



SOS CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGES

S P O N S O R

# Gratitude Report



*\*Children's names changed to protect privacy.*

# A message from our CEO



Children and young people today face an increasingly unstable, unjust and insecure future. Around the world, we continue to see the devastating effects of armed conflict, prolonged inflation and rising poverty levels, alongside an alarming pattern of record-breaking droughts, heatwaves and floods.

But for children without loving homes or adequate parental care, a crisis is, unfortunately, nothing new. Losing a caregiver or growing up in a family on the verge of breakdown are uniquely disturbing experiences that can pose a serious threat to a child's development and well-being. The trauma associated with such experiences may extend into adulthood and can be worsened by external challenges, such as conflicts or natural disasters.

As a member of our SOS Children's Villages family, you're helping a child find their way through crisis, grief or hardship. The importance of secure relationships and a support network cannot be overstated—having a trusted person to lean on is crucial for mental well-being, learning and development. As the world continues to be rocked by emergencies and more children and young people are deprived of a stable environment and family, sponsors like you are vital sources of support.

## **Thank you.**

Thank you for your compassion and action in protecting children at risk of growing up alone. As a child sponsor myself, I know the incredible impact

we have in helping to provide safe homes, loving families and life-changing resources to the children who need it most.

Sponsors like you helped provide 69,000 children with a loving home, connection with their biological siblings and the resources they need to thrive this year. Your support gives a child the most precious gifts: love, support, and the knowledge that they aren't alone.

Thank you for your commitment. Together, we are ensuring no child is left behind!

For the children,



Jill Nosach

*Chief Executive Officer and Child Sponsor*

# Love matters

The white walls of Christel's bedroom are covered with colorful, candid photos, and she looks at them daily. The printed, smiling faces of her SOS brothers and sisters and the loving eyes of her SOS Mother are a reminder that she's not alone.

Born in a small village in Ghana, Christel lived with her mother, who struggled with an undiagnosed mental illness. When her mother tried to harm Christel—a newborn at the time—a neighbor intervened. Christel was removed from the unsafe situation and placed in the care of her maternal aunt.

But Christel's aunt could barely afford food and other basic needs for her own children. She knew she couldn't provide the love and support Christel deserved, so at three months old, Christel moved to SOS Children's Village Tamale in northern Ghana.

Now, 12 years later, Christel is flourishing with her SOS family. "Our house is filled with laughter, fun and games," she said. "There's a lot of warmth at home."

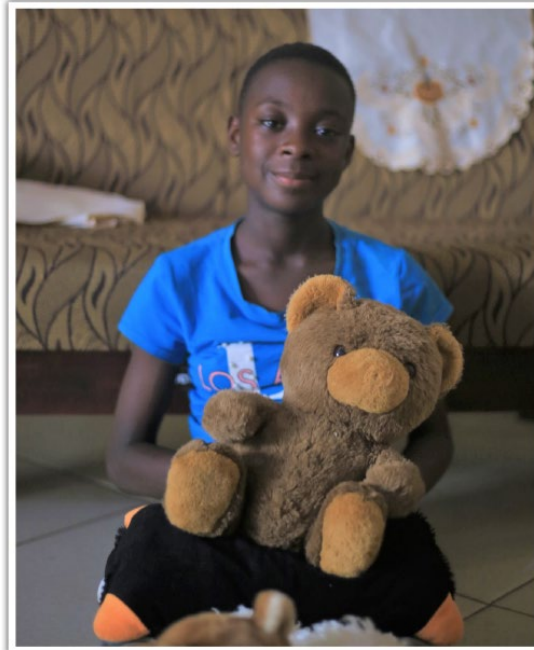
Healthy and loving familial bonds are crucial for a child's social and emotional development, so Christel visits her maternal aunt on holidays.

Building relationships with her aunt and cousins has helped her reconcile the questions in her past, find peace and solidify her developing identity.

Because of a generous sponsor like you, Christel is growing up in a safe home and with a loving family that provides her with all the resources she needs to thrive—now and in the future.

"I feel so blessed to be in a family that loves me unconditionally," Christel said. "A family who taught me that my past does not define my future. My happy childhood is shaping me into a positive person...the sky is the limit for me now."

Thank you for your compassion and dedication to ensuring every child has a loving family.



*"I feel so blessed to be in a family that loves me unconditionally."*

## Did you know?

Worldwide, 1 in 10 children are at risk of growing up alone. Without the protection, support and guidance of a trusted adult, these children are vulnerable to violence, poverty and exploitation. Thanks to generous sponsors like you, children around the world are growing up in safe homes, developing trusting relationships that are crucial to their long-term health and development.



# Asha and Dayo are learning, **thanks to you.**



Sisters Asha\* and Dayo\* lived in a crumbling apartment, breathing in air full of pollutants from the burning trash dump next door.

After their mother passed away, seven-year-old Asha was responsible for watching her two-year-old sister while their father went to work. But, when their father was incarcerated, the girls were left alone and vulnerable to hunger and exploitation.

*“We weren’t going to school,” Asha said.  
“We were always hungry and in old, dirty clothes. I did not have friends.”*

Without anyone to care for them, their future looked bleak. But then the girls were found alone and moved to the SOS Children’s Village in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Sipiwe, an SOS Mother, welcomed the girls with open arms.

“It was heartbreaking to hear the background of these little girls,” she said. “They didn’t look healthy with their thin frames. They hadn’t eaten a decent meal for a long time.”

Because of a compassionate sponsor like you, the girls have a safe home and loving family. With the foundation of a caring parent, the girls have the support they need to pursue a quality education.

Dayo is in fourth grade and loves to swim. In fact, she’s considered one of the best swimmers in the school. “I enjoy swimming. Kirsty Coventry [former Zimbabwean Olympic swimmer and world record holder] was a great swimmer and I want to be like her.”

She also dreams of being a dentist someday.

Asha is in sixth grade and dreams of being a pilot. “I see planes fly past in the sky and nothing holds them back,” she said. “Nothing will hold me back anymore. I have a place to call home and a caring mother. I go to a good school and love going there. I feel alive.”

Thank you for helping keep siblings together and providing a brighter future.

**Thank you for your compassion and dedication to ensuring every child has a loving family.**

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# Your support gives the gift of **healing**

When civil war erupted in the northern region of Ethiopia, Hannah lost everything—her home, her parents and her peace.

At seven years old, she feared for her life, sheltering from heavy gunfire and explosions with her parents. While attempting to flee the violence, she was separated from her mother and witnessed a devastating act of violence: her father's murder.

After she was rescued and treated for injuries at a local hospital, the local government reached out to SOS Children's Village in Bahir Dar, requesting Hannah be moved to the village.

Although Hannah was physically safe, the trauma of all she lived through plagued her. Hannah's SOS Mother, Kassech, knew how to best support her recovery as all SOS Children's Villages mothers are trained to provide trauma-informed care.

"When Hannah joined my family, she couldn't speak," Kassech said. "She woke up breathing heavily and afraid she was going to die. She needs encouragement and assurance of her safety every day to process the trauma."

Thanks to the generosity of a sponsor like you, Hannah also had mental health resources, including trained mental health and psychosocial counselor, Teresa Ngigi.

"Her little body is unable to process all that she experienced, so she just freezes," Ngigi said. "If there



*"Her little body is unable to process all that she experienced..."*

were no one to make Hannah feel a sense of safety in the chaos, then the impact would be much worse than it is with a parent present."

Hannah is receiving professional mental health care to heal from her traumatic experience and ensure it doesn't have negative long-term effects on her health.

With the support of a compassionate sponsor like you, the loving care of an SOS Mother and access to life-changing mental health resources, Hannah is healing.

"I see a smile and a spark in Hannah's eyes when she is playing," Kassech said. "She sleeps better these days and she is [adjusting to] school and everyday living."

**Thank you for providing transformative mental health care to the children who need it most.**



## Did you know?

Young women are more than twice as likely as young men not to be in education, employment or training. At SOS, we provide a quality education for all children as well as future career support—like the YouthCan! employability and entrepreneurship initiative, which has 52,000 young people enrolled and counting. Your sponsorship provides equal opportunities and future success!

# Your impact on **the future**

As a child sponsor, you are helping to provide a child with a safe home and loving family today, and you are also building the foundation for a brighter tomorrow.

Thousands of children graduate from SOS Children's Villages each year and go on to live full, happy lives because of sponsors like you.

Leo\* grew up in a SOS village in Mexico. Now a young adult, he is dedicated to helping others and advocating for children's rights on the global stage.

"I am grateful I grew up in a healthy environment only a family can give you," he said. "I didn't have to worry about a roof over my head, money or food. At [SOS Children's Villages], they gave me the opportunity to study and develop with the freedom to make my own decisions."

And he's not the only one.



## A study conducted in 40 countries from former SOS Children's Villages participants showed:

 **92%**

have **strong relationships** with friends and family and feel they **give good care to their own children**, passing down the care they received to the next generation.

 **59%**

have received education and skills & **feel they are succeeding in their job and earning a decent living.**



**82%**

feel they are experiencing **social and emotional well-being** and are **safe from discrimination and other harm.**

## Thank you

for investing in the life and future of a child in need!