



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES
ILLINOIS

SOS ILLINOIS NEWSLETTER: WINTER/SPRING 2023

PATHWAYS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY

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**SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES**
ILLINOIS

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INFO@SOSILLINOIS.ORG

We'll make sure you're on the list!

2022 STAFF ANNIVERSARIES THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

15 Years

Celia Martinez
Christina Bernabe

10 Years

Dana Mavrogiannis

5 Years

Susan Linton
Laura Oresky
Valerie Jarrett
Fatina Wilson
Kelly Keene

2 Years

Edward Vega
Elexia Russell
Melvin Cox
Taecely Correa
Linda Cockroft
Chandra Cox
Christina Howlin
Rebecca Cerna

Jillian Kilburn
Diney Jordan
Mayimunda Courts
Karina Escobedo
Madison Detres
Yazmyne Mullins
Jasmine Williams
Mayra Guzman
Veronica Miles

1 Year

Mariah Hobby
Aliyah Lee
Antonia Thurman
Nashika Jordan
Christine Andrews
Lois Bugg Shadrick
Mildred Parker
Dezjah Walton
Rodolfo Rodriguez
Maritza Yopez
Melissa Sanchez

Rekenya King
Kierstan Holmes
Amari Walls
Marielee Brito
Vernicia McGill
Guz Hatziagelou
Serenity Allen
Terrell Jones
Larry Lewis
Hannah McNulty
Tiffany Hayatt
Cari Potter
Jacqueline Matheny
Yanire Sierra
Janice Carroll
Leon Smith
Crystal Jacobs
David Perez
Meredith Brewer
Shirley Williams

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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

216 W. Jackson Blvd., Ste. 925
Chicago, IL. 60606

P (312) 372-8200
F (312) 372-8202

CASA TEPEYAC

4538 S. Hermitage Ave.
Chicago, IL. 60609

P (773) 247-7725
F (773) 247-7794

CHICAGO VILLAGE

7600 S. Parnell Ave.
Chicago, IL. 60620

P (773) 783-0500
F (773) 783-0600

LOCKPORT VILLAGE

17545 Village Lane
Lockport, IL. 60441

P (815) 740-7280
F (815) 740-7282

ROOSEVELT SQUARE VILLAGE

1133 W. 13th Street
Chicago, IL. 60608

P (312) 243-1901
F (312) 366-2965

CEO MESSAGE: WELCOMING OUR NEW CEO

SOS Children's Villages Illinois is pleased to announce Mrs. Delphine F. Rankin, Ed.D. as our new Chief Executive Officer. Delphine has worked with SOS Illinois since 2014 as the inaugural Director of Programs and Services at the Roosevelt Square Village. In her eight-year tenure, Delphine has held multiple leadership roles, advancing to Deputy Director of Case Management Services in 2017 and Chief Operating Officer in 2020. With a long-standing career in nonprofit management, Delphine brings renewed vision to SOS Illinois.



WHEN YOU LOOK AT OUR VILLAGE MODEL, WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE KEY PILLARS?

Our Village model is second to none. Key to the model are our Professional Foster Parents. They are a unique group of individuals who have made a commitment and sacrifice to step away from their individual lives, families, homes, and careers, to choose this as a different path to serve others. SOS Illinois' Professional Foster Parents support our mission of keeping brothers and sisters together by fostering up to six children—children who have witnessed some traumatic circumstances.

When children come to us with invisible trauma, it is our Foster Parents who are there to listen and work with the team to seek healing and resolution. In addition to providing a safe and stable environment for children, Foster Parents help them maintain connection with birth parents and other family members. In the voice of Professional Foster Parent Jeanette Rush, "it's not a hard job, but it's hard on the heart." Foster Parents are a key pillar to our model.

HOW DO YOU VISUALIZE SOS ILLINOIS BECOMING A "PATHWAY TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY"?

When families leave our Villages and transition home, their need for services and resources doesn't necessarily end. With an already established relationship, SOS Illinois seeks to aid families by direct support as well as community resources. This year, SOS Illinois will engage in a strategic planning process to hear from our internal and external stakeholders and further establish pathways to strengthen community.

WHAT VALUES DO YOU HOLD THE HIGHEST, FOR YOURSELF AND FOR THE PEOPLE WHO WORK UNDER YOU?

I hold true the values of Transparency, Creativity, Autonomy, and Integrity. Leading this organization comes with great responsibility. For leaders and staff to be empowered to achieve our mission, the vision must be clear, values must be shared, and the team must be like-minded. Our Village model is highly relational and has a team of staff with diverse skills. I believe that our collective creativity and transparency allows us to provide a model of service that upholds

integrity for the children and families we serve.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE OUR PARTNERS TO HEAR FROM US?

To our donors for their generous contributions, to our community partners for providing access to resources and services, and to the almost 500 children and families served this year: thank you for trusting the SOS Illinois team.

For 30 years, our innovative approach to traditional foster care has allowed brothers and sisters to live in a nurturing, stable, single-family home, in the care of a full-time, professionally trained Foster Parent at one of our Villages. Children have benefited from the stability of remaining with their siblings as well as the support of an entire community. Our In-Home Family Services program has helped families build on their strengths, tackle tough problems, and stabilize to help youth deal with issues related to gang involvement and other areas of risk.

You are part of the success of SOS Illinois. We hope you will continue to partner with us in this important mission.

FAMILY MATTERS: FAMILY REUNIFICATION COMMITTEE



Reunification: When a child returns to live full-time with their biological parent(s).

One in three children will become part of the child welfare system in the United States. There are over 100,000 children in-care in the U.S., with the state of Illinois caring for over 22,000 of those cases. On average, those children are in-care for 34 months—sometimes longer. At SOS Illinois, we believe that no child should have to grow up in foster care. That's why we are increasing our focus on improving the 25% performance reunification rate established by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

Our newly formed Family Reunification Committee will be continuing our work to improve the reunification process for the children in our care by identifying barriers to reunification, strategizing, and brainstorming creative ways to facilitate their transition to permanency. We are working to keep families together.

Our goal at SOS Illinois has always been to provide services and support that help our children thrive. When children are reunited with their family of origin, it supports their mental health, reduces anxiety, allows them to form ties with extended family, and assists their mental development. When parents work

on making positive changes in their lives to create a healthy environment, that safety and stability paves a brighter future for their children. Reunification helps

"We are working to keep families together."

improve the outcomes of children in foster care. As a Village, our organization is working to improve the outcomes of our children by promoting permanency as a number one priority. The Family Reunification Committee looks forward to helping to reunite more families and build safe, supportive homes for the children we serve.

Our Goals:

- Increase the number of youth in care who may be safely returned home
- Decrease the amount of time that youth spend in-care



REUNIFY AND THRIVE: MS. FAITH'S STORY



When you meet Ms. Faith Kilpatrick, the first thing you notice is her smile. You may not know that she's a mother of three, or that her children were brought into care in 2020. But if you care to ask about her ear-to-ear smile, she'll soon tell you why it's there: recently, she was reunited with her three kids. Though her path to reunification wasn't easy, Ms. Kilpatrick is eager to provide hope for other parents in similar situations.

HOW DID SOS ILLINOIS ASSIST YOU IN REUNIFICATION?

My caseworker was there every step of the way. She helped me enroll in the services that I needed and was very open and honest with me about the status of my case over the years. And I needed that honesty because it helped me grow and become a better person.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY WAS YOUR MOST VALUABLE LESSON?

I really had to look at my life and choices and the result of my actions. I have learned not to put my job before my kids. I used to work all kinds of shifts and hours...it wasn't until this experience that I realized how little time I spent with them. I realized that all my kids really wanted was my love—it's not about the money.

HOW HAVE YOUR CHILDREN ADJUSTED TO RETURNING HOME?

The kids are doing great. Even while they were in care, I was that parent who was always around. I participated in their daily life as much as I could as we worked on closing our case. We frequently have family nights now, and we're bonding more as a family unit. I've worked my schedule out so that I'm more present at home for my children, and we can really tell the difference.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ANOTHER PARENT WHOSE CHILDREN ARE IN FOSTER CARE?

I know that this process is very traumatizing, but the overall goal is to help you, not hurt you. I encourage people to take advantage of the services offered and learn from them. Through these services I've become a better person and parent for my children.



EXTENDED FAMILY: COMMUNITY PARTNERS



WALMART VOLUNTEER DAYS

40 managers from the new Walmart e-Commerce Fulfillment Center in Joliet came to Lockport Village in August for a few days of landscaping, arts & crafts, and organizing for the Village. Their kindness, hard work, and sense of fun was noted by all. In September, SOS Illinois leadership was invited to the grand opening of the Center, where they were presented with a grant for \$5,000. Walmart plans to become a consistent partner with SOS Illinois through both donations and volunteers, and we look forward to collaborating with them in our shared goal of caring for our community.

BORGWARNER SERVICE WEEK

Last October, BorgWarner volunteers gathered from across North America to visit Lockport Village for a week of service. This group worked on various projects that helped improve the day-to-day life for the children in our care, including remodeling the basketball court, re-mulching the playground, and cleaning the community center, as well as hosting a celebration in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month. Despite plans being shifted by a week of rainy weather, the cheerfulness and adaptability of the BorgWarner team made the week a success! Special thanks to Lauren Swallow and Beatrice Klabunde for coordinating the trip.



MISSION & MINISTRY IMPACT

The Mission & Ministry Impact (MMI) grant, sponsored by Daughters of Charity, remains one of SOS Illinois' largest consistent donors. SOS Illinois is grateful for the renewal of the grant in 2023, and would like to extend special thanks to Sister Mary Ellen Lacy for her support. Over the years, MMI has allowed our work of caring for children in foster care to expand beyond our Villages. Our Community and Workforce Development programs, sponsored by MMI, have increased our efforts to create a healthy community for families after they leave our care. We look forward to providing many more opportunities alongside the Daughters of Charity.

2022 HONOREES

As we begin 2023, it is fitting to reflect with gratitude on the year before. Each year, SOS Children's Villages Illinois takes time at our Annual Meeting to honor a handful of individuals who have used their skills and resources in remarkable ways to help us support the children in our care.



FRÉDÉRIC LISSALDE

BorgWarner Inc.
Distinguished Corporate Leadership Award

In the spring of 2022, Mr. Frédéric Lissalde, President and CEO of BorgWarner Inc., sponsored Race For Success, a program that motivated children to read, maintain school attendance, research career paths, and receive mentoring. The grand prize was a trip to the Indy 500, an all-expenses paid trip sponsored by BorgWarner Inc. Mr. Lissalde's generosity encouraged children whose lives have been disrupted to look ahead and work for a brighter future: a priceless gift. Mr. Lissalde has been President and Chief Executive Officer of the company since August 2018, and has experience in engineering across the globe.



SEN. MATTIE HUNTER

Illinois Senator
Distinguished Community Leadership Award

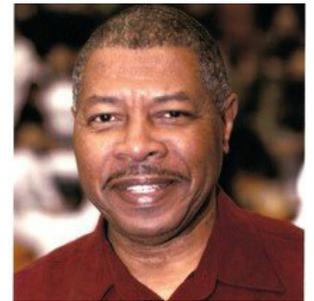
A native Chicagoan, Senator Hunter has demonstrated her commitment to her community time and again. We are especially thankful for her work in helping to secure the DCEO Capital Grant, which will allow much-needed renovations for the homes and structures on our Villages. Senator Hunter currently serves as the Majority Caucus Chair and is a member of the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus. Her career has been marked by an emphasis on equity, the protection of schools, and mental health services. We are honored to present this award to an individual with such congruous goals for community formation.



JOHN TROTTA

Board Member
Excellence in Leadership Award

John Trotta, long-time board member at SOS Children's Villages Illinois and Senior Vice President and National Director Client Services at WSP USA, is a determined advocate for children in foster care. In his eleven years on the board, he has shown an excellence in leadership, perseverance through difficult times, and compassion for the children in our care. Mr. Trotta has worked in the transportation and roadbuilding industry for over 30 years and has been honored time and again for his leadership, community service, and efforts in promoting diversity and inclusion. We are grateful for his years of service.



JOHN R. VENSON

Just for Kicks, The Martial Arts University
Making a Difference Award

Mr. Venson's martial arts school is known for its emphasis on mental and physical skills that help students develop the skills to build a successful life. This past year, Just For Kicks sent an instructor to each Village location to offer karate classes to the children, and the results are hard to overstate. Madison Detres, Education & Enrichment Specialist at Lockport Village, said of the program that "children are going from being timid, scared, and suffering from trauma, to realizing that they're strong and can do amazing things. [Taking karate classes has] increased their confidence, accountability, and discipline."



SOS CHILDREN'S
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