SOS Community Impact

Spring 2024

The Spirit of Giving is still alive

I wish it could be Christmas every day.

It doesn't seem like four months since this song was seemingly on every radio, and the sentiment of the Christmas spirit was in everyone's hearts.

When I first started volunteering at SOS, our Executive-Director-to-be Susanna Newton told me that December is "all about Christmas." For the whole month, it seems like everything and everyone is focused on making sure that no family in the Oceanside area will go without: Without presents, without a meal, without feeling a little bit of love from the rest of us. And, year after year, our community comes through with an outpouring of money and gifts which we pass on to those in need. The Spirit of Giving was strong.

But now it's March, and Christmas has disappeared in the rear-view mirror. Our thoughts are now about spring and all the natural wonders that we experience here on Vancouver Island. There are gardens to plant, summers to plan, and golf courses ready to welcome us back.

But the needs we cared about at Christmas are still there. People are still going without.

If December is "all about Christmas" at SOS, the other eleven months are all about meeting the ever-present needs of the community. You'd have to live under a rock not to be aware of the impact the increased cost of living is having on many in our community. So many people just can't make ends meet. But because of people like you, SOS can be there every month of the year, providing a safety net to catch those who just have no one else to turn to. For more



than 55 years, we have acted on your behalf to help those who just need a hand, whether it be as simple as a little money to make rent, or combatting loneliness, or just giving someone a ride. Whatever it takes.

It may not be Christmas every day, but because of the generosity of SOS donors and volunteers like you, the Spirit of Giving is alive and well in our community twelve months a year. Maybe someone should write a catchy song.

— Paul Ruffell, SOS Board Chair

Seniors Advocacy Services recovering vital benefits

If Joanne had been told a year ago that she needed a new furnace, it would have sent her even further into depression. Without enough money to eat, let alone afford a large purchase, she would have been devastated. Joanne, whose name has been changed to protect her privacy, was in poor health, her home was falling apart, she had no money for food, and she was feeling hopeless before she called SOS for help. Fortunately, after receiving the help she needed from SOS Seniors Advocacy Services (SAS), the local senior has a new furnace, and the much-needed home repairs have started.

"I have a brand-new roof — one more winter and the house would have been ruined," said Joanne. But the biggest difference in her life? "I can sleep again," she said.

This is not an isolated story. Since July 2023, our SAS Coordinator has been able to recover $118,000



Brenda Wasnock, SOS Seniors Advocacy Services Coordinator.

in benefits for local seniors. And that's why this service, and other SOS support programs, are such a lifeline for local residents.

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744 Primrose St., Qualicum 250.752.2040
sos@sosd69.com | www.sosd69.com

Society *of* Organized Services

SOS 2024 Impact Makers Gala

On Friday, June 7, one of Canada's most beloved Impact Makers is returning to Oceanside to help SOS raise funds to ensure vulnerable seniors in our area have the supports they need to age in place with dignity.

This formal (black tie optional) fundraising Gala will be held at the spectacular Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort & Conference Centre. Join friends and neighbours for a memorable evening of music, great dining, and amazing silent auction items and raffle draws, all for a good cause.

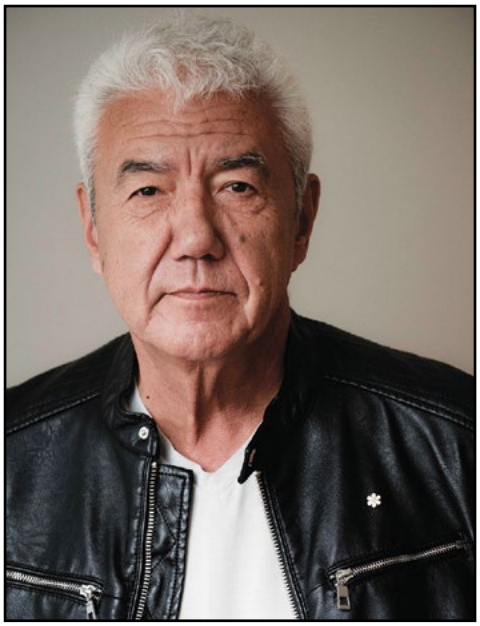
The evening will begin with welcome bubbles and delicious hot and cold appetizers. Attendees will get the chance to peruse the silent auction and raffle items while they take in live music by local jazz pianist and vocalist, Gary Lovell. After a gourmet meal, audience members will enjoy a captivating performance by Tom Jackson.

Starting April 8, tickets will be available to purchase through the SOS website for $150. At that time, people will also be able to create their online account for bidding on the auction and raffle draws which will be announced in May.

This event will support SOS programs for local seniors to overcome financial emergencies, access advocacy and maintain social connections.

A variety of sponsorship opportunities are available to help make an even bigger impact in our region. For more information, please email resource@sosd69.com.

Visit www.sosd69.com on April 8 for tickets or more information.



Tom Jackson will perform at the SOS Impact Makers Gala on June 7.

2024 IMPACT MAKERS Gala
Presented by Society of Organized Services

SOS Thrift Shop in good hands as roles change

The constant buzz of activity and behind-the-scenes intricacies of SOS Thrift Shop are not new to Jackie Brice. That is part of the reason why she's heard so many encouraging sentiments as she prepares to take the reins from outgoing Operations Manager, Paulette Harcourt.

"It's been very reassuring to hear such supportive comments from staff and volunteers," Jackie said.

Jackie has been at SOS for 21 years and held the position of Assistant Operations Manager for the last three. Jessica King has been with SOS for 18 years, and she will be stepping up as Assistant Operations Manager. "They are both very capable and bring extensive knowledge along with a steadfast commitment to ensuring that the Thrift Shop will keep growing and developing in the best way possible," said Paulette Harcourt.



Jackie Brice (right) is the new Operations Manager at SOS Thrift Shop, and Jessica King is stepping up as the Assistant Operations Manager.

Besides regular day-to-day operations, the Teen Shopping Event will take place at SOS Thrift Shop twice a year, the next one slated for May 1. There will also be a second Winter Solstice event taking place in December, 2024.

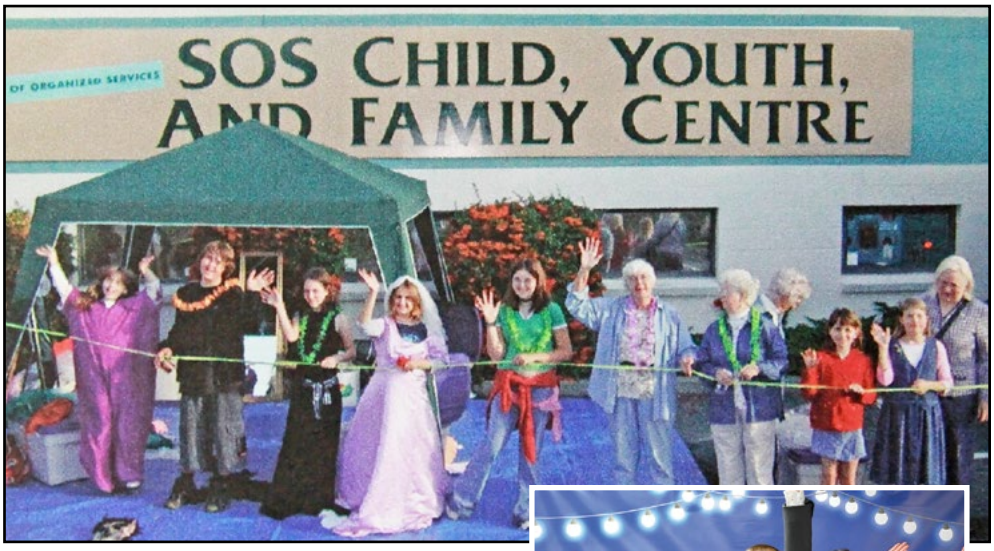
20 years of Child, Youth & Family Programs

Twenty years ago, SOS identified the need for a designated space for children, youth and family programs. That idea was realized in 2004, and a Grand Opening Ceremony took place on September 28.

Since that time, SOS has expanded and evolved, now offering dozens of free programs from two Community Services Centres, one in Parksville and the other at Qualicum Commons.

One local mother, who participated in these programs for years, spoke about how beneficial they were for her and her family.

"My two sons benefited from being cuddled and cared for each Wednesday morning for two hours. They also benefited from having a relaxed and refreshed mother to come home with," she said. "I met other mothers who had similar concerns to mine, and I formed some lifelong friendships. The program helped all of us deal with the demands of motherhood and both the moms and children have benefited greatly."





Top photo, the SOS Child, Youth & Family Centre Grand Opening, Sept. 2004. Bottom photo, SOS GradWear program models, 2024.

Alice Tulia, the Child, Youth & Family Programs Manager at SOS, has been with the organization for 14 years and sees the impacts of the programs daily. She explained that the positive environment in programming empowers children and youth to thrive, and it also gives them strategies to deal with challenges.

Another parent, who has accessed several SOS programs, agrees that children gain a lot from attending.

"It has helped my son make new friends, learn new skills, and be an active part of our community. I am so very thankful for this program that betters our children's lives."

Volunteer recruitment work beginning to see results

When the pandemic struck in 2020, many SOS programs were put on hold, and so were the majority of SOS volunteer positions. Rebuilding the volunteer base has been a long process, but 2024 has shown positive results.

"We have seen the busiest January and February for volunteer recruitment since before the pandemic," said Heather Jones, Volunteer Resources Coordinator.

Although there are still a variety of positions to fill, the response from the community has been promising, said Heather.

The annual Spring Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon is set to take place on April 18, during National Volunteer Week, at Tigh-Na-Mara Resort. The event will include a gourmet lunch, live classical guitar, and prizes. Active volunteers will receive an invitation by mail or email.

"We're so grateful for all of our amazing volunteers who dedicate their time and talents to making our community a better place," said Heather. To view current volunteer opportunities, visit the SOS website.



Volunteers enjoy lunch at the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon in 2023.

Counting on the predictable during uncertainty

The unpredictability of our world today makes it even more essential that social service organizations like SOS can count on a reliable source of funds to meet the growing needs of their communities. That's one of the reasons why monthly giving programs are so popular.

During the pandemic, SOS benefitted from a loyal and growing community of supporters who helped to keep our doors open by becoming monthly supporters though our Grateful Hearts Circle.

When we asked them why they chose to support us in that way, they explained that they appreciated the convenience of donating smaller amounts every month through either automatic bank withdrawal or their credit card, rather than giving bigger donations once or twice a year. And some actually do both at special times of the year like Christmas.

Our monthly supporters also tell us they feel better knowing they are providing SOS with reliable cash flow every month so that when times are tough, SOS will still have funding to keep programs and services running.



We would be honoured to welcome you as a new member of Grateful Hearts Circle, if you are not already a monthly supporter. You can either sign up online (sosd69.com/grateful-hearts-circle) with your credit card, or fill in the form below and mail it to us. It's convenient for you and means the world to your community!

JOIN GRATEFUL HEARTS CIRCLE TODAY!

DONATION REPLY FORM

Your monthly gift is a convenient way for you to support residents of District 69 throughout the year. Every month you will be ensuring that SOS has the funds needed to provide important programs and services that local children, youth, families, individuals and seniors rely on.

☐ **YES!** I want to strengthen the wellbeing of my community every month of the year. By joining the Grateful Hearts Circle, I authorize SOS to withdraw a donation from my bank account or credit card on the 15th of each month. I realize I can change or cancel my monthly gift at any time by notifying SOS 30 days prior to cancellation. I also understand that I will receive an annual receipt for the total of the year's monthly donations to be issued in January of the following year.

I would like my monthly gift to be in the amount of:

☐ $20/mth ☐ $35/mth ☐ $50/mth

☐ $100/mth ☐ $250/mth ☐ $___/mth

Please withdraw from my:

☐ Bank Account (please attach VOID cheque) or

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Card # _____CVV code _____

Exp ___/_____ Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/Prov _____

Postal Code _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Grateful Hearts Circle
SOS Monthly Giving Program

Society of Organized Services

Please mail to: Society of Organized Services
PO Box 898, 245 Hirst Ave. W., Parksville, BC V9P 2G9

250-248-2093 | Fax 250-248-8433 | sos@sosd69.com
www.sosd69.com | Charitable #: 107021537RR0001

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