able to offer an incredible level of support to our local children in need. We have been a proud, long-time partner of SOS Children's Villages Illinois and we can't wait to see the lasting impact [the Roosevelt Square Community Center] will have on the communities it will serve.*

- Edward J. Wehmer, CEO, President, & Founder, Wintrust Financial



*This building is meant to transform lives...what you're going to see transform in front of your eyes is the chance for everyone that goes down Blue Island to see what goes on inside. Not to be hidden; to celebrate all the wonderful and incredible things that SOS Illinois and Maestro Cares do that will bring, not just this community, but the greater city together.*

- Juan Moreno, JGMA President and Roosevelt Square Community Center Architect





# UPDATES ON OUR NEWEST LEGACY

## The Roosevelt Square Community Center

**Pictured above:** JGMA President and Roosevelt Square Community Center Architect, Juan Moreno, offers remarks on the remarkable nature of the upcoming Roosevelt Square Community Center, which will serve over 5,000 individuals each year.

**SOS Children's Villages Illinois unveiled the final design and plans for the Roosevelt Square Community Center at a special announcement on Wednesday, October 28, 2018 at 13th Street and Blue Island Avenue in Chicago, Illinois. In attendance were corporate partners, Board Members, and staff in support of the project, which will serve the SOS Illinois Roosevelt Square Village and surrounding neighborhoods.**

As CEO Tim McCormick gathered attendees under a white tent in the middle of the current garden space, he expressed a deep appreciation for the community center benefactors being at the site to stand together in celebration of the project. "Because of your commitment, we will begin a process of transformation, and not just of this land and this space, but of this community. Here will be a gathering place for all so that everyone who brings their journey can begin to share a common narrative to help each

other to heal, grow, become more, and to share what is a common life of a Village."

### **Updates Since the Announcement**

In the months following, SOS Illinois worked diligently to prepare for the Center's Groundbreaking ceremony in June of 2019, when supporters, staff, Board Members, and SOS Illinois families were invited once again to gather on the land of the upcoming community center to listen to updates on the project and participate

in the symbolic act of breaking ground together. Read more about both milestone moments in the development of the Roosevelt Square Community Center at [sosillinois.org/connect](https://www.sosillinois.org/connect).

SOS Illinois looks forward to being a part of the ever-changing landscape of the City of Chicago. The new center at 13th and Blue Island will infuse a community with hope and healing, and most important of all continue to provide services promoting permanency to help build the future of foster care.



*When you talk about **legacy** and building this organization, as individuals, we accomplish what we accomplish because collectively they came together. They came together with shared values and a sense of purpose and meaning and a commitment and passion for that mission—the mission of SOS Illinois.*

- Don Biernacki, 2018 SOS Illinois Board President

