



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES
ILLINOIS



state of THE HEART

Annual Report 2019



sosillinois.org



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SOS Children's Villages Illinois is building a legacy in foster care.

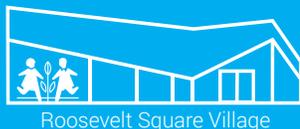
At SOS Children's Villages Illinois, we build Villages that unite brothers and sisters in foster care, surround them with a community of hope, and help them grow into caring and productive adults.

For 30 years, SOS Illinois has offered an innovative alternative to traditional foster care in emphasizing the following five components:

1. Children live together with their siblings; 2. Children receive care and support from a full-time, professionally trained Foster Parent; 3. Children grow up in a private, single-family

home; 4. Children are supported by the Village, designed as an intentional community of care; and 5. Children and families in the community are supported through preventive services and resources.

SOS Illinois operates as its own 501(c)3, with four sites in Illinois:



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SOS Children's Villages Illinois is committed to addressing systemic poverty in communities by marshaling the resources to train, educate, and advocate for at-risk youth and children in foster care. By doing this, we create a different social narrative for families and communities across our city, state, and country.

2019 was a year of breaking new ground, both literally and figuratively, for SOS Illinois. This included the Groundbreaking Ceremony at the site of the future Roosevelt Square Community Center this past July, as well as the further development of our programs and services to support our children and families. By helping children heal and achieve their permanency goals, we work to create a cycle of opportunity that is key to us building the future of foster care.

When we consider words like "innovation," "groundbreaking," and "state-of-the-art," we think of businesses and organizations that are at the forefront of their fields to make better and lasting change. At SOS Illinois, as we are changing the narrative of what it means to be a child in care to ensure that every child receives the love and support they both need and deserve. We also support the entire family through our Family Strengthening Services to keep families intact whenever possible.

Through our Village model of care, we create safe, stable homes in communities of hope. We surround siblings with the care of full-time Foster Parents, caseworkers, clinicians, and Village staff. This outpouring of resources allows children to heal, grow, and rebuild their lives . . . and with that, we do the incredible work of transforming the state of each child's heart.

This very real and important work could not be done without you, our supporters, no matter if it is

building a new center or offering a safe, stable home where children can share a meal and stories at the dinner table. In the second half of 2019, as construction on the community center progressed, a light was shed on the hope and goodness already present in our communities. Each of you continue to be a key part of our ability to create new opportunities that highlight existing hope and bring forth greater optimism for the children in our care, as well as for residents surrounding our Villages.

As partners of SOS Illinois, you contribute to our ability to create trustworthy and inclusive Villages that bring communities together through the power of our common love. An SOS Illinois Village ultimately stands for the notion that we as a people will not and cannot be separated by geography, race, ethnicity, or social locations. Thus, the Village becomes a place where we stand as one, united in a love that is known through service. These charitable works are transformative and allow us to develop authentic friendships that pave the way for innovation and justice.

Thank you for being a part of this most noble effort of caring for the heart of each child and for sharing our journey of reviewing a successful 2019. We look forward to our continued partnership in 2020.



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Did you Know?

PIECES OF OUR HEART

top 10 highlights of 2019

10. Empowering Creativity | 9. Vines to Villages Sets the Table for Dining & Conversation | 8. SOS Illinois Youth and Alumni Shine | 7. Major Foster Parenting Milestones Achieved | 6. Record-breaking Fundraising | 5. New Website Launched | 4. Three Cheers for the Chicago Bears | 3. OneRepublic Promotes the "Good Life" for SOS Illinois | 2. Ground Breaks at Roosevelt Square Community Center | 1. "Voices 4 Foster Care" Amplifies our Mission: Dining & Conversation 2019

read about all these stories and more by clicking here.

A HEART OF DEDICATION

A Special Look into Two

Professional Foster Parents

SOS Children's Villages Illinois seeks to pursue a model of foster care where children experience stability in home and in care. One way this is put into action is by having full-time Foster Parents in our Villages whose top priority is to dedicate their time and service to the children placed in their care. This year, we celebrate two such Foster Parents who have dedicated their lives to this mission.

A Life of Serving Children and Families

In 2019, SOS Illinois Foster Parents served an average of 5.1 years with our community, compared to the national average of one year of service. However, many of our Foster Parents serve quite a bit longer, as our Villages become their longterm homes and our children become their families.

For two longtime Foster Parents at SOS Illinois, enriching the lives of children in foster care is much more than a job. Instead, it is an act of love so great that they have collectively offered nearly a half million hours of service.

Whether chasing around toddlers, driving around teenagers, or preparing meals for a full house, Sandra Marbeth and Minnie Reed have proven time and time again that Foster Parenting at SOS Illinois takes more than skill: It takes a heart of dedication.

Sandra Marbeth Fosters over 50 Children

In 2019, Sandra Marbeth of Lockport Village celebrated fostering her 50th child. Sandra was one of the initial individuals to become a Foster Parent at Lockport Village and continues to be a part of the backbone of the community after beginning this journey in her thirties with a group of eight siblings, whom she later adopted.

One of her adopted sons, Tevin, looks back fondly on his childhood as he expresses that Sandra gave each sibling space to be fully themselves.

While speaking of Sandra, Tevin says, "My mother's my hero because she's shown me what unconditional love looks like and to me that's been the most important thing because I always tried to be

a perfect kid - and that's not the case - nobody's perfect, you end up making a lot of mistakes. But even in my lowest moments, she was there to hold me and comfort me."

Tevin credits Sandra in his ability to pursue his dreams and find success, sharing, "I wouldn't really have all that if I didn't have my mom in my corner telling me that I can do it and giving me that unconditional love."

Minnie Reed offers 24 Years of Service

Minne Reed joined SOS Illinois in 1995, and recently retired from her position at Lockport Village after 24 years of selfless service. Formerly a traditional in-home foster parent, Minnie speaks to the support network and community that makes SOS Illinois different by saying that "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."

Minnie has served as a mother to many. She remembers the countless children that have come through her home saying, "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." Minnie recognized that many children in foster care merely want to be able to call someone "mom," and she was glad to be that for them.

Not only has Minnie opened her home to sibling groups, but she has also brought in and cared for a biological mother who was battling a terminal illness. We celebrate the many years Minnie has dedicated to serving children in foster care and for the sacrificial love that she showed to each child and family along the way.

Gratitude for our Foster Parents

The tremendous and selfless work of our Foster Parents stands as the crucial center of our model of care, making it possible to provide boundless love to some of Illinois' most vulnerable children. In reflection of a year of milestones and accomplishments, we offer our sincerest gratitude to each of our Foster Parents who say "yes" every day to offering us a heart of dedication.



ACTION-DRIVEN COMPASSION

Daughters of Charity Embody Selfless Love

When working with children in foster care and at-risk families, compassion is one of the most essential qualities in order to build connection. The Daughters of Charity wholly embody this gift by supporting us generously as philanthropic partners and mentors, thus tirelessly investing in the lives of SOS Illinois' Foster Parents, children, and staff. The Daughters of Charity provide not only essential resources to our community, but the embodiment of selfless love.

Tremendous Financial Support to SOS Illinois

For years, the Daughters of Charity and their foundation, Mission and Ministry Impact (MMI), have provided major financial contributions to help SOS Illinois provide top-notch service to the children and families in our care.

As one of our partners, The Daughters of Charity have propelled the Roosevelt Square Community Center forward with their grants.

The Daughters of Charity have also shown compassion for children in foster care by awarding a grant to SOS Illinois' College Bound and Beyond Program through Mission & Ministry Impact, a

program that awards grants to organizations consistent with the values of Daughters of Charity.

Gifts of Time and Mentorship

This year, the Daughters of Charity graciously hosted a retreat for Foster Parents and social workers who felt called to help children in foster care. This retreat allowed several Sisters part of the Daughters of Charity, including Sister Mary Ellen Lacy who serves on the SOS Illinois Board of Directors, to share the ways in which they show compassion and inspire others to act similarly.

Reflecting on her choice to work with SOS Illinois, Sr. Mary

Ellen Lacy remarks that supporting children in foster care allows their future to move "from one of predicted chaos and restrictive poverty to one of possibilities and options; and that is a piece of the heaven on earth that belongs to every child."

Immense Gratitude for the Daughters of Charity

As the Daughters of Charity aim to serve those that have been marginalized and live in poverty globally, we are thankful that they have chosen to support our work at SOS Illinois. Their compassion inspires us to touch the hearts of each of the children and families we serve with tenderness, fierceness, and grace.

THE SOUND OF FRIENDSHIP

PHMG Creates More than Audio

SOS Children's Villages Illinois is continuously honored to have such dedicated, passionate, and thoughtful corporate partners and volunteers willing to dive right in with our children and families. PHMG, the world's leading audio branding agency, has showed SOS Illinois more than generosity, but authentic friendship.

Throughout 2019, PHMG continuously showed a commitment to the children and families served at SOS Illinois. Beyond raising contributions for our community, members of the PHMG Chicago office were routinely among the first to get their hands dirty at events and programs alongside our families.

PHMG employees were powerful advocates for our cause throughout 2019, including assisting as volunteers at events and opening PHMG's office for the teens in our care for a career day.

PHMG Hosted SOS Illinois Teen Career Day

Four SOS Illinois teens were graciously given the opportunity to spend a full day at PHMG's downtown Chicago office to meet multiple employees,

enjoy a lunch and goodies provided by the company, shadow a department of the student's choice, and create a branded audio clip of their own.

The audio clips made by the teens ranged from jazz to funk, all similar to clips companies would use in elevators or on-hold music. The clips were produced by PHMG professionals, and our teens received a copy of their new beats.

Samples of these sounds can be heard on our blog at sosillinois.org/connect and looking for "Futures Not on Hold."

Working Alongside Our Younger Children

Whether helping to assemble projects with our smallest children during Harvest Day in the fall or playing tons of field games with

our middle schoolers during our Annual Graduation Celebration, our friends at PHMG know what it means to get fully immersed in our community.

Regardless of the program, our children are all smiles when they see the team from PHMG arrive on site, ready to assist with another day filled with learning and fun.

We can tell that the fruits of this partnership are true acts of love. According to PHMG, "SOS Children's Villages Illinois is particularly close to the hearts of our U.S. staff, and they came together to champion the amazing work of the charity."

Throughout the many ways that their staff are involved, PHMG encompasses what it means to be a corporate partner and committed friend. We're grateful for their giving hearts!





CONVERSATIONS FROM THE HEART

Dining & Conversation 2019

Pictured above: Dining & Conversation Luminaries gather with Sodexo USA's Mike Landers and special guests of the evening's program.

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, in support of the children and families served by SOS Illinois.

210 Design House Hosts Dining & Conversation Leadership Reception

SOS Illinois gathered its 2019 Luminaries, Dining & Conversation sponsor Sodexo, and other local business leaders at 210 Design House (Snaidero Chicago) for a Leadership Reception as a precursor event to its spring gala.

Media Event and Tour at Cinespace Chicago Film Studios

Following the reception, Luminaries and special guests attended a special media event at Cinespace Chicago Film

Studios, where speakers (including Christian Bale, Mike Landers, and Alex Pissios) offered remarks to the press on their participation in the #Voices4FosterCare campaign.

Following the Media Event, Luminaries and special guests enjoyed a tour of Cinespace Chicago from Alex Pissios.

Dining & Conversation

That evening, SOS Children's Villages Illinois hosted Dining & Conversation, a unique event where SOS

Illinois supporters met and conversed with Luminaries. Luminaries included Christian Bale, Adam McKay, Gillian Flynn, and more. The event was prefaced with a VIP Reception and special remarks from Chicago Mayor, Lori Lightfoot. Dinner consisted of courses prepared by Celebrity Chefs. Luminaries shared a course at each table so as to dine and converse with all guests in attendance.

Special thanks to all our Luminaries, Celebrity Chefs, and guests!

[Click here to read more](#)



OUR LOVE IN **NUMBERS**

STATISTICS AT-A-GLANCE

Alongside an all-star team of Foster Parents, staff, corporate partners, and generous donors, 2019 proved once again that legacies abound at SOS Illinois. We are proud to share the following figures that were achieved by the last quarter of 2019. These figures and all our successes are only achieved with your help. Thank you!

56,854 days of service provided to youth and families

500 children served through our programs and services

69 children found forever homes

100% high school graduation rate

2,620 hours of training for staff and Foster Parents

5.1 years, on average, of service provided by Foster Parents



STRENGTHENING THE HEARTS OF DREAMERS

**YOUR LOVING GENEROSITY HAS HELPED
SUSTAIN THE DREAMS OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

SOS Children's Villages Illinois strives to help the children in our care reach their full potential. Even with our successes, there still is more hard work to be done. With the support of our dedicated partners and donors, we are able to continue our commitment to helping children in foster care grow into caring, productive, and self-reliant adults.

150 new donors

\$1.8M raised from contributions and events

Over 100 volunteers at special events



With its unique structure, SOS Illinois is able to offer an incredible level of support to our local children in need. We have been a proud, long-time partner of SOS Children's Villages Illinois and we can't wait to see the lasting impact [the Roosevelt Square Community Center] will have on the communities it will serve.

- Edward J. Wehmer, CEO, President, & Founder, Wintrust

AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

The Roosevelt Square Community Center

Building Begins to Take Major Shape

Throughout 2019 and onward, the Roosevelt Square Community Center began to take shape. This Center, designed by architect Juan Moreno and JGMA with construction led by Lendlease, will be located on 13th Street and Blue Island Avenue in the Roosevelt Square neighborhood of Chicago. Once opened, the Center will serve over 5,000 individuals and families from the Roosevelt Square Village and surrounding communities. With our construction timeline in focus, 2019 paved the way for a site that will provide groundbreaking services for children and adults alike, including a full teaching Culinary Kitchen.

After breaking ground on the Roosevelt Square Community Center in June 2019, construction quickly was underway, beginning with clearing the ground that would soon be the site of something wonderful.

After excavating the footing and creating a solid base for the Center, soil bearing tests were performed. Later, steel and column footing was installed, creating the "bones" of the Center.

Updates Since 2019

In the months following, SOS Illinois' construction

team has made major progress, bringing about the shape of the physical space once only alive in our renderings.

Over the first two quarters, final stages of cutting and capping existing water lines occurred, Glulam columns were installed, roofing panels were set in place, and HVAC duct work and fire suppression systems were installed.

Additionally, exterior framing and metal panels were installed, and interior drywall installation began on the interior studding to

prepare the space for an in-wall inspection. The immense work that has already been completed has set the Roosevelt Community Center right on target for the center's completion and opening in late September 2020.

Sustainability Measures of the Community Center

The architectural planning of the Center, inspired by generous donations, will include the use of Eco-friendly materials, like cross-laminated timber and Glulam columns and beams, as well as

sustainable and renewable energy sources, such as solar panels, energy efficient appliances, and light fixtures. The inclusion of an urban garden, both further promote the organization's commitment to responsible development.

These environmentally conscious features reflect both our focus on

building sustainable futures for our children and families, as well as our desire to help create a sustainable future for our city at-large.

Click here to read more about construction of the Roosevelt Square Community Center and the Center's sustainable features, found on our blog at sosillinois.org/connect.



Corner of Blue Island Avenue; Construction as of May 2020

HEARTBREAK INTO HOPE



A Transformational Gift to the Roosevelt Square Community Center Project

At SOS Illinois, we have been honored to welcome many donors, supporters, and partners into our shared story. Often, these important friends come to us with close, personal reasons why our model of foster care inspires them to get involved, make a difference, and help build our future. For one family, turning heartbreak into hope is helping to create a legacy of their daughter and an opportunity for youth and families to shine at SOS Illinois. We are deeply grateful for the establishment of the Jill L. Meinzer Scholarship Fund, which will not only help to open doors for our youth, but for all those who enter into the Roosevelt Square Community Center.

About Jill Louise (Hubbard) Meinzer

With over 20 years of leadership roles in the cable and communications

industry, Jill L. Meinzer was known as a hands-on team-builder, collaborator and problem solver. Jill received a bachelor's degree from Purdue University with

majors in Computer Science and Math. Inspired by the strong work ethic of her parents, she began her career at Rockwell as a software engineer for large

telecommunications systems, later transitioning to the start-up company Cadant. ARRIS International, who acquired Cadant in 2001, offered many opportunities for Jill to showcase her talents as Vice President, overseeing Technical Support, Consumer Support, Global Knowledge Services and Service Contracts, as well as many managerial capacities.

Committed to helping

strengthen other women in the field, Jill also was very active in industry and community organizations that promoted education and leadership opportunities for women, including serving on the board for Women in Cable Telecommunications. Jill frequently served as a mentor for young women in the cable industry, recognizing the value of utilizing her own experiences to guide and empower others as they

navigate career paths of their own.

In addition to an accomplished career, Jill still found time to earn the title, "Favorite Aunt" as she frequently hosted her nine nieces and nephews, all from Indiana, with fun-filled Chicago weekends. These often would include trips to see the Bears, Blackhawks, or Cubs as well as memorable walks and

“Heartbreak into Hope” continued

bike rides along Lake Michigan and Navy Pier.

Jill’s Commitment to Building Healthy Families

As Jill was committed to her career and the strength of her industry, so too was she committed to the strength of families. Jill recognized that others, due to circumstances beyond their control, faced challenges that could keep them from reaching their full potential. Through her work and through her mentoring, Jill became particularly aware of the challenges faced by youth in foster care, including those served by SOS Illinois. Jill privately helped a colleague adopt and support a child out of the foster care system and from there her interest grew.

Turning Heartbreak into Hope

In the spring of 2018, Jill was diagnosed with renal cell carcinoma (kidney cancer) and passed away less than a year later on January 14, 2019 at the age of 53. However, several years prior to this, she had already put into motion a scholarship fund, and with the time she had, Jill was able to share her wishes with her family. As a long-time resident of Naperville, it was important to Jill that her estate fund Chicago-based organizations that support youth in foster care.

The Hubbard Family found SOS Children’s Villages Illinois, and after meeting with Foster Parents, children, and staff, the Hubbard Family felt that Jill would have wanted to support SOS Illinois without reservation. Together, they decided to support the building of the Roosevelt Square Community

Center, in addition to establishing an endowed fund that will support education and job skills training programs associated with the Center through a gift of \$1 million.

Karen (Hubbard) Whitaker, one of Jill’s sisters, commented, “We know Jill would be incredibly honored to support the SOS Children’s Villages Illinois mission. It is a privilege for us, her family, to help make that happen. We are so grateful for all those at SOS Illinois who have chosen to work in this area and make such a difference in the lives of very deserving children.”

Gratitude for the Hubbard Family

The tremendous and groundbreaking support of the Hubbard Family and the Jill L. Meinzer Scholarship Fund is providing essential resources that can help to ensure our children and families receive the life-changing services provided by the Roosevelt Square Community Center.

“Strengthening families is at the core of our mission,” shared SOS Illinois CEO, Tim McCormick. “We are humbled by the strength of the Hubbard Family and honored by their trust in SOS Illinois. This transformational gift to the Community Center and its programs will reinforce Jill’s wishes to support youth in foster care, and her legacy will be honored through the success of our youth and families for years to come.”

We offer immense gratitude to the Hubbard Family who, moved by Jill’s legacy, are strengthening the heart of our community for many years to come.





I want to
PLAYING all
day Long

Always funny
on face

LEI