



SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES  
ILLINOIS

# PRESS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### HICKS CELEBRATES THE START OF THE SCHOOL YEAR WITH CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

*From end zones to school zones, Chicago Bears Defensive End Akiem Hicks brings backpacks to brothers and sisters at SOS Children's Villages Illinois as part of Tailgate Tuesday*

**September 3, 2019 (Chicago, IL) – SOS Children's Villages Illinois**, a non-profit, child-welfare agency that serves at-risk youth and children in foster care, will host **Tailgate Tuesday**, a back-to-school bash for brothers and sisters supported through the organization's programs and services on **Tuesday, September 10 at 4:00 p.m. at the SOS Illinois Chicago Village, 7600 S. Parnell**, in the Auburn Gresham neighborhood of the city. Chicago Bears defenseman will kick off the school year with activities, food, and fun for children and families at SOS Illinois.

Akiem Hicks will help children in need get set for school with new backpacks and a winning mental attitude to encourage them to achieve their academic goals. **One hundred children and families** will be in attendance for **Tailgate Tuesday**, which will include field games on a recreated football field, giant outdoor games including a 3.5 foot tall inflatable football and tee set, a football turf craft, an inspiration station, a touchdown dance competition to be judged by Hicks, the Bear Down Chicago Bears fight song and other music, and a concession stand complete with tailgate food hot off the grill.

"We are proud to be an organization that shares the hometown of the Chicago Bears. The dignity each member of the team and coaching staff exhibits, equally on and off the field, offers the fans here in Chicago a team of which they can be proud," said SOS Illinois CEO Tim McCormick. "Having Akiem Hicks in our backyard reminds the children in our care that our Village of caring supporters extends beyond our homes, outside our local neighborhood, and across the greater Chicagoland area."

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Hicks is participating in **Tailgate Tuesday**, a first-time event for children at SOS Illinois. T-Mobile and PHMG will be part of the celebration by bringing volunteers and special games. In addition to backpacks given by Hicks, the Chicago Bears will offer giveaways to the children and families at SOS Illinois.

“I am excited to be a part of Tailgate Tuesday and meet the children and families at SOS Illinois,” said Bears Defensive End Akiem Hicks. “Having this opportunity to help children in Chicago start school on the right foot is important. To me, preparing for the school year is similar to gearing up for a game. You have to get ready, set goals, and stay focused. Success on the field or in the classroom is where preparation and opportunity meet.”

#### *Media Note:*

*This event will take place at SOS Children’s Villages Illinois, some restrictions apply to the use of images of children in foster care, per DCFS policies and procedures.*

#### About SOS Children’s Villages Illinois:

SOS Children’s Villages Illinois, founded nearly 30 years ago, is a 501(c)3 child welfare agency that provides an individual licensed home in a supportive, community environment that marshals all the resources needed to help children heal and achieve their permanency goals. The Village Model of Care prioritizes the following: 1) Children live together with their siblings, 2) Children receive care and support from a full-time, professionally trained and licensed Foster Parent 3) Children thrive in a private, single-family home, 4) Children are supported by the Village, designed as an intentional community of care; and 5) The entire family is supported through our Family Strengthening Services to keep families in-tact whenever possible.

SOS Children’s Villages Illinois unites brothers and sisters in foster care and provides a safe space to heal for at-risk youth. Currently, the organization operates four sites: three Villages providing sibling group foster care at an 18-home Village (opened in 1993) in Lockport, Illinois; a 19-home Village (opened in 2004) in the Auburn Gresham, Englewood neighborhood of Chicago; a 14-home Village (opened in 2014) in the Roosevelt Square Community of Chicago, as well as Casa Tepeyac (acquired in 2011), a facility that offers preventative and in-home services in the Back of the Yards neighborhood of Chicago.

SOS Children’s Villages Illinois celebrates a 100% high school graduation rate, compared to a national average of 50% for children in foster care. In November 2015, *Chicago Magazine* named SOS Children’s Villages Illinois one of the “Best Charities in Chicago.” For more information on SOS Children’s Villages Illinois visit: [sosillinois.org](http://sosillinois.org).

#### For more information about SOS Children’s Villages Illinois, please contact:

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