



PERSONALIZED
CARE FOR
THE ORANGE
COUNTY
COMMUNITY

Share Our
Selves
News
September 2015

20th Annual Back to School Program

Thousands of backpacks help assure school readiness for local students

For many of us, the transition from late summer to early fall brings about a flood of back to school nostalgia. Freshly sharpened pencils carefully placed into a pencil box and nestled in a new backpack. Notebooks and binders free of doodles or ripped pages, and bright white sneakers that have yet to be sullied by the scuffs a game of kickball or lap around the field are sure to bring. For others, this time of year brings feelings of panic, embarrassment, and the shame of not being able to provide their children with the basic items needed to begin the school year with a positive start.

For two decades, the SOS Back to School Program has provided relief and assistance to thousands of families struggling to make ends meet. This year's program, the 20th annual, was record-setting – over 4,000 backpacks filled with school supplies were distributed to local students. The one day event, held at The Crossing church in Costa Mesa, was an inspiring collaboration between donors, community agencies, and volunteers. The majority of the supplies filling each backpack were donated by fairgoers during OC Fair's We Care Wednesday Back to School Drive. The more than 130,000 supplies collected were taken to warehouse space generously donated by Reyes Holdings in Huntington Beach. New friends to SOS, Reyes Holdings opened their doors to allow us to house the supplies, donated over 1,000 backpacks themselves, and provided over forty volunteers to assist with filling the bags for distribution. On Saturday, August 29th, their team again showed up in a big way – braving the heat, decked out in Reyes Cares Cheers to Charity shirts, to see the fruits of their weeks of labor – thousands of smiling kids happily receiving backpacks.

Because The Crossing generously allowed SOS use of their campus for the distribution, this year's event was expanded to include a "resource row" where our community partners, including Wells Fargo, Olive Crest, and Safe Families, were on hand to provide information about their services for our clients. Team Kids set up a station with activities for kids, including a photo booth where children dressed up like what they want to be when they grow up. Starbucks kept attendees cool with water and iced coffee, and Chik-Fil-A offered chicken nuggets to the kids.

They say it takes a village to raise a child, and with the help of our partners – our village – thousands of local children are ready to tackle the school year ahead. Thank you to everyone who supported this year's program. You made a difference.



Student received new backpacks and schools supplies during the SOS Back to School Program

Reflections

School days are here, summer is ending, and I cannot help but think of all the "risk takers" in our midst this time of year. Risk Takers can be exciting, fearless, outrageous, scary, challenging, and sometimes true visionaries. Who are these risk takers I see every day? They are children returning to school. They bravely encounter a new teacher, new friends, new schools, leave home, have new rules of conduct, and part hands with their parents. It's a pretty big order for a kindergarten child, and is followed by many years of change in their lives. I think students are little heroes with great courage and tenacity of spirit. They have full trust in the future and willingness to experience what is to yet to come.

Our children teach me well, and certainly those of us who believe in the mission of SOS. We are "risk takers" for creating better communities for all, care for those who are poor, marginalized, and vulnerable, and responsive to the issues of justice and mercy. We risk stepping out of our world, see through the eyes of others, part hands with some of our misconceptions, and even allow for mistakes. Risk taking is not easy as our children so often tell us, but to quote my grandkids, "its way more fun to try than to do nothing." Hooray for the risk takers!

As always I hold you close in my heart,

Karen L. McGlenn
Chief Executive Officer

Thank You

Thank you to the many donors, community groups, and corporations that support SOS. We appreciate all you do to make a difference!

- **El Ranchito Newport Beach**, for donating \$1 of every 40th Anniversary Margarita sold in the month of June.
- **Blue C Advertising**, for hosting a *Tacos and Good Deeds* party and backpack drive in support of the SOS Back to School Program



Awards & Grants

SOS recently received generous grant funding and awards for our programs from the following:

- **CalOptima**, in support of the Medical Clinic
- **Kaiser**, in support of the SOS – El Sol Wellness Center
- **Cotton Family Foundation**, in support of the Dental Clinic
- **Resnick Foundation**, in support of the Food Pantry
- **Orange County United Way**, in support of the school-based health center initiative



Volunteers from Reyes Holdings helped distribute thousands of backpacks to local students

20th Annual Back to School Program

A true community effort

Thank you to this year's donors who hosted drives, donated school supplies, and volunteered their time:

Event Partners: OC Fair & Event Center • Reyes Holdings • The Crossing Church • **In-Kind School Supply Donors:** Ashbrook Clevidence Insurance Brokers • Blue C Advertising • Hoag Emergency Department • Hoag Nightingales • Hoag Radiation/Oncology • Orange Community Escrow • Rainbow Rising Daycare • Reyes Holdings • **Corporate Volunteers:** Eberhard Equipment • Marriott Group Sales • National Charity League • Optum Rx • Orange County Asian American Bar Association • Reyes Holdings • St. Joseph Health – We Care Committee • Woodruff-Sawyer & Co • **Corporate Supporters (\$500+):** St. Joseph Health – We Care Committee • Starbucks • Wigmore Insurance Services • Woodruff-Sawyer & Co • **Many families and students!**

We'd also like to thank everyone who supported our program by donating funds and supplies, and volunteering to help sort and distribute backpacks. Your support ensures that many kids will have a great start to the school year!

In My Lifetime

Stories of Case Management Success

A generous supporter of SOS decided that instead of waiting until later in life to make a contribution to Share Our Selves, she wanted to do it now in order to see the results of her gift in her lifetime. As a result, the In My Lifetime grant was set up to support the SOS Case Management program. This section of the newsletter is dedicated to sharing stories of case management successes.

When Suheim felt a lump in her breast, she knew in her heart what it meant. She had a family history of breast cancer, and several of her aunts had died of the disease. But when she told the doctors at the clinic she had been going to about the lump, they told her she was imagining things. She even heard the Spanish translator at the clinic complaining about her constant pleas to get tested to the other staff, in English. "Send me!" Suheim remembers telling her. "It's my money, it's my health, it's my body, it's not yours." When the surprised translator asked if she spoke English, Suheim responded, "Just when I'm mad!" Her sister told her to go to SOS to see if we could help.

"As soon as I got here with Yadira [Gomez], everything went right," she said. After an appointment confirmed Suheim's suspicion that the lump was breast cancer, our case management team signed Suheim up for Medi-Cal, referred her to an oncologist, and got her scheduled for surgery. Whenever a problem came up, she learned that calling Yadira was the best way to get it solved. She is incredibly thankful to SOS for getting her insured and being there for her every step of the way. She is now undergoing chemotherapy and waiting on results of genetic testing to see if she is at a higher risk of developing breast cancer again. She said she knows what to do if she doesn't hear back soon. "For sure Yadira's going to find out what's going on."

Volunteer Spotlight

Summer Volunteers Lend a Hand

What a wild and crazy summer! Services never slowed down and volunteers were here in force. A big "thank you" to our regular volunteers who endured the busyness and heat that accompanies this time of year. Thank you, too, to our amazing student volunteers who were instrumental in filling our extra volunteer needs. And finally, we thank our Back to School teams for their support in helping kids get off to a great start this school year.

As we head into fall, our volunteer needs continue. We are looking for volunteers to help with our Thanksgiving Food Distribution, Sleep Out on Superior event, and Adopt A Family Program, as well as Food Pantry and administrative volunteers, and drivers to pick up from our various merchant locations.

We hope you'll consider joining the SOS volunteer team, either for a special project or as part of our weekly volunteer crew. Julie Neja - jneja@shareourselves.org or 949.270.2113



A group of volunteers from St. Joseph Health help collect school supplies at OC Fair's We Care Wednesday

2nd Annual SOS Vision & Values Awards

Recognizing SOS team members for their exemplary work

On Friday, August 14th, the entire SOS team gathered at the beautiful Balboa Harborside Pavilion in Newport Beach for an afternoon of fun for the Vision & Values Awards luncheon. This event recognized staff members that best represent the SOS Core Values of Dignity, Service, Excellence, Justice, and Vision. This year we also celebrated the growth of Share Our Selves – both in terms of new members to the SOS team, and new centers in our expanding network of care.

Our 2015 honorees were most deserving of their recognition and we are truly fortunate to have them on our team at SOS. Our staff goes above and beyond to deliver the best care possible to our neighbors most in need.

DIGNITY – Gladys Gutierrez-Teske, LCSW, Behavioral Health Clinician

SERVICE – Janet Cho, System Manager

EXCELLENCE – Vanessa Ontiveros, Facilities Manager

JUSTICE – Nicole Ganci, Nurse Case Manager

VISIONARY – Mary Ann Huntsman, Director of Clinical Pharmacy Services

Honorees were presented with plaques, and there are also perpetual plaques for each value on display at SOS to enjoy for years to come. It was a wonderful afternoon and staff appreciated the opportunity to celebrate each other and the successes of the year. For a complete list of nominees, visit our website at www.shareourselves.org.

Top: Excellence Honoree Vanessa Ontiveros and Dr. Melissa Soo Hoo; Middle: Dignity Honoree Gladys Gutierrez-Teske (right) and Deirdre Fitz-William; Bottom: Service Honoree Janet Cho (right) with Rudy Ramos



Celebrity Chef Dinner

Cheers to 25 Years! - October 30

A group of Orange County's most generous chefs will team up to prepare a fabulous five course dinner paired with specialty wines. The event will be held at the Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach. This year's event will celebrate 25 years of the dinner, and will honor Dr. Gwyn Parry, Hoag Director of Community Benefit and SOS Board Chairman, for his 50 years of humanitarian efforts and service to the health of the Orange County Community. See back page for more information on the event, and our new online auction.



Last year's SOS Celebrity Chefs

SOS Community Health Fair

Celebrating National Health Center Week

As part of National Health Center Week, SOS held its annual Community Health & Wellness Fair in August. The event featured health screenings, Back to School Program registration, agency referrals, children's activities and a farmer's market with vegetable plants grown by the Organic Gardening Club. Our community partners, Orange County Health Care Agency, Public Law Center, Wells Fargo, Boys Town, Olive Crest, and 211, were also onsite to offer additional resources and information for attendees. It was a great day to educate our community about the many services offered at SOS!



Children enjoy the farmer's market and activities

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Save the Date

25th Annual Celebrity Chef Dinner
 Friday, October 30, 2015
 Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach

14 Talented Local Chefs • Five Course Dinner with
 Wine Pairings • Live Auction • Silent Auction •
 Opportunity Drawing

For information, contact Elizabeth Hopkins at
 949.270.2137 or ehopkins@shareourselves.org.
 Tickets can be purchased online at
 shareourselves.org/events

Wish List

The need for support continues all year. Here's how you can help:

- Donate your car with You Pick You Save
- Toothbrushes, dental floss, toothpaste
- Baby Items – clothing, food, and diapers in all sizes
- Hotels & Motels – consider donating toiletry items or half-full shampoos, lotions, etc.
- Food – hold a food drive in your neighborhood (canned goods and dry goods)
- Hygiene kit items – socks, travel size toiletries

Facility Requests

- Outdoor industrial umbrella
- Tall workstation (4ft W, 3.6ft H, 2ft D)

To donate any of the items above, please contact Vanessa Ontiveros at 949.270.2150 or vontiveros@shareourselves.org.

Calendar of Events

Please join us for our upcoming programs and events:

- October 5-25 NEW! Celebrity Chef Dinner Online Auction
www.biddingforgood.com/shareourselves
- October 30 25th Annual Celebrity Chef Dinner
- November 20 2nd Annual SOS Sleep Out on Superior
- November Thanksgiving Food Drive
- December 14-17 46th Annual SOS Adopt A Family Program

For more information on any of our events, please contact Elizabeth Hopkins at 949.270.2137 or ehopkins@shareourselves.org, or visit our website at www.shareourselves.org.

To receive our newsletter by email, please contact Katie Santore at ksantore@shareourselves.org

