

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**British Columbians Agree B.C.'s Foster Care System is a 'Mess', but SOS Children's Village B.C. Provides a Working Example of How Children in Care Should be Treated**

**Surrey, British Columbia** So many innocent children have died in the foster care system that they have literally lost track. There has been extensive coverage in the news media of the agonizing issues facing children in care. Due to public pressure, every one of the major political parties in the 2017 Provincial General Election specifically mention in their platforms what they will do to help children in care (past elections have not seen this level of focus).

**The good news is that a working model already exists in British Columbia of how children in care should be treated.** SOS Children's Villages is the world's largest non-denominational child development charity and has existed for over 65 years with presence in 134 countries and 572 Villages. SOS Children's Village B.C. has operated the local village for over 20 years, separate from the foster care system, with solutions generated at a different level than the problems. SOS B.C. is committed to breaking the generational cycles of family breakdown, trauma, dysfunction, and death – so committed that they are building a template of care proven to work in the B.C. context, and sharing that model across North America.

Many children are as battered and abandoned by the foster care system – chronically underfunded for decades – as when they had been with their biological families. **These children have not chosen their circumstances.** It is therefore up to us to create a village in which children can thrive, heal, and build healthy self-reliance for a lifetime. They have the right to the same level of loving care that any parent would offer their own kids.

**SOS Children's Village B.C. provides the professional caregivers, sibling dynamics, homes, and village of support that every child needs and deserves.** Due to trauma and mental health conditions such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, foster children are frequently at risk of emotional disturbances, delayed social development, and poor educational performance. Foster parents who raise these children require ongoing special resources and support. SOS B.C. addresses the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual needs of those in care. They do this by actively creating opportunities, programs, and services for children to become balanced, responsible, contributing members of society.

The SOS B.C. model is based on **lifelong engagement** and **embracing the cultural heritage of each child.** Indeed, 61% of children in care in B.C. are Aboriginal, while only 9% of the general child population is Aboriginal. Like any parent, SOS B.C. doesn't believe that a relationship ends with a child on their 19th birthday, their Transition to Adulthood Program helps young adults move from the dependency enforced by being in care, to independence. Unlike the foster care system, SOS creates permanency: a stable childhood for children who have had abusive

parents or who do not have any parents at all. The village is a trauma-informed environment with professional therapists and specialized training for SOS caregivers, and wrap-around programs involving music, recreation, academic support, and life skills development.

The SOS B.C. model takes into account that the most vulnerable and least visible children in the province of British Columbia unfortunately receive highly compromised service in the mainstream system due to chronic underfunding. The charity is implementing the proven and successful SOS International model in the context of the complex challenges and specifics of British Columbia, **as an example for the citizens of B.C. to see how the effective investment of funds can permanently break the cycle of foster care and also lead to Aboriginal reconciliation.**

If you asked one of SOS Children's Village B.C.'s thousands of donors why they give to the charity, they would stress that: **"This is how foster children and youth should be treated."**

Learn more at: [www.sosbc.org](http://www.sosbc.org).

#### **About SOS Children's Village BC**

SOS Children's Villages is the world's largest non-governmental, non-denominational child development organization for fostered, orphaned, and abandoned children. It has existed for over 65 years with presence in 134 countries and 572 Villages. British Columbia is home to the only SOS Children's Village in Canada. SOS Children's Village BC provides homes, a supportive community, and programs to help foster children and youth in need grow into caring, self-reliant adults.

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