

fall 2005

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES ILLINOIS

www.sosillinois.org

at last, a place to call HOME

Lockport Village gets A TOUCH OF TLC



story on page 4.

Lockport family gets a home makeover by the Learning Channel's "While You Were Out"



OUR MISSION

at SOS Children's Villages
Illinois is to build families.

To provide a stable home
in a supportive, community
environment designed to
help children in need grow
into caring, productive
and self-reliant adults.

Lockport Village

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2005 HOLIDAY CARDS!



Once again, the Professional Board is sponsoring the sale of some stunning holiday cards featuring original art work created by children of SOS and community friends. Your purchase helps SOS Children's Villages Illinois continue to provide loving homes and necessary programs and services to children in need. Proceeds from all sales will benefit the organization. Spread holiday cheer to your friends and family with a beautiful card - your thoughtfulness and kindness will also reach the hearts of SOS Children. Visit www.sosillinois.org to view the entire selection and order or contact Karen Kurnick at [312] 425-0477 or Karen.kurnick@heitman.com. Order your beautiful holiday cards today and help SOS Children's Villages Illinois.



I am not a gardener. The best I can do is digging a good round hole. With this knowledge of my limitations, I visited SOS Lockport Children's Village on a Saturday morning in April to "help" with spring planting.

As I joined dedicated volunteers, staff, foster parents and children, I explained my deficiencies to the proper planting authorities and was given the job of pulling weeds and digging a trench. I shared these delightful tasks with children from the village who were novices in gardening. I apologized for their misfortune to be connected with me, but we were determined to make the best of it. After about 20 minutes and some insightful conversations into what we were doing, we were all quite astonished at what a good job we had done. We looked with

pride at our work and went on to the next task. It was quite a surprise.

So often, it happens that way. Whether hearing from an old friend, finding a crumpled \$5 bill in your pocket or digging the trench the right way, you find that, despite its many challenges, life can give you pleasant surprises. Those moments of unanticipated happiness give us resilience to face life's challenges. These interludes of delight become our sources of hope.

In some ways, SOS Villages are those unexpected surprises for our children. Here they find both a new home and a

new community. Here after neglect, abuse and uncertainty, they can discover a reason for hope. Here the potential of each human is unlocked and free to

grow and flourish. The village becomes fertile ground for human transformation and development. In both Chicago and Lockport many surprises happen each day, small miracles that tell us what we do and how we do it makes a difference. And as with gardening, others can get involved and be surprised at the results.

In this newsletter, you'll read about the surprise SOS Children's Villages experienced hosting the national television show *While You Were Out* and Sarah, Duchess of York, the national spokesperson for SOS Children's Villages USA. Camera crews, television

Planting

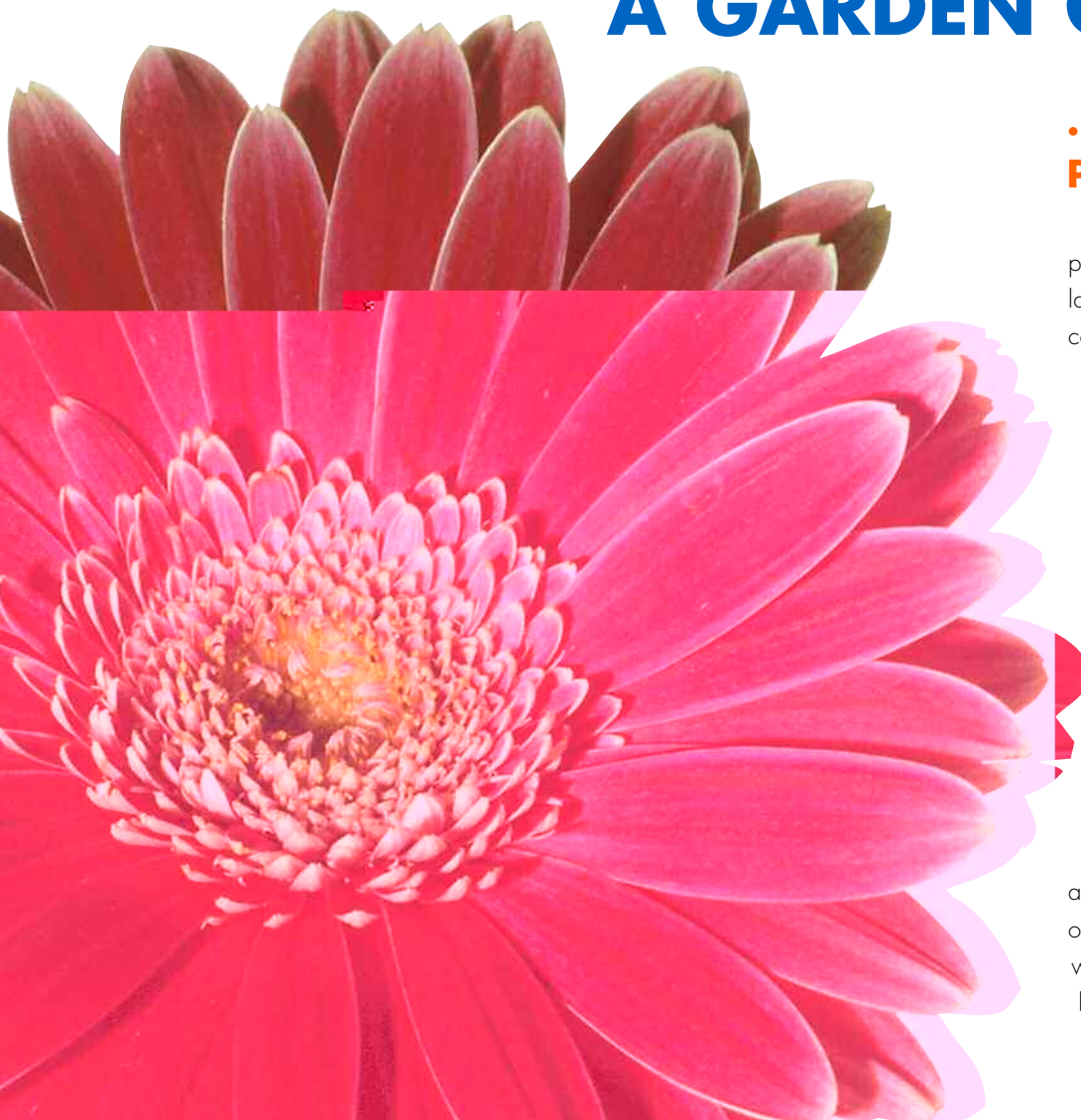
A GARDEN OF BEAUTY

< by SOS CEO Tim McCormick

...AND ALL OF LIFE'S PLEASANT SURPRISES

personalities, royalty, volunteers and staff all labored hard for two days to show the country the beauty of SOS Children's Villages of Illinois. As the village was transformed into a mini movie set, the normal chaos of life here carried with it new excitement and enthusiasm, all leading up to a marvelous surprise for Sandra Marbeth when the transformation of her family's home was complete. Everyone did their part painting, sewing, even more gardening. At the end of the day, we realized we had changed much more than a home.

The garden we all work in at SOS Children's Villages holds many surprises and constantly reveals to us challenges and the potential for great beauty. Despite our limitations, sometimes all it takes is that willingness to start digging and allow the beauty of human nature to reveal itself. 



Surprise Home

at Lockport Village

Over three days this spring, 40 dedicated volunteers answered the call to work on a “special project” at Lockport Village. What they didn’t know until they arrived was that they would be participating in The Learning Channel’s “While You Were Out,” a popular home renovation program, which had selected Sandra Marbeth’s house for a makeover.

The first group of volunteers arrived on Thursday, April 21. They spent the day clearing out the home, loading most of Marbeth’s belongings into storage modules then assembling an overwhelming amount of furniture from IKEA and Bombay Company. Night stands, armoires, dining table and chairs, sofas, even popcorn machines and a game table took shape over the space of a few hours. By 7 p.m. Thursday everything was ready to begin shooting the episode.

SOS Illinois Board President Ted Weldon recommended two carpenters. “Joe and Joe,” as they were known throughout the weekend, worked with the television program’s carpenters to infuse the house with Old-World charm.

They turned a plain drywall fireplace surround into a beautiful stone centerpiece for the living room and added ceiling beams to the master bedroom, as volunteers helped TLC’s expert sew pillows, curtains and bedding.

In the dining area, designer John Bruce made a new chandelier from hundreds of die-cut pieces of plastic. Meanwhile, in the living room TLC’s Nadia Geller created a comfortable, kid-friendly space with a ‘70s retro feel. New couches from IKEA with removable, washable slipcovers created lots of space for family lounging. But the main attractions were the transformation of the fireplace and a prize won by Marbeth’s oldest daughter Tish—a new plasma television set for the living room.

Designer Chayse Dacoda decorated the master bedroom like a villa in the Greek Islands, with bright blue shutters and sheer curtains, stucco walls, an iron bed, a cherry

writing desk and, of course, the rustic wood ceiling beams. Each of the children’s rooms also got fresh paint and new bedding and curtains, as well as extra storage space and new bedside tables.

In the basement, designer Mark Montano created a subterranean



< Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York, Sandra Marbeth and WYWO host, Evan Farmer


“I thought I was going to have a heart attack.”

jungle populated by stuffed animals. A small, custom-built replica of the first wooden rollercoaster located on Coney Island served as a couch, padded with hundreds of “squish” pillows in bright red and blue. The room, including all the ductwork, was painted cotton-candy blue, and Montano completed the décor with a giant clown mural on the wall. Plug in the popcorn machines, and this basement is sure to be the favorite hangout for all the kids in the village.

Stormy weather added a challenge to the final piece, an outdoor patio designed by Bruce, complete with a fire pit, canopy, new patio furniture and professional gas grill. Battling relentless winds (and a complete absence of assembly directions), SOS volunteers and staff erected the canopy and secured it on the patio with no parts left over!

On Saturday, April 23, the SOS families joined the volunteers to see Marbeth’s return to her home. In the cold wind, tears flowed freely as her grown son, who had flown in from California, appeared on the new patio.

But the biggest surprise was a visit from Sarah, Duchess of York, celebrity spokesperson for SOS Children’s Villages USA, who worked side-by-side with our volunteers. The program aired August 13 on TLC.

This project was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for our staff, families and the volunteers, who came from Lucent Technologies, LR Development Company, Southwest Covenant Church in Homer Glen and Naperville Covenant Church. 



< Top: Andrew Dan-Jumbo, Middle: Mark Montano, Bottom: TLC staffer

And what did Sandra have to say about all of this?
see article on page 7.

Illinois spends about \$1.3 billion to care for children and families in crisis, with about half that amount coming from federal funds. Now congressional committees are planning \$35 billion in cuts, including capping Title IV-E funds that represent close to 29 percent of Illinois' total child-welfare support. Additional cuts would place restrictions on Medicaid use for children in the child-welfare system.

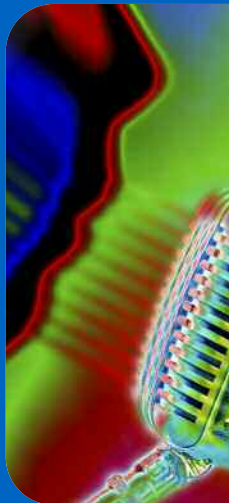
Capping federal foster-care money will place children's well-being at risk. Please take a moment to ask your senators and representatives to reject any proposal that could cap or block Title IV-E assistance, or restrict the use of Medicaid for children in the child-welfare system. For legislative contact information visit www.house.gov and www.senate.gov.

J-Camp

An aspiring journalist from the SOS Lockport Children's Village got her first taste of j-school this summer at a two-week camp sponsored by Eastern Illinois University.

"EIU was the best experience ever. I got to do live reports, interview real prisoners and sit in a real county board meeting. I also did an article on a Danville man whose car runs on pure ethanol."

After two weeks in the field, the Lockport resident realized journalism is hard work, "but life's not easy. I'm looking forward to becoming a professional journalist, and with this camp experience, I'm getting a head start on my dreams."



SOS's European roots were showing when SOS Children's Village Illinois hosted two overseas visitors for a month in Lockport Village.

Lisa, 19, lives in Austria, where her father is an assistant director of parent training at the SOS Children's Village of Hinterbrühl near Vienna. College-bound, Lisa plans to major in Web design and enjoys art, dancing, music, movies and, of course, travel.

Sonia, 20, grew up in the SOS Children's Village San Lorenzo de El Escorial just outside Madrid, Spain. She now shares an apartment in Madrid with another young SOS woman and majors in graphic design at the University of Madrid. An avid athlete, she teaches tennis part time.

During their month here, Lisa and Sonia stayed with Christine, who was waiting for final DCFS licensing and placement of children in her SOS home. (The guests found Lockport's SOS houses surprisingly large.) They met all the village's children, foster parents and staff, sharing most evening meals with SOS families.

The visitors also gave soccer and tennis clinics and went on outings with the children and families, taking in Shedd Aquarium, Museum of Science and Industry, Field Museum, Art Institute, Navy Pier, Millennium Park, and Cubs and White Sox games. Shopping on Michigan Avenue, they enjoyed the American Girl store but were shocked that anyone would pay to have a doll's hair done! (They also say Americans eat too much junk food, but they loved it.)

For both Lisa and Sonia, their month here was their first extended stay abroad. They fell in love with Chicago and truly enjoyed their time with the SOS children and families. And for our SOS children and families, playing host was an opportunity to learn more about other cultures and the international heritage of SOS.



METLIFE HONORS MACAK


SOS volunteer and foster parent Jim Macak received a Volunteer Service Award from his employer, MetLife Financial Services Corp. The award came with a \$2,500 donation to the charity of his choice – SOS Lockport Children’s Village.

A tireless volunteer and a positive role model, Macak recently initiated a garage sale that netted \$1,500 and played a key role in revitalizing the village’s recreation room. He also participates in fund raising as an active member of the SOS Community Advisory Board.

Established in 1994, the MetLife Volunteer Service Award honors associates who have made a difference in their communities through volunteer work.

“MetLife and its employees have a long and active history of service to the community. The 21 employees recognized this year represent the best of this tradition,” said Sibyl Jacobson, president of the MetLife Foundation, which presents the award. The foundation, established in 1976 by MetLife, supports health, education, civic and cultural programs throughout the United States.

MetLife Foundation awarded a grant to Macak in recognition of his accomplishments of excellent community service.

For more information about the foundation, please visit www.metlife.org. 

A special thanks to the Little Angel Foundation, MetLife and other donors for helping to make these activities possible.



What did the children of SOS Chicago and Lockport Children’s Village do on their summer vacation?

- Nearly a third attended summer school, and many participated in the local park district day camp.
- Several attended summer programs at The ARK at St. Sabina community youth center.
- More than half went to overnight camp, from 4-H Camp Shaw-waw-nas-see in Manteno and YMCA Camp Pinewood near Muskegon, Michigan (which provides scholarships for our children), to basketball camp at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb and to art camp at the University St. Francis in Joliet.
- Others enjoyed Little League, soccer, choir, family vacations, a golf clinic, afternoon activities in the village’s recreation room, and trips to Joliet’s water park, Chicago’s Lincoln Park Zoo and the Indiana Dunes.
- Several of our older teens worked at area businesses, and a few of the younger ones helped at a local kennel.
- A number of eighth- through 10th-graders took part in a new Young Leaders Program designed to prepare them for jobs and their eventual transition to independence.



WHILE I WAS OUT

– Sandra Marbeth on her Lockport Village makeover

On a day like any other (with seven kids in tow), I received an excited phone call from my sister Sherry saying she'd won trip for two to the Colorado Dude Ranch, and because I love horses, I just had to come along. I doubted I could get the time off on such short notice, let alone get someone to watch my kids, but it all came together without a hitch. That should have been my first tip-off.

The vacation was the absolute best I have ever had. I was truly in my element, and I only wished my kids could share the experience. When I climbed up the mountain

place when I wasn't there. That should have given me another inkling.

When it was time to go home, my brother-in-law picked us up at the airport. He and my sister were acting really strange, but I chalked it up to married life. That should have been my third clue, but I was totally oblivious.

Arriving home in the village, I saw storage modules and a truck and a sea of people on my front lawn. My first thought was that the village was closing or something terrible had happened to one of my kids, but my sister kept telling me to look at the truck. Finally I calmed down enough to see the



I entered the house to see a beautiful stone fireplace and newly decorated home and Sarah Ferguson, the Duchess of York. She's a very warm, down-to-earth person, and my kids really liked her a lot. Meeting the designers and celebrities made me feel like a movie star. But my best surprise was seeing my oldest son J.R., back from L.A. I haven't seen him in four years, and it was wonderful to be able to give him a great big hug.

Although I've watched the program many times before, I never in my wildest dreams thought I would be on it. The kids all love their newly decorated bedrooms and the playroom downstairs. 🏠

Thanks to everyone involved in this project: TLC, the BBC, the Duchess of York, all the designers and producers, my children, family, friends and neighbors, the SOS staff and the hundreds of volunteers who helped. I really appreciate what everyone did for me.

to call the kids on my cell phone, my oldest daughter Tish answered. She's on her own now, and I wondered why she was at my

words on its side: "TLC" and "While You Were Out." I thought I was going to have a heart attack.

VILLAGE VOICES: REBUILDING A FAMILY



Imagine seeing no way to keep your three siblings together besides living in a van then, as the oldest (and largest), leaving to give the others more room. Today, these four children are reunited, living with an SOS foster parent. They are enrolled at the local elementary school, where the oldest (and tallest!) is on the basketball team and two of the children tested into the gifted class. Their biological mother has entered substance abuse treatment and looks

forward to rebuilding her family. The generous support of SOS donors has given these children a chance to continue their education, pursue their interests and live together in a safe, supportive environment.

At SOS Children's Villages Illinois we build families. On behalf of our children, parents, staff and board members, we thank the "contributing engineers" who are helping to reconstruct these young lives. 🧑‍🔧

Calendar of Events

SCREAMIN' OCTOBER SOIREE

The Professional Board of SOS Children's Villages Illinois presents its 2nd annual Halloween Fundraiser on **Saturday, October 29, 2005**. Come out for devilish drinks, ghoulishly good food and a spooky silent auction. Tickets (\$50 each) are available online at <http://www.sosillinois.org/Soiree.htm>, or via mail. Contact Joanna Brinckerhoff at 312] 543-9582 for more information. Tickets purchased at the door are \$60 each, so order today! Costume or Creative Black Tie Required!

2005 DARE TO SOAR

Celebrate our 7th annual Balloon Fest & Craft Fair on **September 17, 2005**, from noon to dusk, with a day of family fun, food and festivities. For more information, or to become a 2005 crafter or sponsor, please contact Bill at 315] 740-7280, ext. 214.

TEE TIME

Second annual SOS Children's Villages Illinois Golf Classic is scheduled for **September 21, 2005**, at Harborside International Golf, 11001 S. Doty Road registration begins at 10:30 a.m. lunch, dinner, prizes sponsored by Bovis Lend Lease and LR Development Company benefits SOS Chicago Building Families Campaign for ticket information contact Danita Jaurique at 312] 832-2886, www.sosillinois.org or djaurique@lrealty.com

at last, a place to call HOME

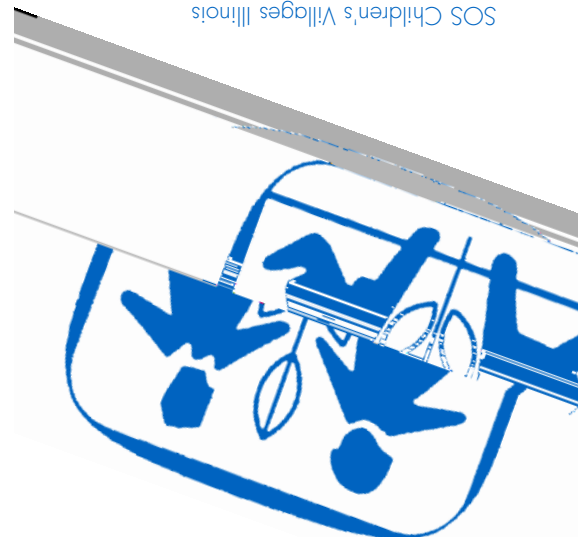
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