

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 21, 2015

**Annual SOS Children's Gingerbread Village and Holiday Gala Raise 24% More to Benefit Foster Children & Youth**

**Surrey, British Columbia** The SOS Children's Village B.C. charity announced today that a **total of \$62,000 was raised** through the SOS Children's Gingerbread Village, presented by RE/MAX, and the Holiday Gala premiere event. This figure represents a 24% increase over the previous year's \$50,000 raised to benefit foster children.

**Ticket revenue alone for the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Gala was up 60% from the year before** - the venue at Grouse Mountain, the Peak of Vancouver, reached full capacity with 230 guests. Sponsorship, live and silent auction, and 50/50 revenues were all up as well. Event proceeds support the charity's in-demand neurofeedback therapy, counselling, educational, and transition to adulthood programs for children and youth in foster care.

"This past holiday season was unprecedented for SOS Children's Village B.C. and our annual Christmas event," said Douglas Dunn, executive director of the charity. **"With the Holiday Gala celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> year, strong interest from the community led to tickets selling out a full two weeks before the Gala, a first for us."**

"On behalf of everyone at SOS, I would like to sincerely thank the wonderful team at Grouse Mountain, all our corporate, media and service club sponsors, all the gingerbread bakers, and every member of the public who helped make Christmas much more special for the children and youth we support who cannot live with their biological parents."

**Grouse Mountain has been a dedicated partner of the SOS Children's Gingerbread Village - and preceding Parade of Trees - since 2005**, generously supporting all components of the event as the highlight of their Peak of Christmas activities. Significant funds were raised through donations from visitors who had a photo with Santa in his workshop.

**Furthermore, over the holidays, SOS Children's Village B.C. appealed to the public for gift card donations for youth in their Transition to Adulthood program**, many whom lack the funds to purchase life's essentials. The response was overwhelming with over \$7,500 in gift cards donated (an increase from \$3,000 the previous year), plus heaps of food hampers and other gifts. The generosity displayed at Christmas from the community was truly heartwarming.

SOS B.C. acknowledges **The Vancouver Sun** and their *From Care to Where* series for vastly increasing awareness of how devastating it is for foster youth to leave care at 19, and the **Cloverdale Reporter** for their committed support of the gift card appeal.

**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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