



## Press release

Paris - February 25, 2016

### **Bel Foundation makes an exceptional €150,000 donation to the SOS Children's Villages France' food program to mark the Bel Group's 150th anniversary**

*In 2016, the Bel Foundation will finance the daily meals of some 1,700 children at four SOS children's Villages in Haiti, Vietnam, Madagascar, and Mali.*

In 2015, Bel employees celebrated the company's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary with humor and generosity through the #saycheese challenge to elicit charitable smiles from around the globe. The international, viral challenge encouraged people to submit selfies of their smiles to assist the efforts of the Bel Foundation, which supports initiatives on behalf of children and child nutrition. Bel agreed to convert the smiles uploaded to its saycheese.groupe-bel.com site into a donation to a charity supported by the Bel Foundation. As a result of the challenge and the active involvement of the company's employees, as well as the Bel brands that relayed the campaign around the world, nearly 50,000 smiles were received and converted into a €150,000 donation to the SOS Children's Villages France' food program.

### **Historical partnership between the Bel Foundation and SOS Children's Villages France**

The Bel Foundation has maintained close ties to the SOS Children's Villages France charity since 2008. Supporting the SOS Children's Villages France food program, particularly at school canteens, was the aim of the Bel Foundation's exceptional anniversary donation. The program provides a balanced meal for children attending SOS Children's Villages schools, as well as for the most disadvantaged families who live near the villages. Through its participation in the program, the Bel Foundation will finance daily meals for some 1,700 children at four SOS Children's Villages in Haiti, Vietnam, Madagascar, and Mali.

"As with all the initiatives supported by the Foundation, the exceptional donation that we are making today to the SOS Children's Villages program goes hand in glove with our mission to support initiatives on behalf of children and teens around the world, with a focus on food-related issues," said Bel Foundation President Antoine Fiévet. "Since the establishment of the Bel Foundation in 2008, we

have maintained a close relationship with SOS Children's Villages, having financed various infrastructure building projects and programs to fight malnutrition in Madagascar and Mali."

The SOS Children's Villages' canteen food initiative is part of the charity's broader food program and a main focus of its efforts to ensure one of the fundamental rights of children, i.e. having enough healthy food to eat on a regular basis.

"In many world regions, where access to basic food is difficult and/or school infrastructures are inadequate or inexistent, SOS Children's Villages builds and operates schools with canteens," said Gilles Paillard, Managing Director of SOS Children's Villages France. "These facilities are open to children in SOS villages and the surrounding populations. In these impoverished regions affected by malnutrition, school canteens provide a daily balanced meal that helps keep the children healthy, while encouraging school attendance, since the free meals alleviate the temptation of families to put their children to work. We are sincerely touched by the continuous support of Bel and the Bel Foundation. Our mission is a long-term one, and it cannot be sustained without the generosity of our partnering friends."

### **Bel Foundation backs charitable projects to give children a smile worldwide**

Since its founding in 2008, Bel's corporate Foundation has sought to financially assist and support projects on behalf of children and teens, with a focus on food, the core of the company's activity.

The charitable initiatives supported by the Foundation fully reflect Bel's sharing smiles mission. They also reflect a desire to share and humbly contribute to finding tangible and enduring solutions for communities.

The Foundation's support is guided by four areas of focus, including fighting malnutrition, building infrastructure dedicated to better nutrition, developing subsistence farming and market gardens, and supporting programs to raise awareness about good eating habits.

So far, the Foundation has helped fund 200 initiatives by charities and NGOs with nearly €1.8 million in total financial assistance. Bel employees are also actively involved with the Bel Foundation, which has awarded grants for more than 70 charitable projects sponsored by Bel employees around the globe.

### **SOS Children's Villages, a lovely home for every child**

SOS Children's Villages' mission is to provide care for children with no parental support or who are at risk of losing it, in France and internationally. Its goal is to provide children with family care by hosting brothers and sisters who lack parental support at its children's villages, or by strengthening families through programs to prevent child abandonment, in accordance with the United Nations' November 2009 Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children.

SOS Children's Villages France hosts nearly 1,000 children and young adults at 14 SOS children's villages and three associate institutions. The association is a member of SOS Children's Villages International, founded in Austria in 1949.

Active in 134 countries and territories, SOS Children's Villages International provides care for nearly 80,000 children and youths at 560 children's villages. With nearly 2,400 social, educational and health initiatives, the organization reaches over a million and a half beneficiaries through its special services

and daily care programs. SOS Children's Villages is a non-political, non-denominational non-governmental organization. It has a consulting role on the UN Economic and Social Council.

For more information, please go to [www.sosve.org](http://www.sosve.org)

### **Key Bel Foundation Figures**

**Created in 2008**

**200 initiatives supported in 30 countries**

**Nearly €1.8 million in donations**

**70 grants awarded to charitable initiatives sponsored by Bel employees worldwide**

For more information, please go to [www.fondation-bel.org](http://www.fondation-bel.org)

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