



## SOS GLOBAL CITIZEN: S.O.S. / glo-bal / cit-i-zen /, noun.

1. A member of the SOS global village family
2. One who supports every child's right to a loving home, regardless of background, race, or nationality
3. Someone who believes that supporting an SOS child is an investment in the future

### SOS Children's Villages Around the World



SOS CV BHOPAL, INDIA



SOS CV MOIN, COSTA RICA



SOS CV TELDE, SPAIN



SOS CV PUTAIN, CHINA



SOS CV LUMBINI, NEPAL



SOS CV DAFRA, BURKINA FASO



SOS Children's Villages may look different all around the world but they have many things in common. They are built with local materials and follow the local architecture. Built to last, they are modest, sturdy and integrated into the local community.



"We were heartened by what SOS Children's Villages is doing for these children and for the community. Our children took to the other kids immediately, and before you knew it, they were drinking Coca Cola, dancing and jumping rope."

Jodie Lesh, Sherman Oaks, CA  
Sponsors child in Limon, Costa Rica

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# SOS GLOBAL CITIZENS



www.SOS-USA.org

Making dreams of an abandoned child come true



Dear SOS Supporters,

In this first issue of SOS Global Citizens, SOS donors share wonderful stories of why they support SOS Villages around the world. Those who support SOS, year after year, are a testament to SOS as an effective and dynamic organization.

These stories are an interesting range of reasons why people became committed to SOS and we hope to hear yours too. Perhaps it's a European background, travel through a war-torn country or a fundamental understanding of the needs of abandoned children. Whatever the reason, the results are the same: lives are transformed because of your help!

Not only are you leaving a legacy by investing in a child's future today, you are leaving a lasting impression on your own children and their future, as global citizens.

I hope these stories inspire you—knowing that it is never too late, you are never too old to help change a child's life!

*Heather*

Heather A. Paul, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
SOS Children's Villages-USA



## 101 Years and Counting: Lifetime Commitment to SOS

With a generous heart and working on his "second hundred years," Carl recently celebrated his 101st birthday and has been contributing to SOS Children's Villages for 60 of those years! After being born and raised in Seattle until age ten, Carl and his family moved to Germany, where he was educated and worked in his father's export business until World War II. After the war, Carl witnessed the birth of the first SOS Children's Villages in devastated Europe before returning to Seattle where he worked in a winery business until retirement.

Carl and his late wife Erna, who shared a marriage of 73 years, visited the SOS Children's Village in southern Austria near Villach, where they met Willibald, the boy they were sponsoring.



Carl & Erna Kroll celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1984

"The village was beautiful," he says. "The children sang for us, showed us around, and invited us for dinner."

The Krolls kept in touch with Willibald for many years and visited him as a young man when he was an apprentice in Vienna. Carl fondly recalls that day when Willibald took time off to show his wife and him around the city.

"I love SOS and have nothing but good to say about it." Carl has introduced the next generations of his family to SOS with the hope they will carry on his long, faithful, and generous tradition of support.



David Mitchell talking with children at an SOS Children's Village in Haiti.



## David Mitchell: SOS Ambassador

"SOS is like no other charitable group I have ever worked with, because it seems to be able to 'multiply' the funds it is given to benefit children. With most organizations, I wonder where the money goes. With SOS, I wonder how they do it with the money they receive."

Since 2005, David has been an ambassador for SOS. At his own expense, David has traveled to Eastern Europe, Nicaragua, and Haiti. Because of his many trips to Haiti before and after the January 2010 earthquake, he knows the SOS staff and children in the Santo Village. Some of the kids keep in touch with him via email. On his visits, he renders aid as needed. Upon his return, he reports to SOS-USA on the conditions and special needs of the Villages he's seen.

David's contributions are often made in honor of friends' birthdays instead of buying them gifts. In this way, he helps meet the needs of SOS children while spreading the SOS story and sharing his compassion for children.

"I am taken by the broad work of SOS, the way they provide schools and health care to the communities around their villages, how they protect kids from exploitation like forced labor, prostitution, and child soldiering, and how they provide disaster relief and rebuilding." He has an avid interest in the SOS Family Strengthening Programs that provide support, services and resources to help keep families together.

David Mitchell became familiar with SOS Children's Villages while doing humanitarian work with children in Bosnia after the genocides of the 1990s and in Indonesia after the 2004 tsunami. As a private businessman in the Dallas area and a former U.S. Air Force pilot, David sponsors four children in Nicaragua and Bosnia-Herzegovina and is "sold" on the SOS model.



## A Kentucky Couple hosts two Ethiopian daughters, born a generation apart

Ever since David Harl and his wife, Josa, got married, they wanted to adopt. "Instead of bringing another child into this world, we wanted to find a child already here who needed parents—where the need is greatest," says David. They knew they wanted to be involved with Africa and decided Ethiopia was the right place.

After they brought back 3-year-old baby Saidi to their home, the Harls got involved with a group of adoptive parents. One of those parents, a professor at Berea College, introduced him to Etagegn,



L to R: David, Saidi, Josa, Etagegn

an SOS Ethiopian student studying Public Health. After learning that her host family moved away, it was a natural fit for the Harls to host Etagegn during her studies. "The Ethiopian connection is great for our daughter and both girls share so much in common. Already they are like siblings."

Remarkably, when Etagegn told David about her mother, sisters and brothers at home, it was not apparent right away that she was an orphan. She talked about them like biological family. David was so intrigued, he had to visit the place and see for himself.

In February, David traveled to the SOS Children's Village Addis Ababa, where Etagegn grew up. It was important to him to learn more about his host daughter's family and to create videos, which he does for a living. As a result of David's trip, you can view his short videos at [www.SOS-USA.org/videos](http://www.SOS-USA.org/videos).

David says of his trip to the SOS Village: "I also visited five government-run orphanages there. They were not like SOS. SOS is not an orphanage; it is a real family. The conditions at the orphanages were poor, disease was a problem, and the children were basically raising themselves. They were given nothing more than food and a roof. At SOS, kids find opportunity and happiness—you can see it on their faces. I think the SOS Village is a wonderful place and I believe that Etagegn will accomplish her dream because of it: to be the Minister of Health in Ethiopia!"



## The Foells: Watching their SOS children grow up brings joy to their lives

Ankie Foell knows what it is like to be a child who goes to bed hungry and afraid. Born in the Netherlands during World War II, she spent time in a concentration camp in Asia. Her experience compels her to be a fervent "campaigner" for SOS, where children are rescued from hunger and fear.

"Everyone is familiar with SOS Children's Villages in the Netherlands," says the piano teacher and concert pianist. She is so taken with SOS that today she donates the

proceeds from her piano concerts to SOS children.

Ankie and her husband Wes became acquainted with the very first SOS Village in Imst, Austria, when living in Vienna in the 1970s. Through Wes' work at the University of Wisconsin, addressing energy and environmental issues in developing countries, they have traveled extensively and have visited SOS Villages in a dozen countries!

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Wes and Ankie Foell, with their first sponsored child Sugihartono. He is now an accountant and IT specialist.



## SOS Alumni Corner



Wanda, SOS Coconut Creek, Florida Alumna

"I spent 10 years at SOS and was nurtured, guided, learned to trust again, and to believe in myself and be the best I could be. I am a responsible and loving mother today because of the nurturing, care, and love I was given at SOS."

Nathalie with SOS Mother, SOS Santo, Haiti Alumna



"Speaking to any of my SOS brothers and sisters always makes my day. The best thing for me is that we all still feel like we have a stake in each others' well-being."

"I can remember always playing soccer with brothers and living as a normal child, surrounded by my siblings, being taken care of by mother and going to school and enjoying life."

Michael Yaw, SOS Tamale, Ghana Alumnus





## "SOS is not an Orphanage"

Originally from Canada, Steven and Katherine Leonard live in Seattle. They travel "to learn about other cultures and go to places off the beaten track." Four years ago they were touched to learn about two young brothers working in a Bolivian mine to help support their mother and pay for school.

"Our desire to help children in similar predicaments led Katherine to begin researching organizations that focused on helping children. That's how she discovered SOS," says Steven. Its broad approach to raising children was "a perfect fit for what we were looking for."



Steven and Katherine Leonard at SOS Honduras in 2009.

The Leonards are delighted to be sponsoring children in Bolivia, Honduras, Indonesia, Thailand and Ethiopia. A wonderful bonus is that Steven's employer matches dollar-for-dollar all ten sponsorships!

To become more involved they began writing and sending photos to each child twice a year. They have visited their sponsored children in Honduras and Bolivia.

"In Honduras we arranged with SOS to have someone drive us to the Village and secure an interpreter," Steven recalls. "We were excited and a little nervous about meeting the children. Being greeted with big hugs from them was an emotional experience."

The couple played games with the kids, walked around the SOS Village and neighborhood, and basked in the children's warm smiles. "We were graciously welcomed to stay for dinner and enjoyed a delicious meal. It was difficult to say good-bye," says Steven. "Traveling through Honduras, we were able to witness the poverty there and see the opportunity that the SOS children have. To know that SOS kids have a chance to live in a home where love is so evident, where they can become educated and dream of possibilities that may otherwise not be possible, reaffirmed our commitment to SOS Children's Villages."

They share that visiting the Villages makes it so much easier to describe to people that "SOS is not an orphanage; it really is a neighborhood, a community with a family in each home, with love, structure and a real family environment." Steven and Katherine plan to visit more Villages.

"SOS represents what we value: family structure, education, opportunity to reach goals, and abundant love. We especially like that SOS keeps siblings together. We realized we could have an impact, whether it was one child or ten children. It is a lifetime commitment we gladly support."



## SOS: Where the Ideal is Real



Jai and his family (father, wife, and daughter) on their visit to the Aluva Village, India.

"My first contact with SOS Children's Villages happened in 1984 when I visited the village in Thrissur in Kerala. Before my visit, the ideals behind SOS appeared to me too romantic to be practical and successful. But the SOS organization there under Victor Pynadath left a strong impression on me. All the homes in the Village were happy and under loving care of the mothers. The children followed the normal daily routine of any other child in Kerala. Victor explained to me the organizational structure of SOS and how Villages were run. I left Thrissur a strong believer in the mission and success of SOS Children's Villages. So, it was natural for me to reach out to SOS and contribute, once I was secure in my career. Now I have a four-year old myself and I realize the importance of a stable family structure in the development of a child. In the last few years, I had the opportunity to support SOS Children's Villages through their U.S. office. This office had arranged our visit to the second SOS Village in Kerala in the city of Aluva, very close to where I grew up."

- Written by Jai Puthenveetil



## The Foells...

The couple first visited SOS children they had sponsored in Indonesia in 1981. More recent trips to that country have allowed them to keep up with the children, who are now adults. The Foells "are delighted" to see the happy and productive lives of the SOS children they once supported. Today they sponsor children in Indonesia, Cambodia, Lebanon, China and Thailand.

Special guests hosted by the Foells in their home include the founder of SOS Children's Villages, Hermann Gmeiner, and Norwegian actress, Liv Ullman.

"We are inspired by the optimism and spirit of the people we've met at SOS," they say. Ankie and Wes also admire the SOS adherence to rules and principles, and that the SOS love for children is "consistent and lasting." As sponsors and donors, they appreciate that SOS keeps them well-informed.



## Michael Davis: An SOS big brother

Michael Davis learned of SOS through his employer American Express, which asked its workers to get involved in a back-to-school fundraising event with foster children at the SOS Children's Village near Fort Lauderdale. But Michael wanted to do more than raise funds.

"I was eager to find a place that had the same values and principles that I believe are important," says Michael. "After meeting the kids at SOS and understanding the group's mission, there was no doubt in my mind that SOS was the place for me to volunteer."

In 2000, Michael began mentoring 11-year-old Freddy, who was living at SOS Florida with his three older sisters.

The two started to get to know each other slowly, spending time together once a week. Michael encouraged Freddy to become serious about school and concentrate on his education. Their relationship gained strength and steam and three years later, Freddy was proud to be an usher at Michael's wedding.



L to R: Freddy, Michael, Brandon, Robin

Michael continues to raise money for SOS through American Express. His efforts have included compiling holiday food baskets for each of the 12 SOS homes and coordinating an employee initiative to help fulfill holiday wish lists of the children.

Now, 11 years after their introduction at the Village, Michael and Freddy continue to enjoy a meaningful relationship. At age 22, Freddy is a "big brother" to Michael and wife Robin's two-year-old son Brandon. Freddy credits much of his success to Michael's involvement.

"I am very proud of Freddy's accomplishments and I support everything positive that he is doing in his life," says Michael.

## SOS Children's Villages in the USA



In the United States, SOS Children's Villages are located in Illinois (Chicago and Lockport) and in Florida (Coconut Creek). These three Villages provide hope, healing and homes to foster children who have been removed from their families by the public child welfare agency and the court. The children have experienced abuse, neglect, or abandonment... often all of these, along with frequent moves in foster care and separation from their siblings.

Programs and services vary among the Villages and include tutoring, mental health therapy, mentors, extra-curricular activities, life skills training, adolescent parenting support, community day care, and transitional and independent living services, which continue long after the youth have "graduated" from SOS and established themselves in college or in the community. Funding sources include individual and corporate contributions, government contracts, grants, and community events hosted by or for SOS.

You can learn more about SOS in the U.S. at [www.sosflorida.com](http://www.sosflorida.com) and [www.sosillinois.org](http://www.sosillinois.org).





## The SOS "Bucket List": Leaving a Legacy

In the movie "The Bucket List," Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman escape from a cancer ward to live out their dreams: drive a race car, climb the Pyramids, skydive. In the end, they discover that complete strangers can become the best of friends through a shared experience.

Do you have a bucket list? If so, have you thought about adding "giving a gift that will be celebrated"? You don't have to make this gift tomorrow, next year, or even in the next ten years: it can be a gift that connects you to complete strangers

whose lives will be forever changed because of you.

Leaving a legacy to SOS Children's Villages is simple. If you are drafting your will for the first time or updating it following a life change, please consider leaving SOS in it. Your attorney can help you with the specific language, but it can be as simple as:

I give and bequeath (percent of estate or dollar amount) to SOS Children's Villages - USA.

Your legacy can help a child live out their own "bucket list":

- Live with a mother and siblings who love me.
- Grow up in my own home.

- Be part of a supportive village community.

Want to learn more? Please contact Margie Bruszer, Major Gifts Officer, at [mbruszer@sos-usa.org](mailto:mbruszer@sos-usa.org) or (202) 347-7922.



## What Does Sponsorship Mean to You?



Mark Bonfoey San Jose, CA

**Q: How do you support SOS?**

A: I sponsor ZhouMia who lives in the Chengdu Village. I believe it was Yuan Fen, (destiny), that we found ZhouMia and that she found us.

**Q: Why do you support SOS?**

A: They are accountable, they have the children's welfare, safety, and long-term best interests as the strong, guiding principles of their organization. They are action-oriented, and a very responsible group from my experience as well.

**Q: How long have you been sponsoring an SOS child?**

A: For 2 years, after an earthquake hit the Chengdu region of China.



Linda Jackson Anchorage, AK

**Q: How do you support SOS?**

A: I sponsor a child in Nepal. I tell everyone about SOS. Many of my family and friends now sponsor SOS children. I do a lot of public speaking and always include information about SOS and recommend/list them on our website.

**Q: Why do you support SOS?**

A: SOS gives the children love, a home, family, and normalcy. As a former teacher myself, I am of course interested in the schools and education. I also think the attention to keeping your own culture/values is impressive and important.

**Q: How long have you been sponsoring an SOS child?**

A: Really since that first visit in 1999. I am now on my second sponsored child.



Elaine Jenkins Germantown, MD

**Q: How do you support SOS?**

A: I currently sponsor two Thai children in separate villages - I love the letters I receive from each, I get hand-made cards the kids make and photographs showing how they are growing and thriving as they get older.

**Q: Why do you support SOS?**

A: SOS is a place where I feel I can contribute and help provide a home, health care and an education to impoverished children raised in countries where it's possible they could be exploited and suffer without assistance from others.

**Q: How long have you been sponsoring an SOS child?**

A: 2 years.



## Generations of Giving: L. Brandes (New York)

During the aftermath of WWII in Europe, when just about everybody was walking the roads, I heard about a Mr. Grmeiner and his efforts to gather those children who, by those circumstances, had been separated from their parents and was trying, any which way, to find the individual parents for these children. He published by any and all means the names of the children, and as we heard, he had already succeeded for quite a number of them. Mr. Grmeiner and his family had taken the children into their home and care and kept up the search for their parents by listing their names, partially on walls or churches, etc., which was quite expensive.

After learning about Mr. Grmeiner and his efforts for this, my parents started to send money to him for the upkeep of the children and his efforts to join them again with their parents. Mr. Grmeiner succeeded eventually, after the "world" had become a bit more normal again, to join more and more of these children with their parents, while still taking care of those who, unfortunately, could not be joined with their families.

Out of this small beginning, the "SOS Kinderdorf" was born, and "Children's Villages" are now established all over the world.

My family kept on sending donations to Mr. Grmeiner for the upkeep of those children left in his and his family's care, as well as for the more and more numerous "Children's Villages" worldwide. I, personally, after leaving home, also continued donating to this wonderful organization to this day. After the death of my mother (my father, unfortunately, died at a relatively young age), I found old receipts from "SOS Children's Villages" in my mother's desk, as she also had continued sending donations to this wonderful organization.

This makes a long, long relationship for me (over 65 years) with a very worthwhile and excellent organization, and I will continue to support them.

- Written by L. Brandes

## Edith Grupp



Edith Grupp Jackson, Michigan

"These are my children!" This heartfelt phrase is Edith Grupp's response to the reason she has donated to SOS Children's Villages for over 40 years.

Edith grew up in Germany in the Northern end of the Black Forest. "After the war, the country was in rubble, and people didn't have much to give." However, Edith had a job and was able to give a little to the work of SOS, having learned of Mr. Grmeiner's efforts to start the first Village. In 1968, a marriage brought her to Jackson, Michigan,

where she continues to make her home. After arriving in the United States, she "lost touch for a while," then read an article about SOS in U.S. News and World Report and began contributing again.

When asked what she likes about SOS, Edith says "The whole idea...the way it started, the way the houses are separate instead of an orphanage, and the children live with a mother."

Edith is now retired and enjoys keeping up with the activities of SOS. She makes her gifts to SOS around her birthday, which makes her special day even happier.

Edith has included SOS Children's Villages in her Will...after all, "These are my children!"

