

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 27, 2015

**The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual SOS Children's Village Run & Walk: Stepping up to Follow up for Foster Children**

**Richmond, British Columbia** On Sunday, May 24th, lace up your joggers and join hundreds of runners and walkers streaming onto the Richmond Olympic Oval Plaza for the 8:30am kick off of the 7th Annual SOS Children's Village B.C. Run & Walk, **a major fundraiser supporting SOS homes and programs for foster children.**

Kids in foster care face challenges that most young people could never imagine. They endure crises, family breakdown, and perhaps see people they love and depend on abusing drugs or alcohol or suffering mental health problems.

Maybe they have been abused themselves, physically, mentally, or sexually, and their childhood has been a living nightmare. **On average, a foster child's life becomes a travelling circus of seven homes, seven families, seven schools, and seven neighbourhoods.**

**Foster children are like youngsters abandoned in the aftermath of war.** In fact, it was after the Second World War that a doctor, Hermann Gmeiner, decided to find homes for Austrian children left to fend for themselves, homes where they received proper care and, most importantly, unconditional love and respect.

SOS Children's Villages was born!

Lois and Gilles Bouchard, who brought SOS Children's Villages to B.C. and founded the Run & Walk, say the mission is alive and well because many individuals, organizations, and corporations volunteer their time and talents.

"We help fund five SOS homes in Surrey where foster kids grow up in a family with a mother's care and programs and therapies for their healing and development," says Lois Bouchard. **The Run & Walk, she added, is now one of Richmond's most anticipated community events.**

"It's a joy to see the athletes and their families having fun on the Oval plaza. **With the great riverside location and the spectacular mountain views and so much spirit and camaraderie, how can you lose?"**

"Last year, the **Richmond Rotary Club** came on-board with our Run & Walk Team, so things are just getting better and better. We cannot thank the Rotarians enough for their terrific organizational skills, enthusiasm, and willingness to pitch in for the SOS cause."

SOS B.C. Communications Manager William Brennan explained that the agency continually looks for new ways to solve difficulties faced by foster children and youth.

**“Those who have turned 19 and are no longer eligible for government funding can, without the referral of a social worker or other professional, enter our Transition to Adulthood program to negotiate the challenging next stage of their lives.”**

“We are tremendously thankful to those who come out each year to the Run and Walk to make such programs possible.”

SOS offers a variety of donation options, including estate planned giving, to benefit children in care today and those who will need services in the future. For information, contact [douglasdunn@sosbc.org](mailto:douglasdunn@sosbc.org).

To enter the 2K, 5K, or 10K Run & Walk, to create your corporate or family team, or to make a donation for \$20 or more to receive a tax receipt, go to [www.sosbc.org/run](http://www.sosbc.org/run).

#### **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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