



## THE 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE BC RUN & WALK

By Laureen McMahon

On the morning of Sunday, May 25, the beautiful, natural setting of Richmond's Olympic Oval Plaza will be alive with athletes, families, and a host of volunteers gathering for the sixth annual SOS Children's Village B.C. Run/Walk to benefit children in foster care.

Beginning about 8:30 a.m., everyone will gather on the river side of the plaza for the 9 a.m. opening ceremonies followed by the Run/Walk kickoff. Festivities include special guests, entertainment, and refreshments.

"This event is proof that a community can have a wonderful time while contributing to a worthy cause," according to Run/Walk founders Lois and Gilles Bouchard.

For the long-time Richmond residents, the annual event is a dream come true.

The Bouchards have devoted over three decades to helping children in crisis find a new start when



they move into a SOS Children's Village home in Surrey or are helped through SOS programs in the community.

This year's Run/Walk is expected to be bigger and better than ever, Lois explained, because more and more people are stepping up to make it a success.

"This includes the Rotary Club of Richmond who, for the very first time, are partnering with our SOS team to share their exciting and effective expertise in a successful hosting of the run and walk. We are so grateful for their enthusiastic assistance and hope that the relationship between SOS and Rotary will continue to grow into the future."

"We are also very thankful to those who have faithfully assisted us in the past including our sponsors, individuals and groups who give so generously of their time and talents, and the great team at SOS Children's Village B.C.

To the retired Bouchards, the secret to enjoying life is pretty simple – get involved in helping others! It was back in the 1970s that they learned through a family member about the challenges of children placed in foster care.

"We were saddened to find that foster kids often move from family to family many times, a recipe for lifelong instability. Only 25 per cent graduate high school and family fracture is common because siblings can go to different homes and even different provinces!" said Lois. "Recent attention has focussed on the fact that 700 B.C. youth leave foster care every year at age 19, often facing homelessness and despair."

Shortly after she began to research how foster care is handled in this country and beyond, SOS Kinderdorf International came to her attention.

"In the early '80s, I began to correspond with SOS



International Secretary-General Dr. Hans Reinprecht. Through the work of SOS founder Dr. Hermann Gmeiner many children had found temporary and/or permanent care in SOS Children's Villages after the Second World War."

The Bouchards rolled up their sleeves.

Help from many volunteers and organizations made it possible in 1999 to open the first of five SOS Children's Village B.C. homes in Surrey, each with a full-time surrogate parent or parents so youth can grow up in a stable family environment.

Therapies are provided so kids can heal from traumas suffered along the way and now SOS B.C. outreach therapeutic programs are also helping children and youth with challenges in the larger community, explained Lois.

While there have been many fundraisers to benefit SOS B.C. programs, thus far the 5-10 K and 2K Family Walk on the Middle Arm dyke trail has raised close to \$75,000. "We have something for everyone," Lois said. "Grandparents bring their grandchildren to enjoy the fresh air and fitness and the kids love the children's crafts and games. Those doing the longer distance enjoy the scenery and the flat course."

The popular Silent Auction will again feature children's wooden fold-up stools and other items hand-crafted by Gilles Bouchard's buddies from the Richmond Seniors' Centre carpentry shop.

"This is just one example of how SOS is bringing out the best in community involvement," said Lois. "Everyone can pitch in and donate goods and services and our volunteers show up faithfully each year to help us help the children."

## SPECIAL THANK YOUS!

- **Envision Financial** provided us with a **\$300** cheque through their Employee Giving Campaign
- **KD Technical Services** donated **\$500** to the SOS Run & Walk
- **NexS Security Services** donated **\$500** to the SOS Run & Walk
- **Northwest Odd Fellow/Rebekah Association** donated **\$213** that was collected from their District Assembly in White Rock
- **Rotary Club of Richmond** donated **\$2,500**
- **Tag Liquor Store Cambie Plaza** generously donated **\$1,500** to the SOS Run & Walk
- **TELUS** provided us with a **\$200** cheque from employee donations
- **Vancouver Foundation-Youth Homelessness Initiative** for the first cheque of **\$48,000** of a three year grant to Transition to Adulthood
- Bill Emerton kindly donated \$600
- David and Barbara Head kindly donated \$300

- Jun Kang kindly donated \$500
- Henry Nowak kindly donated \$1,200
- David and Fay Roberts kindly donated \$500
- Claude Sergerie kindly donated \$300

SOS Children's Village BC appreciates the support and generosity towards the children, our programs, and our organization.



*Douglas with Pamela Ottas, Vice Chair Rebekah Assembly*



## **PARENT DRIVEN AUTISM SERVICES (PDAS) PARTNERS WITH BRIDGES YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION**

We are pleased to announce the formation of new social and life skill groups to assist youth in developing attitudes and skills necessary to help them prepare for their future. They are designed for children and teens with: Asperger's Syndrome, High Functioning Autism, PDD-NOS, Anxiety, ADHD, or other social/behavioural needs.

These groups will be led by our new SOS Children's Village BC Behaviour Consultant, Jeff Prasad, B.Ed

Jeff received a Bachelor of Education and maintains active status with the BC College of Teachers. Jeff has dedicated the past 10 years to working with youth and teenagers with Autism and a variety of other special needs. He has experience as a teacher, Behavioural Interventionist, and Positive Behaviour Support Consultant. These experiences have given Jeff the opportunity to learn and teach numerous skills including behaviour management skills, social development, anger management, sensory integration, and implementing visuals as supports.

He has a true passion for social skill development and his philosophy is based on the idea that the first step to teaching youth and teens to be successful in the social environment is to instill the understanding that being social is fun. Also, Jeff believes that all children and youth are unique and may require a variety of different learning opportunities to meet their specific needs. He believes that everyone in the program has strengths on which successful social skill development can be learned, nurtured, and built upon.

Children who have difficulty with social skills often need guided support and encouragement to help



them visualize and put into effect new ways of connecting and staying connected to peers. In our groups, facilitators teach various skills through practice scenarios in a fun and encouraging way so that children can improve their abilities to communicate with peers and others who may enter their lives. Our groups focus on improving a child's overall self-confidence, making and keeping friends, and behaving appropriately when in stressful situations. Children are taught how to implement what is learned in group into their outside environment.

Our goal is to provide a variety of activities, discussions, and educational experiences that teach our group members skills and nurture independence. We believe that building on strengths helps to instil positive self-esteem and teaches youth the confidence required to take charge of their own lives. Together we strive to build the philosophy that they have the ability to contribute to society and have a positive impact on the world around them.

For more information about these groups, or to learn about our other new addition – an Autism Parent Support Group - please visit our website: [www.sosbc.org](http://www.sosbc.org)



## ROLL OUT THOSE LAZY, HAZY INSTRUCTIVE DAYS OF SUMMER

By Kistie Singh, Education Coordinator & Village Manager



This summer, SOS Children's Village BC is working closely with Metis Family Services to provide a two day summer camp in August on the 20th and 21st.

We are opening our Village site to accommodate the summer camps which will be open to both villagers and families involved with Metis Family Services. The aim of the summer camps is to provide some cultural exposure to our kids in care.

There will be lots of fun activities including beading, jig dancing, and storytelling!

Along with the hustle and bustle of summer activities, SOS Children's Village BC will also be providing its annual Prep Squad in partnership with our local Cloverdale Library at the end of August to help kids prepare for the upcoming school year. Time to get our thinking caps on, school will be just around the corner!

Most of our Learning Club teachers are off for the summer, but a few stay on board to provide learning opportunities to vulnerable populations in our community. This year, SOS Children's Village BC will be teaming up with Baobab Inclusive Empowerment Society, to provide lessons and programming to the kids registered in their summer program. It's a fun way to keep kids active and learning during the summer, while also helping at-risk and vulnerable families.

And of course, we'll hopefully be enjoying a nice summer BBQ at the Village. A date hasn't been locked in just yet as we want to ensure our families are available, but keep an eye out on our Happy Friday blog to see when we set a date!

It's going to be a great summer!

## A MILESTONE TO REMEMBER

Lulu Shen, Media Sales and Marketing Director of iTalkBB Media – Chinese Television Division, made a goal to help 12 non-profit organizations this year to celebrate her 50th birthday...and she chose SOS BC as one of them! She has graciously offered to help us raise awareness by showing the 30 second trailer of our film *It Takes a Village* on their platform across Canada for the rest of the year, and showing our ad for the SOS BC Run & Walk to

viewers in the Lower Mainland. iTalkBB provides cutting edge audio-visual entertainment and cultural programming to Chinese communities around the world through a streaming digital platform. iTalkBB is also registering a team for the Run & Walk. Heartfelt thanks Lulu for your kindness and support!





## WOULD YOU GIVE YOUR JACKET TO JOHANNES?

SOS Children's Villages Norway made a splash across the globe earlier this year. Their ad quickly went viral online, racking up an astounding 14 million views on YouTube. They asked: What would you do if you saw a freezing child? By setting up a hidden camera and placing Johannes at a bus stop, in Oslo, Norway, the answer was revealed and the world was moved by the results. The video was made to raise awareness of the situation for children in Syria, and to raise funds for SOS Norway's winter campaign. The hope was that the public would see that they should care about children in Syria just as much as they care about this boy Johannes in Norway. View it here: <http://youtu.be/L908j9QPZc8>



## DID YOU KNOW?

SOS Children's Villages Germany recently launched a website to connect sponsors to SOS Villages around the world. It's an innovative way to drive traffic to their site and to enable sponsors to do something that's incredibly important to them: show their commitment. The website enables you to travel to any of the 545 SOS Children's Villages worldwide and connect to them virtually. Based on Google Maps, you can look into the villages from above and see their unique structure and how different they sometimes are from their surroundings. Check out the amazing virtual tour at: [www.mein-sos-kinderdorf.de](http://www.mein-sos-kinderdorf.de)





## POP SOME TAGS AT THE THRIFT SHOP DOWN THE ROAD

Spring has finally sprung and what better way to get in the spirit than by clearing out all those clothes and other hidden treasures taking up space in your house and dropping them off at one of the SOS Children's Village BC Thrift Stores! Not only does spring cleaning help get rid of all that built-up dust around your home, and items you no longer need, the act itself seems to aid in clearing your head of clutter as well. Summer here we come!

We have two lovely locations in Steveston, Richmond (3800 Moncton Street) and Kerrisdale, Vancouver (2319 West 41st Avenue). Check out our website for the full list of what we can and

cannot accept at our stores. At this time of year, books are in demand as the days get warmer and reading outdoors becomes a pleasant possibility. So don't forget to donate your novels after reading them, and help us help foster children in BC!



## CONNECTING SOS VILLAGES

Our new SOS Children's Village BC ambassador Eleni Georgantas - who leads the SOS Club at University Hill Elementary in Vancouver - flew to Greece in March after being invited by the National Director of SOS Greece to the 'Ambassadors in Concert' charity event, that took place in Athens. She was there as a guest art and English teacher for the activities taking place at the event and at SOS Children's Village Vari.

Her first day at Vari involved working with three groups of SOS children and as well as kids from the local community, teaching about BC Aboriginal animal meanings. They were fascinated by the Aboriginal history of British Columbia and worked hard to create their aboriginal animals with detail.

The University Hill SOS Club also made hand-drawn cards for the Greek SOS children. Everyone in Vari received a card, and there were so many that they were given out at Easter time too.

