



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES
ILLINOIS

SOS NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2019

BREAKING NEW GROUND

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DINING, CONVERSING, RAISING AWARENESS

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**SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES**
ILLINOIS

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DO WE HAVE YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESS?

Don't miss out on event announcements and Village news.
Send your e-mail address to:

TCISARIK@SOSILLINOIS.ORG

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

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SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES ILLINOIS

Keep the Conversation Going - #Voices4FosterCare

3 simple things you can do to join the SOS Illinois community:

- Learn About Us
- Donate Today
- Become a Foster Parent

OUR NEW WEBSITE IS LAUNCHED.
VISIT US AT SOSILLINOIS.ORG TO
LEARN MORE ABOUT WAYS YOU
CAN GET INFORMED, INVESTED,
AND INVOLVED.

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CEO Message

VILLAGE VOICES: STAGING A HOME VISIT

“THANK YOU FOR
HELPING US BREAK
NEW GROUND.”



SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES ILLINOIS
CEO - TIM MCCORMICK



SOS Illinois Foster Parents and staff gather with Christian Bale and David Eigenberg on May 1

When we think about what “groundbreaking” means, we understand it as both a verb and adjective, whether it be an action with shovels or a description of new ideas. At SOS Illinois, we are proud to be doing both. With the Groundbreaking Ceremony at the site of the new Community Center and through our programs and services, we are digging into the first parcels of land to construct a place where children and families in our

“...our supporters, are key to our ability to move and create ground breaking opportunities.”

communities can together learn more skills, find support, and dream. Each of you, our supporters, are key to our ability to move and create ground breaking opportunities.

As you read this newsletter, I ask that you share our progress on everything from the latest updates on our community center to the leadership and celebrities lending their voices to the charge to our amazing donor support. I also invite you to learn more about our innovative programs on our brand new website, complete with regular blogs that keep you apprised of the latest events at SOS Illinois and those affecting the foster care system both in Illinois and nationwide. Thank you for helping us break new ground that transforms our children, their families, our communities, and society.

As a precursor to Dining & Conversation on May 1, Christian Bale, David Eigenberg, and Alex Pissios (President and CEO of Cinespace Chicago Film Studios), joined SOS Illinois Foster Parents, Carmen and Tony Moyet and Jenny and John Wray, to learn more about the rewards of challenges of being a Foster Parent at SOS Illinois.

Each couple shared with our special guests about what drew them into our unique mission, and why they chose to expand their families by participating in our model of care.

Though Jenny Wray had grown up in a home that her mother opened to children in foster care, the SOS Illinois mission, quite different from her traditional experience, is what drew her in.

“This model of community-based care -- where you actually move into the SOS Illinois homes, where community support is right there on your street, on your block, or across the street -- was totally new to me,” Jenny Wray shared. “I can’t imagine doing this in a different way. If I need my caseworker, I know that they’re right across the street a majority of the time or just a phone call away. If I can’t get ahold of



Foster Parent Jenny Wray shares on her experience

my caseworker, I can get someone else’s. I can call Ms. Carmen if I need help. I can say, ‘Hey, I know you’ve got a new baby. But what care do you give to a teenager?’ We can just talk about this stuff, and it’s great. You have a whole, built-in network.”



Christian Bale interviewed at Cinespace Media Event

Each Foster Parent also shared their hopes for the longevity of SOS Illinois, made possible by the dedicated leadership, staff, and supporters of our mission.

“The children at SOS Illinois need love and protection 24/7, just like all children need,” Tony Moyet shared. “And that’s basically what our goal is: to make sure that they always get that. They get protection. They get fed. They get clothed. SOS Illinois provides all of that.”

As the greatest testimony of our services comes from the children and families we serve, we are of particular gratitude for our special guests to join us in this way.



GROUND BREAKS AT ROOSEVELT SQUARE COMMUNITY CENTER

Ground Breaks at Roosevelt Square Community Center

On June 11, SOS Illinois gathered Roosevelt Square Community Center funders, civic leaders, SOS Illinois Board Members, community advocates, staff, children, and families at 13th Street and Blue Island Avenue for a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the beginning of construction for the project.

SOS Illinois CEO, Tim McCormick, thanked attendees for joining the organization at the future site of the community center. He started the event by sharing, “We all can make a difference by bringing ourselves together to make a difference.” With that, he introduced “Chicago Fire” Actor, David Eigenberg, who reiterated this notion, offering in remarks, “It is the essence of being human: the reaching out, and sharing with each other, bringing each one of us along to the next step, and learning and teaching.”

SOS Illinois assembled an array of community voices who shared the impact the center would have on their lives. Community voices

included: Elizabeth Hope, SOS Illinois Foster Parent; Karen Felix, SOS Illinois Program Director for the Roosevelt Square Village; Mary Baggett, ABLA President; Raymond Wilson, SOS Illinois Child Welfare Specialist; Michelle Morris, SOS Illinois Alumnus; and Ted Selogie – Swissôtel Chicago General Manager. SOS Illinois Board President Jim



Wolfe, CHA CEO Eugene Jones, Jr., 25th Ward Alderman Byron-Sigcho Lopez, 28th Ward Alderman Jason Ervin, Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer at Wintrust, Matt, Zaidy Cardenas, Executive Director of Maestro Cares Foundation and Raphael Rodriguez with Goya Foods also shared remarks.

Following the ceremony, SOS Illinois gathered an array of supporters

to break ground at the site. Tim shared that the shovels for the event were specially made for each of our partners by the children at our Roosevelt Square Village. On every shovel, there was a different drawing depicting a service or program that will make the community center so important to our families and the surrounding community, such as financial education, therapeutic services, computer labs, the culinary kitchen, and more. SOS Illinois was delighted to offer these shovels as a keepsake to each participant for their care and dedication to our mission and this project.

Before guests enjoyed refreshments, as well as a culinary demonstration offered by our corporate partner, Swissôtel Chicago and Chef Dan McGee, together, the group dug their shovels into the earth where only months from now a state-of-the-art community center will provide groundbreaking services. As one, our supporters, leaders, Board Members, staff, children, and families moved the dirt, thus raising their voices to share that as a united community, together, we are breaking new ground.

FAMILY MATTERS: THE OPIOID CRISIS IMPACTING FOSTER CARE

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) reports the Nation is in the midst of an unprecedented opioid epidemic. More than 130 people a day die from opioid-related drug overdoses. SOS Children's Villages Illinois is looking at the impacts that opioid use has on the foster care system.

The work SOS Children's Villages Illinois does in our community to keep children healthy and drug-free pairs closely together with how we maintain relationships with the biological parents that may be getting the support and assistance they need to combat addiction.

The opioid epidemic is growing at a rapid rate, bringing more children into foster care in increasingly large numbers. It's more important than ever for children entering foster care under these circumstances to be placed where they will be loved, nurtured, and allowed to harbor a sense of security and peace while their biological parent(s) receive the help they need to recover from their addiction.

SOS ILLINOIS PROVIDES A COMMUNITY FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE THAT PROMOTES HEALING

SOS Illinois has a community in place that promotes the healing and wellbeing of the children in our care. We have licensed, clinical therapists on-site at each of our Villages who are dedicated to helping children in foster care recover from their traumas so they are able to regain hope and move forward toward the bright futures ahead of them. Clinical services help youth find healthy solutions for navigating traumas and other difficulties in which they may otherwise use drugs and alcohol to numb or self-medicate.

Our clinical support at SOS Children's Villages Illinois creates an environment of healing that is necessary in order to mend families and prepare children to re-enter into homes when recovery has occurred. In addition to our licensed staff, children in foster care at SOS Illinois live in a single-family home with their biological siblings, offering a home-like environment and a feeling of comfort and security.

Additionally, keeping a child engaged in academic studies and involved in extracurricular activities reduces the likelihood that they will use or abuse drugs and alcohol. Our unique focus on education and harboring a community environment within each of our Villages sets our children up for success. In addition, placing emphasis on education and wellness helps to break the cycle of poverty among foster youth, which runs parallel to the cycle of drug use, creating a new cycle of opportunity. SOS Children's Villages Illinois celebrates a 100% high school graduation rate with our foster youth, but our care and support doesn't end there. The College Bound and Beyond program at SOS Illinois helps prepare those in foster care for college as well as the workforce to ensure they enjoy bright futures far into adulthood.

SOS ILLINOIS OFFERS SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES STRUGGLING WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE

While the children in our care and their wellbeing are our priority, we find it extremely important to work towards healthy relationships with biological parents as well. Ultimately, we try to work with recovering parents in an effort to reunite children whenever possible.



Family First Prevention Services Act.

Our programs on education and mental health and wellness work hand-in-hand with the vision of the

Our mission is to provide loving, stable environments where children in foster care are able to receive the encouragement, support and focus they need to move forward in a positive way.

OUR EXTENDED FAMILY: DINING, CONVERSING, & RAISING AWARENESS



On May 1, 2019, the stars came out once again in support of SOS Children's Villages Illinois. Serving as the launch of Foster Care Awareness Month (honored each May), as well as the #Voices4FosterCare campaign, Dining & Conversation offered the opportunity to dine alongside key supporters and friends in civics, business, entertainment, and more, gathered together in support of the children and families served by SOS Illinois.

The day kicked off with a Leadership Reception hosted by at 210 Design House (Snaidero Chicago), where guests were greeted by staff and mingled amidst a collection of some of the world's most premier kitchen and home furnishing brands under one roof. Reception Host, Rama Dandamudi, Snaidero Chicago President and SOS Illinois Board Member, welcomed guests to the gathering and thanked everyone for taking this time together in support of SOS Illinois. Over the course of the reception, guests

enjoyed remarks, dishes prepared by TWO Restaurant and Bar, and time together with a selection of this year's Dining & Conversation Luminaries.



Following the Leadership Reception, Christian Bale kicked off our #Voices4FosterCare month-long campaign on DePaul University's Stage 15 of Cinespace Chicago Film Studios during our

Conversation with the Media. Other presenters included Alex Pissios, the President and CEO of Cinespace Chicago Film Studios, and a 2018 Luminary for SOS Illinois' Dining & Conversation event; Tim McCormick, CEO of SOS Children's Village Illinois; Michael Landers, Vice President of Operations of Sodexo USA, sponsor of Dining & Conversation; and New Orleans-based actor and SOS Illinois Alumni, Tevin Marbeth. A precursor to the evening's gala, our Conversation with the Media offered a unique opportunity for Dining & Conversation Luminaries, supporters, and the press to learn more about why so many notable individuals are interested in joining the conversation on foster care.

Prior to the start of the formal evening program, VIP guests – including 2019 Dining & Conversation Sponsor, Sodexo – gathered with Luminaries, Celebrity Chefs, and Chicago Mayor, Lori Lightfoot for a VIP cocktail



reception. Lightfoot – who gave the opening remarks for the evening's gala, graciously stopped for photos with Luminaries, Chefs, sponsors, and guests, and offered affirmations for the work at SOS Illinois.



Additional opening speakers included SOS Illinois Board President, Jim Wolfe; SOS Illinois Alumni, Tevin Marbeth; 2019 Dining & Conversation Sponsor Representative, Michael Landers (Vice President of Sodexo USA), and 2019 Dining & Conversation Emcee, Micah Materre (WGN TV news anchor).

After Luminaries were introduced, the well-crafted meal began, led by Chef Tony Priolo of Piccolo Sogno. The meal consisted of courses prepared by Celebrity Chefs from Chicago's most well-respected restaurants. Luminaries shared a course at each table, rotating throughout the evening, 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 success of Dining & Conversation 2019 was only made possible due to the generous support and friendship of Sodexo. Sodexo, a worldwide leading provider of integrated food, facilities management, and other services that enhance organizational performance and improve quality of life, centers its mission on corporate responsibility and sustainability. We are honored to welcome Sodexo into the SOS Illinois family and offer our warmest gratitude to Michael and the full Sodexo team. Their kindness and generosity is making a profound impact on the children and families we serve!

LUMINARIES:



Christian Bale; Lou Canellis; David Eigenberg; Josh Earnest; Gillian Flynn; "Candid" Candace Jordan; Zach Filkins; Leslie Hindman; Adam McKay; Elayne Granger; Jamie Rhee; Scott Turow; Dr. Stuart Strahl; Anna Valencia, Jenny Wray.

CELEBRITY CHEFS:

Lead Chef Tony Priolo; Chef Louie Alexakis; Chef John Coletta; Chef Federico Comacchio; Chef Graham Crowe (Mixologist); Chef Kevin Cuddihee; Chef Chris Gawronski; George Jewell; Chef Tom Van Lente; Chef Dan McGee; Chef Ryan Pitts; Liz Plascencia; Nicole Raftery and Raki Mehra



*A special note of acknowledgment to the evening's emcee and longtime SOS Illinois supporter, Micah Materre. We also were fortunate to be joined by special guests **Star Jones** and **Rashied Davis**.*



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GIVING IS SIMPLE. HERE ARE FOUR EASY WAYS:



Through Commemorating Love

One-time memorial tribute gifts are an awesome way to make an impact on SOS Illinois and honor the lasting legacy of a loved one who inspired you to care for others.



Through Empowering a Dream

Our Monthly Giving Program, **Dream Makers**, focuses on supporting educational development, health and wellness, and cultural enrichment. Each gift helps to keep our youth at their very best, empowering each child to achieve their dreams.



Through Remembering Our Cause

You may want to include us in your estate plans if you wish to continue to feel confident in the security of SOS Children's Villages Illinois for many years to come.



Through Breaking New Ground

We have officially broken ground on the Roosevelt Square Community Center. Support this innovative project and the over 5,000 families it will serve in our community and beyond.



Give online at sosillinois.org/giving, or arrange your gift with our Department of Advancement by calling 312-372-8200.