



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES
ILLINOIS

SOS NEWSLETTER WINTER 2015

NEW YEAR NEW VILLAGE NEW HOPE



THE ROAD TO **ROOSEVELT SQUARE**
PG 4

TOURING **ROOSEVELT SQUARE VILLAGE**
PG 5





**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:

KKAVANAGH@SOSILLINOIS.ORG

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

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

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

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

LOCKPORT VILLAGE

**17545 Village Ln.
Lockport, IL 60441**

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

CHICAGO VILLAGE

**7600 S. Parnell Ave.
Chicago, IL 60620**

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

CASA TEPEYAC

**4538 S. Hermitage Ave.
Chicago, IL 60609**

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

ROOSEVELT SQUARE VILLAGE

**1200 W. Roosevelt Rd.
Chicago, IL 60608**

P (312) 243-1901
F (312) 243-3086

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GIVING THE GIFT OF HOPE

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CEO Message

GIVING THE GIFT OF HOPE

THROUGH OUR COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION, WE HAVE THE
COURAGE TO DREAM AND CREATE NEW OPPORTUNITIES
AND EXPECTATIONS FOR EACH CHILD WE SERVE.

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES ILLINOIS CEO - TIM MCCORMICK



It is pretty alarming; in the United States a report of child abuse is made every ten seconds. Yearly, referrals to state child protective services involve 6.3 million children, and around 3 million of those children are subject to an investigated report. As you can imagine most of the children who come into our care are often times exposed to one form of abuse or another. In almost every case, one can see the pain in each child's eye when they first arrive at a Village, but the mission of SOS Children's Villages Illinois is to always move forward and allow hope, not pain to shape a child's future.

As CEO, the focus on hope is the side of the story on which I always try to concentrate. In order to truly reshape a child's life, an element of trust must be placed in the simple belief that the treasures of the human heart are capable of healing and strengthening any person who may have been injured or is in pain. This faith relies on the goodness of each person and their willingness to share these treasures in order to nurture the human spirit of others. To me, the work we do at SOS Children's Villages Illinois and the support you provide is always a story of hope that triumphs over any injustice; one where so many individuals come together to share a gift that cannot be purchased from stores, but only passed from one individual to another.

Through our collective imagination, we have the courage to dream and create new opportunities and expectations for each child we serve. I recently felt so fortunate to attend a few gatherings at the Villages where children, foster parents, and other staff gathered to celebrate. One could choose to look at our children and their stories by viewing them as part of the very troubling statistics I mentioned earlier. However, what I saw, were young people committed to rediscover in themselves their fullest potential; and despite the struggles of the past, I could see the rekindling of something greater in our children's eyes. I saw a spark of real faith that a better and brighter future is both real and achievable.

I anticipate that as you read this newsletter you will rediscover the hope that is so essential to our human existence. The stories shared demonstrate that hope occurs every second of every day at our Villages and overcome any alarming statistic that seeks to rob us of the most amazing treasures in each of our hearts. Certainly, I look to our third Village with its 14 new homes as another sign of our Board's commitment to dream of new opportunities to care for more children and families so that we can help reshape a greater number of vulnerable lives. I look forward to your finding that as you read the stories a new hope of how we, as the

extended community, can stay connected to each other to further heal, educate, and inspire our children and families.

I will leave you with this thought - hope does not stand still, it bounds. Hope is a three year old child who runs and jumps with excitement at the discovery of seeing a rainbow after a thunderstorm, essentially showing that even in the darkest of times, there is light just beyond the clouds. Instead of statistics, the story I see every day at our Villages and in each of our children is the discovery they can sing, dance, run, play basketball or just simply smile again. The story that I see in our homes is that hope is the gift we give to one another. As SOS Children's Villages Illinois grows and our children press forward, I thank you for being an essential part of our story. Please read and enjoy, and pass along what you learn, and in doing so you share the gift of hope with those around you.

WRITTEN BY SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES
ILLINOIS CEO TIM MCCORMICK

2014 YEAR IN REVIEW

IN 2014, SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES ILLINOIS ACHIEVED GREAT PROGRAMMATIC SUCCESS. TAKE A LOOK AT OUR OUTCOMES BY THE NUMBERS. AT SOS ILLINOIS:

- **60,400** days of service and **2,154,960** hours of care were provided
 - **698** total children were served (the highest number in our history!)
 - The average age of children at our Villages is **10.61** years old
 - **127** new children found a safe and loving home
 - The average size of sibling groups entering SOS Illinois is **5.46** children,
- with our largest group being **11** children
 - We celebrated a **100%** high school graduation rate, compared to the national average of 50% of children in foster care
 - **95%** of youth attended **90%** or more of school days
 - Our foster parents serve an average of **4.58** years, nationally foster parents serve an average of one (1) year
- SOS University offered more than **30** classes and staff completed over **500** hours of training
 - We have maintained a **4-Star Charity Navigator award** for seven consecutive years - only 2% of charities in U.S. have this distinction



WRITTEN BY DIRECTOR OF
COMMUNICATIONS AND DONOR
RELATIONS KRISTINE KAVANAGH

VILLAGE VOICES



MRS. CHAVEZ – RECEIVING IN-HOME FAMILY SERVICES FROM CASA TEPEYAC

SOS le dio la oportunidad a mis tres hijos de recobrar la confianza en ellos mismos y la esperanza de obtener un futuro en este país a través de la educación. Gracias a la asistencia de la trabajadora Celia Martinez mis hijos pudieron registrarse en la Secundaria Virtual y están esperando su documentación de DACA. Ahora tienen inspiración para seguir luchando por sus metas.

SOS gave my three children the opportunity to regain confidence and hope to obtain a better future through their education. Thanks to the assistance of Celia Martinez my children were able to register at the Virtual High School and are now waiting for their documentation. They now have are inspired to continue working on completing their goals.

EDGAR – CHILD IN FIRST SIBLING GROUP OF FIVE LIVING AT THE ROOSEVELT SQUARE VILLAGE

“I feel really happy to be at the new Village with my brothers. If I ever met the architect, I would let them know they did a super great job, and the colors are my favorite. The house just feels comfortable and homey.”



THE ROAD TO

ROOSEVELT SQUARE



On October 28, 2014, SOS Children's Villages Illinois celebrated a historic moment for the organization with the official opening of its newest Village. Located along the 1200 and 1300 blocks of West Washburne Avenue in the Roosevelt Square neighborhood of Chicago, the third Village in Illinois offers the city and state another unique community of 14 individual homes with the capacity to support up to 84 children in foster care, ages birth to 21 years old.

THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING AND CONSTRUCTING ANY SOS VILLAGE IS DONE WITH A GREAT DEAL OF THOUGHT AND DELIBERATE ACTION

Opening the doors to a Village is a momentous occasion because the process of developing and constructing any SOS Village is done with a great deal of thought and deliberate action, and always with the purpose of providing care and support to more children and families in need. Through the leadership of the SOS Illinois Board of Directors, executive leadership team, and many supporters of the organization, the recent opening of the Roosevelt Square Village is a great testament to this practice.

The three Villages in Illinois offer an alternative to traditional foster care. Due to their uniqueness, it requires seemingly a journey of a thousand miles to build just one Village. The distance travelled on the road to the Village at Roosevelt Square began with the first step taken more than twelve years ago in 2002. At the time, SOS Children's Villages Illinois had one Village located in Lockport, Illinois, which had been open for just under a decade. SOS Illinois formed an exploratory committee to review potential sites for its second Village, Roosevelt Square being among those reviewed. All locations considered were assessed

according to a list of twelve criteria. Ultimately, the second Village was built in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood of Chicago; however, the Roosevelt Square neighborhood was kept on file as a quality site for a future Village.

Almost eight years later in 2010 with two Villages and an acquired short-term shelter located in the Back of the Yards neighborhood of Chicago all operating at capacity, SOS Children's Villages Illinois began discussions of opening a third Village. Several locations within different Chicago neighborhoods were reviewed, one of which was a revisit to the Roosevelt Square neighborhood. With significant support from local government, board members, community leaders, and residents, SOS Illinois was able to meet each of the key criterion. Thus, the process of designing, solidifying funding and endorsement, as well as constructing the new homes was on its way.

SOS Children's Villages Illinois worked continuously for nearly five years. At the end of October 2014 over one hundred government officials, business and nonprofit leaders, as well as longtime supporters joined SOS Illinois for the official grand opening and ribbon cutting ceremony of the third Village. In addition to the ceremony, attendees had the opportunity to tour two of the homes.

Tim McCormick, CEO, SOS Children's Villages Illinois, served as emcee for the program, which included remarks from Don Biernacki, Board President, SOS Children's Village Illinois, Commissioner Andrew J. Mooney, from the City's Housing and Economic Development, Alderman Danny Solis, 25th Ward, Michael R. Merchant, CEO, Chicago Housing Authority, and Edward J. Wehmer, President and CEO, Wintrust Financial Corporation. Joining the

dedication ceremony at the new Roosevelt Square Village was 21-year old Terik Brown, an alumnus of the Chicago Village.

Although the journey seems nearly complete, one more building awaits construction - the hub of the Village - the Roosevelt Square Village Community Center. Plans are underway to secure both funding and land for the project. Once built, the Community Center will provide services to both children and families, as well as to the surrounding community members. Education and training services will be offered through parent training and life skills seminars, youth services such as tutoring and educational support, employment and life skills training, in-home support and family strengthening services, professional clinical therapeutic services, and social engagement through community activities.

AS WITH ANY VILLAGE, THE MOST IMPORTANT STEPS TAKEN ARE THOSE TO ENSURE EACH CHILD IS GIVEN UNCONDITIONAL LOVE.

After two months of operation, SOS Illinois Foster Parents and staff at the Roosevelt Square Village already see the difference being made in the lives of the children who call it home. The support a Village contributes is far-reaching both within and beyond its boundaries. And yet, even once the physical construction of the homes and community center are complete, the road to Roosevelt Square will continue to develop. As with any Village, the most important steps taken are those to ensure each child is given unconditional love. Walking hand in hand, children learn to trust again and feel an ever-important sense of belonging that forever changes the way they see themselves and those around them.

WRITTEN BY DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DONOR RELATIONS
KRISTINE KAVANAGH

TOURING ROOSEVELT SQUARE

COVER
STORY

The Roosevelt Square Village was made possible through the generous support of numerous partners. The City of Chicago contributed \$1.9 million for the development of the Village, and the land on which the homes are built was donated by the Chicago Housing Authority. Wintrust Financial Corporation provided construction financing and a matching challenge grant of \$500,000 to be used for the development of a new

community center. Additional in-kind donations totaling approximately \$500,000 were made by Related Midwest, Amberleaf Cabinetry, Delta Faucet, Added Sales, Snaidero Chicago, Republic Services, Crawford Supply, Bosch, Thermador, and Imperial Crane.

WRITTEN BY DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS AND DONOR RELATIONS KRISTINE KAVANAGH



THANKS TO OUR FRIENDS, WE WILL HELP A GREATER NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN NEED. TAKE A TOUR OF OUR NEW HOMES BY VISITING OUR FACEBOOK PAGE FOR A COMPLETE VIRTUAL TOUR.

/SOSCVI 



EACH HOME HAS OVER 2300 SQUARE FEET OF LIVING SPACE AND INCLUDES 5 BEDROOMS, 4.5 BATHS, A FAMILY ROOM, DINING ROOM AND KITCHEN, OFFICE SPACE, LAUNDRY ROOM, AND STORAGE . ALL HOMES AND SURROUNDING GROUNDS ARE LANDSCAPED AND OFFER TWO OUTDOOR PLAY AREAS WITH DESIGNATED SPACE FOR VEGETABLE GARDENS.

SOS INTERNATIONAL ALUMNI GIVING BACK



Starting Left – SOS Children's Villages International President Siddhartha Kaul, Hermann Gmeiner Award Winner Maya Dahl, Hermann Gmeiner Award winner Deepak KC, Honorary President Helmut Kutin, and International Senate Member and President of SOS Children's Villages Nepal Bishwa Maskay.

The first SOS Children's Village was founded by Hermann Gmeiner in Tyrol, Austria, in 1949. As a child welfare worker, Gmeiner saw how children orphaned as a result of World War II suffered. He was committed to helping them by building loving families and supportive communities.

With the generous support of donors, child sponsors, partners and friends, Gmeiner's vision of providing loving, family-based care for children without parental care, and of helping families stay together so they can care for their children, has grown steadily over six decades.

Today there are over 550 Villages in 133 countries. To honor his legacy, the international organization created the Hermann Gmeiner Award to recognize outstanding individuals who were cared for in an SOS Children's Villages program as children, and who grew up to distinguish themselves through their

accomplishments and contributions to their communities or society. The award is given bi-annually to one woman and one man.

Last year, Maya Dhal (24) and Deepak KC (39), were awarded the two winners of the 2014 Hermann Gmeiner Award and honored by the International Senate of SOS Children's Villages International in Innsbruck, Austria. Each of the winners received a prize check for nearly \$8,500. The Hermann Gmeiner Award and its prize money were made possible through an endowment by the late Mrs. Helene Weiner, specifically for the purpose of recognizing the achievements of alumni of SOS Children's Villages programs.

From the pool of eight finalists for the 2014 award, Maya and Deepak, who grew up in SOS Children's Village Bhubaneswar and Jorpati respectively, received thousands of votes from around the world for their remarkable

achievements and service to others. She is helping children from some of India's poorest communities stay in school; and He is pioneering the creation of barrier-free architecture and awareness in Nepal.

"Maya and Deepak are two people who have, despite all the difficulties, succeeded through hard work. But apart from their success they are also willing to share whatever they have with others who are less fortunate. To me that is a celebration," said SOS Children's Villages International President Siddhartha Kaul.

To learn more about the winners, visit the SOS Illinois facebook page. Watch videos of Maya and Deepak sharing the stories about their lives growing up in SOS families and their passion for using their talents to help children and young people in their communities.

WRITTEN BY SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES INTERNATIONAL

SPEAK UP

AT SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES ILLINOIS, WE KNOW THAT THE MOST MEANINGFUL INSIGHTS ARE OFTEN SHARED THROUGH CONVERSATION, AND WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU THINK. FOLLOW THE ORGANIZATION FOR TRENDS IN FOSTER CARE AND CHILD WELFARE:

Are you looking to learn more about SOS Children's Villages Illinois or see the organization in action? Consider attending an event, or scheduling a volunteer project with a group of friends, family or co-workers.

Looking for the latest updates, events and information? Look no further than your computer! Let's keep the conversation going!

 @SOS_CV_ILLINOIS

 /SOSCVI

 SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES ILLINOIS

How did you first encounter SOS Children's Villages Illinois? Why do you stay involved? What is your favorite memory with our organization? We want to hear your stories and learn about your involvement.

TO SHARE, PLEASE CONTACT KRISTINE
KAVANAGH AT (312)372-8200 OR BY E-MAIL
AT KKAVANAGH@SOSILLINOIS.ORG.



Emerging Leaders Board: A PROMISING YEAR

The SOS Children's Villages Illinois Emerging Leaders Board was conceived in 2014 under the guidance of the SOS Illinois Board of Directors. This group of motivated and philanthropic, young professionals seeks to promote the mission of SOS Illinois through networking and volunteering. Garden Work Days at the Chicago Village, a networking event at the Lagunitas Tap Room, Christmas Posadas at Casa Tepeyac, and a cocktail party at OneEleven by Related are just a few of the engaging opportunities created by the Emerging Leaders Board during the past year. A Founding Members group has been formed to lead initiatives for 2015, including tutoring, educational support, outings, and a variety of fun, social gatherings. Please contact Michelle Conradt at mconradt@sosillinois.org and Amy Kaczmarek at akaczmarek@sosillinois.org if you are interested in learning more information regarding this group.

WRITTEN BY SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES
ILLINOIS ADVANCEMENT CONSULTANT
MICHELLE CONRADT

