

A Newsletter for Friends of SOS Community Services

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Your support helped a mom overcome addiction.

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Tell us what you think! Take SOS's Supporter Survey.

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Save the Date for Road to Home!



Thanks to your support, SOS distributed 374,815 pounds of food during the pandemic.

Young Couple Loses Housing

But thanks to great SOS supporters like you, they are getting back on their feet.

Deirdra and Rick entered SOS's shelter in June after weeks of living in their car. They are 19 and 21 years old and have three children. They are very committed to each other and to their children.

During the pandemic, they lived with extended family. But now that they are a family of five, that living situation was too crowded. They had to leave in April. Then they were homeless.

During the time when they did not have anywhere to stay, their

preschool aged daughter, Kayla, was not able to continue with her on-line preschool program.

She missed a month of lessons.

The parents are so glad that she has been able to start on-line preschool again using the Wi-Fi in SOS's shelter. Now they are able to put in place routines for sleeping, eating, and bathing. They say how much having these regular routines has helped their children.

They are looking for work so they can afford their own housing soon. They have been accepted into SOS's Rapid Rehousing program, which qualifies them for rental assistance.

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Deirdra and Rick are glad to have regular bed, bath, and meal routines for their kids now that they have stable housing.



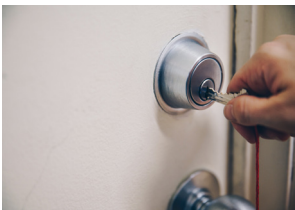
After years of struggle, Krystal feels hopeful for herself and her little girl.

Emergency funds prevent pandemic evictions!

SOS will distribute more than \$4 million to prevent eviction and utility shut off for families who have experienced financial hardship during the pandemic.

People who qualify for COVID Emergency Rental Assistance may visit ceraapp.michigan.gov to apply.

Thanks to support from people like you, SOS is here to provide relief funds at a critical time.



Mom Overcomes Addiction and Homelessness

On her worst days, it seemed hopeless.

But she never gave up.

And thanks to people like you, she found help at SOS.

In 2017, Krystal had a new baby. She was also battling an addiction to heroin. SOS's Parents as Teachers program helped her change her life. She got clean and focused all of her attention on caring for her new baby girl.

Then she lost her housing. The stress of being homeless with a little baby was too much for Krystal. She relapsed into her addiction and lost custody of her baby.

Krystal's parent educator at SOS got her into drug treatment. Krystal wanted recovery but she didn't succeed right away. She kept trying. She did everything she could to get her baby back. She got into Rapid Rehousing and started to get herself together. She got off of heroin and regained custody.

Now she has been selected for a permanent housing voucher, which will ensure she can afford her housing long-term. The road has been hard, but thanks to support from the community and generous people like you, Krystal had the help she needed to persevere and reach her goals.

I've been clean for two years now. I can't believe all that I have now.

Krystal's little girl is three years old now. She has a new boyfriend and they have a 15 month old baby together. His road has been difficult too.

"I was in prison when my baby was born and didn't get a chance to be a dad. Now that I am out, I work all the time. I want to know how to take care of my baby and be a part of her life." He is excited to be a part of SOS's new Fatherhood program that will support him to be the father he wants to be.

Recently, Krystal broke down into tears when she was talking to her parent educator. "I've been clean for two years," she said. "I can't believe all that I have now – this house, my children, and my boyfriend. And when I fell off the wagon, you never judged me. You have always been there for me and helped me every step of the way."

What do you want your legacy to be?

Sandy and George Kunkle share why they decided to leave a gift to SOS in their Will.

George and Sandy moved around the country while raising their children and even lived in Canada for a time. While living in North Carolina, they attended a workshop at their church called "Getting Your Things in Order." The workshop helped them understand the necessary legal work to accomplish. Perhaps more importantly it encouraged them to think about their legacy.

"They asked, 'What do you want your legacy to be?' We have four kids who are on their own now, good citizens all. That is one part of our legacy. But we decided we wanted to do more."

Sandy and George had an annual tradition of thinking about the difference they wanted to make through their charitable giving.

"Every November, George and I had a date at the kitchen table. We would talk about what organizations we wanted to support that year. We always supported our church, the environment and a local organization that worked directly with people for the betterment of their lives. After our introduction to and learning about the work of SOS, it always rose to the top of places we wanted to support."

Every November, George and I had a date at the kitchen table to talk about the organizations we wanted to support that year. SOS always rose to the top!

George was diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment in 2011 and Alzheimer's Disease in 2016. Sandy remembers those good conversations about charitable giving!

She continues in the tradition they began together of choosing which charitable organizations to support.

Sandy and George have chosen SOS and two other organizations to receive a gift in their Will. When asked why they decided to make these organizations a part of their legacy,



Sandy said, "It's a tangible way to express that we made a difference in our lives and another in our deaths. We deeply believe in the work these organizations are doing and want a portion of our estate to support them when we are not here to do that."

If you would like more information about leaving a gift in your Will to SOS, contact barbarac@soscs.org or visit soscs.org/giftsinwills.

Your Opinion Matters!

While we see some signs the pandemic is coming to an end, many families at SOS continue to struggle. They will need time to recover from the financial devastation of the last year and the loss of loved ones.

You can help us find more supporters like you to help them in the months ahead. Please complete your 2021 SOS Supporter Survey by August 15th. You can complete your survey on-line here: bit.ly/2RX8vRr

Thank you!

New Diaper Pantry Keeps Babies Clean & Dry

What do parents do when they can not afford enough diapers for their babies? Some dry out and reuse disposable diapers. Others make diapers out of plastic bags and old clothes. These solutions don't keep babies clean, dry, or healthy.

You can help these babies by working with SOS to establish a diaper pantry. SOS is looking for leaders to host diaper drives throughout the year. If you can organize a drive, contact Regen Stahl at volunteer@soscs.org.



Charles Reinhart Company Realtors donate diapers for the new diaper pantry

We hope to see you at Road to Home 2021!



Jerry Kozak & Ricky Winowiecki

YOU ARE INVITED!

SOS's 12th annual Road to Home Fundraiser will take place on Tuesday, October 5th at Sesi Lincoln.

Join Road to Home co-chairs, Jerry and Ricky, for food, friends, and our annual silent auction of empty bowls. Guests may choose to participate in person or virtually.

Buy tickets on-line at soscs.org!

Young Couple Loses Housing, continued from page 1.

Deirdra and Rick's application for rental housing was denied many times. They finally found a landlord who will lease to them. They will move out of SOS's shelter soon and into their very own apartment.

Many people have struggled during the last year because of pandemic hardships. Thanks to you and other caring people, families have left homelessness and found safe, affordable housing every week at SOS.



SOS relies on local landlords who are willing to rent to families like Deirdra and Rick. If you are someone you know has housing for rent and you are interested in ending homelessness for families, please call SOS at 734-485-8730.