



**SALI'S FARM
PARTNERS WITH
SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGE
FALL 2011**



Currently, in BC, there are close to over 9,000 children who have the provincial government as their legal guardian. Of those, over 10% are parented by staff in residential group homes. Children in care have lower graduation/high school completion rates and are more likely to be involved in crime, substance abuse, homelessness and system dependence as adults. These negative outcomes can be prevented with appropriate interventions and services that are geared to helping children heal and providing them with the skills they need to succeed.

SALI's Farm was developed by Semiahmoo Animal League Inc. with the goal to help children who have experienced violence or abuse in their young lives to heal and to learn non-violent and caring skills. Contact with animals is an ideal opportunity to convey respect, empathy, gentleness, and a humane regard for all living things. Children who have experienced abusive or neglectful human relationships are more available and open to animal relationships. They feel the unconditional acceptance from the animals and trust more readily. When these experiences are paired with a nurturing, trust-worthy adult, the child's ability to heal and learn another way (other than violence) is enhanced.

SALI's Farm will bring a group of children from the SOS Children's Village in Surrey to a farm in Fort Langley every Saturday for eight weeks. At the farm, the children will be paired with a trained volunteer and engage in care-taking activities with animals and work in a garden. It is our hope that by taking care of animals and creating life in a garden, the children develop empathy, feel success, learn the importance of being calm and gentle, and feel safe and accepted for who they are.

SOS Children's Village BC is committed to enhancing the lives of children who are marginalized due to circumstances beyond their control and are subsequently considered to be "at risk". SOS BC endeavors to provide programs and services that contribute to positive outcomes for children and youth, including bridging access to other community programs such as SALI's Farm. We are enthusiastic about the opportunity for 5 children who are currently involved with SOS BC to participate in the Farm program. The majority of these children have grown up in foster care and their lives have been negatively impacted by the circumstances of their birth and infancy; many have Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder as well as residual trauma from early neglect and abuse. These issues affect children's abilities to develop healthy attachment with others, trust that their needs will be met and that they are safe, and allow them to think past just survival. SALI's farm is an opportunity for these children to nurture, take responsibility for another's care and safety and bond with the animals. By demonstrating to the animals that they can be trusted, and through the friendships that develop, these children will broaden their perception of the world beyond what their pasts dictated. Animals have no judgment and are forgiving of many faults, and for children who have grown up feeling different, this provides a sense of belonging, which positively impacts self esteem and social skills. Positive experiences like those offered at SALI's farm can motivate children to pursue other goals and propel them forward on a healthy path.

SALI and SOS Children's Village need \$1600 to be able to send these children to the farm. The cost of transportation is \$200/day and the children will be going for eight days.

Please support this unique, collaborative project that seeks to help 5 children who have suffered abuse to heal and learn that all living things deserve to be nurtured and cared for.... Especially them!