

## SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE BRITISH COLUMBIA OPENS TRANSITION SUITES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVING FOSTER CARE



SOS Children's Village British Columbia recently celebrated the grand opening of three transition suites for youth aging out of care, as well as the organisation's 30th anniversary. As Canada's only SOS Children's Village, SOS Children's Village British Columbia provides stable homes, a supportive and healing environment, and community-based family care programs to help foster children and youth in need grow into caring, self-reliant adults.

Clouds loomed overhead throughout the ribbon cutting ceremony, but luckily the rain held off and everyone had a wonderful time. There were over one hundred of SOS Children's Village British Columbia's closest supporters in attendance, including its founders, local politicians, an Aboriginal elder and corporate and foundation donors.

Letters of congratulations from Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Canadian Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett, Premier of British Columbia Christy Clark, and the Mayor of Surrey Linda Hepner were read aloud to guests.



### Young people 'aging out' of care

Every year in the province of British Columbia, more than 700 teenagers 'age out' of the government foster care system. As soon as they turn 19, the only support system they have known is no longer available to them, and they are expected to begin taking care of themselves. But at just 19, with no confidence, no skills, and no support or resources, it's setting these kids up for failure. And far too many of them do fail – ending up homeless, living on the streets, addicted, or in trouble with the law. Indeed, over 40% of youth living on the streets have been in foster care.

That's why SOS Children's Village British Columbia is excited about the completion of construction on three independent living accommodations. Separate building entrances, bath and restrooms, living spaces, and kitchen areas will allow young adults or young mothers, to live an independent lifestyle.



### Supporting young people in transition

Unique to SOS Children's Village British Columbia's program, youth will be able to access any or all of the therapeutic and support programs offered to the village families including: learning clubs; music program; camps, recreation and cultural programs; cognitive, expressive arts, and Neurofeedback therapies. These services will contribute to a more normalised experience of transitioning to adulthood for teens aging out of care. They will be taught the

skills needed to live independently, skills they never learned while being shuffled from foster home to foster home.

SOS Children's Village British Columbia also operates two thrift stores, and can outfit a young person with clothes, school supplies, furniture, and more, all at no charge. A number of Transition to Adulthood participants in the established outreach program have already been provided with the business attire needed for successful job interviews.

### A secure living environment for a secure future

Additionally, the youth who reside in the transition suites will receive rewards from SOS British Columbia as they reach their educational and other goals, including everything required for their own apartment: furniture, appliances, kitchenware, computer, TV, etc. – an 'apartment in a box' that they can take with them once they complete the yearlong program.



A stable living locale will allow these youth aging out of care to positively connect to their communities. With the location of the housing at an SOS Children's Village, the teens will be healthier – with improved mental health – and more able to live independently with access to the extensive green space and facilities of the village which include a sports court, dedicated and stocked art and music studios, and more.

### Making history

This important moment in the history of foster care in British Columbia is the culmination of two years of intensive capital campaign fundraising of \$250,000 to build five permanent suites. Success has been achieved through the generosity of individuals, corporations, foundations, and governments who understand the incredible need for this project. Fundraising for the construction of the final two suites is ongoing.

Post a comment



**Sharma Ishwori** 17/07/2016 12:15

Congratulations for this innovation, which gives insights to us as well.



**Dunn Douglas** 15/07/2016 23:47

For those interested Kistie Singh, Village Director has produced a great document on the Year Intensive Program, and our first documentation of our permanency commitment, which we are referring to as "After Care". For a copy of the document please just send me an email.

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**Suryawanshi Manoj** 12/07/2016 11:45

A very good example of "innovate Alternative Child Care",,



**Wilms Stewart** 08/07/2016 10:09

Congratulations to the BC. Great step forward in customizing foster care!

**Nepal Sanothimi** 08/07/2016 07:27



Very interesting concept of 'aging out' of care!



[Kotkavuori Jukka](#) 06/07/2016 17:38

Congratulations SOS-BC!! We in SOS-Finland want to learn more about this.