



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES
ILLINOIS

SOS NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2015

25 YEARS OF IMPACT



MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY EVENT

PG 4

25 YEARS OF IMPACT TIMELINE

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**SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES**
ILLINOIS

IN THIS 25TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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!

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SUMMER2015

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 6 – Lockport Village Graduation Ceremony

June 25 – Making an Impact:
Celebrating 25 Years Event

June 30 – Chicago Village Graduation Ceremony

July 4th – Celebrations

July – Kick-Off Back to School Supply Drive

REMEMBERING THE FAMILY TREE

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CEO Message

REMEMBERING THE FAMILY TREE

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT A SENSE OF PLACE IS THAT IT CREATES A MOMENT OF SIMULTANEOUS RECOGNITION OF BOTH THE PAST, AS WELL AS OF THE FUTURE.

SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES ILLINOIS CEO - TIM MCCORMICK



With the help of numerous online sites like [ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com), many families have begun tracing their roots to discover their own genealogy. In doing so, as families explore the footprints of the past, deliberately or not, they begin to better understand their current reality. Learning of one's family lineage can, in some cases, also serve to chart a new course for the future. The ability for people to study their heritage allows them to capture a new understanding of who they are, as well as to appreciate a sense of place in relation to advancement and growth. The most important thing about a sense of place is that it creates a moment of simultaneous recognition of both the past, as well as of the future.

For SOS Children's Villages Illinois today, the recent excitement of opening our third Village is a welcomed achievement. The 14 new homes located at Roosevelt and Racine stand as a testament to current board leadership, local and state support, as well as dedicated staff. More importantly, the collective efforts of all have resulted in another SOS Illinois community that creates a true sense of belonging for 84 children who once were abused, abandoned, or neglected. As we witness this new Village transform lives and our organization grow, it is right to pause. This moment allows SOS Illinois to realize its very own sense of place, and the vision it took to arrive at the doors of the Roosevelt Square Village, when the dreams of the Lockport Village were just beginning to take shape over 25 years ago.

In the mid-eighties, a professor from DePaul University, architects, builders and a strong network of community leaders came together and dared to dream of constructing the first SOS Children's Village in Illinois. At that time, both courage and vision were the determining factors that drove the construction of the initial homes. Today, those first structures have become the foundation on which all other homes in each of our Villages in Illinois have been built.

As with every generation, there are both progresses and setbacks. In 1985, those same men and women who dared to advance a village model of care here in Illinois faced numerous struggles to educate community leaders, legislators, and state child welfare workers about what then was a most innovative model of providing care to brothers and sisters, so siblings could flourish as a family. The origins of the first SOS Children's Village began with its leaders' belief in the value of keeping families together in a single-family home with the support of a Village to transform each child's life. The economic, political, and social challenges were countless. Yet, what sustained the development of the initial Village was the moral obligation to which SOS Children's Villages Illinois leadership held firm - making a difference in society - or SOS "Societas Socialis," the Latin term from which the "SOS" letters are derived. Such commitment and courage proved to be the cornerstone of every door, window, wall, roof, structure, staff

member, program, service, and all that would follow.

From those early days in Lockport, Illinois to the development of the 17 homes at 76th and Parnell in the Auburn-Gresham community, to the acquisition of the short-term residential facility in the Back of Yards neighborhood, and now to the newest Village of 14 homes at Roosevelt Square, the intrinsic value we promote has remained constant: that every family deserves to live together. From this commitment our organization heals, educates, strengthens children and families, while creating a better, stronger society.

SOS Children's Villages Illinois cannot fully sense the importance this one moment of the new Village's opening without also understanding our own rich and enduring SOS Illinois genealogy. What we have today and what we have the potential to build tomorrow began with our bold leaders many years ago. Their fortitude inspires our journey to create new footprints toward an exciting and exhilarating future. As you read this newsletter, I hope you will celebrate with us our esteemed history and sense of place, which has created such a fine and exemplary organization that continues to carry out the noble work to ensure every child finds a safe and stable home, feels loved and cared for, and can grow into a productive, self-reliant adult.

VILLAGE VOICES

Central to our model of care are our incredible full-time, professionally trained foster parents. Nationally, foster parents serve an average of one (1) year. At SOS Children's Villages Illinois, our foster parents serve an average of **4.5 years**. With the dedication and commitment of our foster parents, our Villages and homes truly provide a loving and stable environment in which the children in our care can grow and thrive.

In honor of our 25th Anniversary and in recognition of the many staff who have helped make the organization the agency it is today, we wanted to take the opportunity to sit down with two amazing women who have served SOS Illinois for more than twenty years at the Lockport Village.



MS. MINNIE REED — Professional Foster Parent 1995 to Present

Taking the opportunity to meet with Ms. Minnie, the conversation offered many insights into the strength and courage it takes to be a foster parent for so many years. Looking back, Ms. Minnie shared, “it’s been a long journey with SOS Children’s Villages Illinois, and it has not always been easy, but I have worked through it with the case managers and services provided by SOS.” Formerly a traditional in-home foster parent, Ms. Minnie came to SOS Children’s Villages Illinois after hearing about the new organization from a friend; she immediately felt there was a difference at SOS Illinois because “they offered so much more than one social worker for the children and parents. Here you knew you had a therapist, they provided everything, and all you had to do was show and express love to the children.” Ms. Minnie reiterated, “there is still a great need for foster care in the state of Illinois,” and though every day presents its challenges, she continues to serve as a loving and attentive foster parent at Lockport. Since joining SOS Children’s Villages Illinois, she has fostered nearly 50 children. Ms. Minnie’s first foster children at Lockport were all boys, one of whom had cerebral palsy. “It was a joy to have him and take care of him,” she says. As she thinks back to these children, she recalls her favorite memories: “The oldest one of the first five boys graduated from college, which I feel was really great. One of the things I used to stress to them as they were growing up was that if you want to be able to maintain this type of lifestyle that you’re growing up in, then you need to go to college.” Ms. Minnie radiates the warmth and love of motherhood. “The family came through the door calling me ‘Mama.’ It appeared that they were longing for a Mom figure, someone to call Mom. I thought that was pretty special, I did.”

“All you have to do is show and express love to the children.”

SISTER TONI WAGNER, OSF — Professional Foster Parent 1993 to 2006 Program Support 2006 to Present

In a recent opportunity to sit down with Sr. Toni, she remembered what it was like to be a part of the very early years of the Lockport Village. She shared, “I think what was exciting was to know that we were introducing a new concept to the community, not only the community around here, but also globally because *Time* magazine came out and interviewed us. It opened up for the United States the need for this type of foster care—the moral understanding and the stability of keeping siblings together.” Once the Chicago Village was built in 2004, she remembered feeling that “at first we were more like a big sister to them because we had years behind us, but at the same time we became a bigger family. There was a lot of give and take, and sharing, and learning from each other.” Over the more than twenty years the Lockport Village has been open, she shared that even though there were a lot of changes, “they were for the better because we knew how to improve on ourselves, especially with licensing and clinical needs for the children. Of her favorite memories, Sr. Toni found “at first when they started calling me ‘Mom’ it was a word to be used addressing an older person, especially the female in the home, but then all of a sudden it became a meaningful ‘Mom.’ I can remember folding clothes one day and a little guy sprang up to me and kissed me on the forehead for no reason at all—said nothing, did nothing, and ran back to whatever he was doing. That said a lot. This past Mother’s Day I heard from most all of them—‘Happy Mother’s Day.’ That meant a lot too.”



“I think what was exciting was to know that we were introducing a new concept to the community.”

MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION EVENT



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KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Diana Mendley Rauner
President,
Ounce of Prevention Fund
First Lady of Illinois



Diana Mendley Rauner is President of the Ounce of Prevention Fund, a public-private partnership that prepares children for success in school and in life. The Ounce believes in starting early to unlock the power of human potential and advancing program and policy efforts interactively to foster systemic change. Diana's work as President is rooted in her background researching early childhood programs, as well as her experience in investment banking and private equity. Diana holds a Ph.D. in developmental psychology from the University of Chicago, an MBA from the Stanford Graduate School of Business and a BA from Yale University. Married to Governor Bruce Rauner, Diana serves as First Lady of Illinois. Diana and Bruce are the proud parents of six children and one son-in-law.

MAKING AN IMPACT

C E L E B R A T I N G 2 5 Y E A R S

SOS Children's Villages Illinois proudly presents *Making an Impact, Celebrating 25 Years*. In addition to the keynote address by Diana Mendley Rauner, a champion of at-risk children, guests will enjoy a reception including fare from Chicago's well-known Chefs and a presentation of our *Awards of Excellence* to outstanding supporters. This incredible evening will be set at the spectacular Venue SIX10, offering panoramic views of Millennium Park and Lake Michigan.

Thursday, June 25, 2015

Venue SIX10, 610 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago

Individual tickets and Corporate Sponsorship Packages are available.
Visit support.sosillinois.org/25

5:00 p.m. - Registration, Lobby

5:30 p.m. - Diana Mendley Rauner, Keynote address, Feinberg Theater

6:30 p.m. - Reception, Gallery 10 and Outdoor Terrace

7:30 p.m. - Dinner and Awards of Excellence Presentation, Crown Hall

Awards of Excellence

SOS Charitable Leader

Chicago Blackhawks Charities
Edward J. Wehmer / Wintrust Financial Corporation

SOS Innovative Partner

Gregory Mutz / AMLI Residential
Jeff Arfsten / Lend Lease, Inc.
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For more information visit support.sosillinois.org/25, email advancement@sosillinois.org, or call the Office of Advancement at (312)372-8200.

25 YEARS OF IMPACT

November 9, 1985: At the request of Hans A. Schieser, PhD, Professor Emeritus, DePaul University Chicago, Hermann Gmeiner, founder of SOS Children's Villages International, and Helmut Kutin, second president of SOS Children's Villages International, host a seminar at DePaul University to discuss the establishment of the first SOS Children's Village in the United States, ideally established in the Chicagoland area.



1990: SOS Children's Villages Illinois is Incorporated as an Organization.

June 6, 1992: The Ground Breaking Ceremony is held at the Lockport Village.



1993: The Lockport Village opens, offering 10 private family homes, which include a Director's Home and a residence for training future Foster Parents.



1994: The first siblings find a home at the Lockport Village as part of the Sibling Foster Care Program, which gives foster children the opportunity to grow up with their siblings as a family.

October 1994: The Lockport Village Dedication Ceremony takes place commemorating the first Village built in the State of Illinois.



1997: The premiere gala takes place for SOS Children's Villages Illinois, paving the way for the organization's successful fundraising efforts.



2002: SOS Children's Villages Illinois forms an exploratory committee to find potential sites for the second Village, to be located in Chicago, IL.

2002: The Lockport Village expands with eight additional homes. The Director's Home and residence for training future Foster Parents are converted to homes for

the Sibling Foster Care Program, bringing the Village total to 18 homes.



October 1, 2004: Through a partnership with the City of Chicago, SOS Children's Villages Illinois opens the Chicago Village at 76th and Parnell in the Auburn-Gresham neighborhood with 16 homes for the Sibling Foster Care Program. Mayor Richard M. Daley joins SOS Children's Villages Illinois for the opening ceremony.



2006: Chicago Village launches its innovative Fostering Families Program in four homes. Fostering Families provides biological parents with the support needed to overcome substance abuse. Biological parents live in an in-law apartment, while foster parents care for their children and serve as parent coaches, teaching biological parents the skills and strategies needed for effective parenting.

2007: The Lavezzorio Community Center opens at the Chicago Village. The Lavezzorio Community Center serves as the gateway to the Chicago Village and is home to educational, recreational, therapeutic, and

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childcare services offered by SOS Children's Villages Illinois and its community partners.



2007: The YMCA opens the day care center at the Lavezzorio Community Center. The Auburn-Gresham neighborhood now has access to much needed child care services.

2009: SOS Children's Villages Illinois is awarded the Richard H. Driehaus Award for both Architectural Excellence in Community Design and Outstanding Non-profit Neighborhood Real Estate Project for the Lavezzorio Community Center.

August 25, 2009: Illinois Governor Pat Quinn signs a series of bills that enhance and improve child welfare services in Illinois. Together, these bills enable the Department of Children and Family Services to better support

families in need, strengthen relationships between parents and children, and build better futures for youth transitioning from state care to adult independence.



2010: SOS Children's Villages Illinois forms a new exploratory committee to find potential sites for the third Village, again planned to be located in Chicago, IL.

2011: SOS Children's Villages Illinois acquires Casa Tepeyac, a short-term shelter located in the Back of the Yards neighborhood. SOS Children's Villages Illinois assumes the programs previously run by Boys Town Chicago, continuing to offer comprehensive child and family services to at-risk youth in the Chicago area.



April 2012: SOS Children's Villages Illinois purchases an additional home at the Chicago Village, bringing the total to 17 homes.

December 2012: SOS Children's Villages Illinois secures funds from the City of Chicago, obtains land from the Chicago Housing Authority, and approves the development of a Village in the Roosevelt Square neighborhood of Chicago, IL.

June 2014: SOS Children's Villages Illinois breaks ground on the fourth Village in the Roosevelt Square neighborhood.

October 28, 2014: SOS Children's Villages Illinois opens the Roosevelt Square Village, a 14-home Village designed to provide homes and critical support services to 84 children through the Sibling Foster Care Program.



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.

EMAIL INFO@SOSILLINOIS.ORG TO LEARN MORE.

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.

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Back to School **SUPPLY DRIVE**

School may be out for the summer, but SOS Children's Villages Illinois never stops preparing the children at our Villages with opportunities for education, growth and development. We are proud to report a 100% high school graduation rate, compared to the national average of 50% for children in foster care. Our high-school-aged children are offered tutoring and college preparatory courses through the College Bound and Beyond Program, and in 2015 we created an Education Incentive Program to recognize the academic accomplishments of all our school-aged children.

SOS Children's Villages Illinois emphasizes the importance of education to each child in our care. Key to our children's success is having the necessary supplies to complete their school work. **We invite you to join our 1st Annual School Supply Drive, which will begin mid-July.** For details on supplies needed and to participate with either your company or individually, please contact advancement@sosillinois.org or call the Office of Advancement at (312)372-8200.

