

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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B.C. Child and Youth in Care Week is Not a Time to Celebrate: Therapeutic Village

Surrey, British Columbia Home is where the heart is, but what if one is removed from their broken home and placed in a stranger's care? Only the healing touch of therapeutical services can help a heavy heart, and yet most children and youth in care do not receive the treatment they need to become psychologically healthy again. SOS Children's Village B.C.'s unique and globally-proven model of care returns the 'heart' into 'home' for children who cannot live with their biological parents.

The charity has identified four key problems in the foster care system and is moving to ensure each foster child and youth living in the village has the absolute best and most nurturing care possible. The four issues include: **lack of permanency for foster children, brothers and sisters being split up within the system, failure to recognize and treat trauma foster children and youth have been through, and lack of access to therapeutic services to aid in healing.**

The last of four pillars of SOS Children's Village B.C.'s solution is the **Therapeutic Village**. The organization recognizes that once a child or youth is removed from their home they experience immediate trauma that cannot be overlooked, as is often the case in the foster care system. Children in care need support and counselling to move on with their lives – this should **never** be optional. Additionally, if a child has been moved many times within the system, it is likely that there has been abuse along the way.

In the environment of the Therapeutic Village - guided by SOS B.C. Clinical Director Dr. Lise' DeLong, Ph.D, CPCRT, CCCM - foster children can recover from their trauma and become emotionally healthy once more. **The atmosphere of the Surrey village site is very nurturing to its inhabitants, with staff on-hand for support and even caregivers looking out for each other's children when they are playing outside.**

The services provided to the foster families in the Therapeutic Village, free of charge, include cognitive behavioural counselling, art therapy, play therapy, cutting-edge Neurofeedback training, and narrative therapy. Each child is assessed to ensure that they are receiving the correct therapies for their needs.

“The Therapeutic Village and its programs provide foster children and youth with everything they need to become emotionally, physically, and mentally healthy,” says Douglas Dunn, Executive Director of SOS Children's Village B.C. “This holistic approach cannot be found anywhere else in B.C. or Canada, and in the future we hope to be able to expand the number of villages in our province and the number of foster youth we can help.”

The final substantial benefit of the Therapeutic Village is **prevention**. If the professionals at SOS B.C. notice red flag behaviour they can address and prevent it from escalating further into other adverse issues.

Providing easily accessible and effective therapy services is the hallmark of an effective child welfare system that raises stable youth who become contributing members of society – that would be something to celebrate.

About SOS Children's Village BC

SOS Children's Villages is the world's largest non-governmental, non-denominational child development organization for orphaned and abandoned children. It has existed for over 65 years with presence in 134 countries and 553 Villages. British Columbia is home to the only SOS Children's Village in Canada. SOS Children's Village BC provides stable homes, a supportive and healing Village environment, and community-based family care programs to help foster children and youth in need grow into caring, self-reliant adults.

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