

Room to Grow news

FALL 2010



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Room to Grow's first clients started kindergarten this year. Research indicates that students who learn more in kindergarten are less likely to become single parents, more likely to go to college and earn a higher salary as adults, but studies have found disparities between low-income children and their middle-class peers as early as nine months of age. Room to Grow's social workers emphasize the importance of education from the very beginning. At

every visit, we provide each child with ten books, building a home library of 130 books over three years. Early exposure to books and quality education introduces skills that last a lifetime and better equip our graduates to succeed in kindergarten and beyond. Please continue to help us give babies born into poverty a good start in life.

Saskia Epstein
Executive Director
Room to Grow, Boston

DID YOU KNOW?

A child's environment in the first two years correlates to obesity risk. Breastfeeding less than six months, eating solids before four months, having a television in the bedroom, getting less than 12 hours of sleep at night, and exposure to cigarettes are all risk factors for childhood obesity. Room to Grow helps parents make informed positive choices to ensure their babies reach age three at a healthy weight.

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, March 2010. <http://www.rwjf.org/humancapital/product.jsp?id=56331>

CLIENT SNAPSHOT: Raising Twins with Support

Luisa was ecstatic when she found out she was pregnant with twins, but as a first time mother who was unemployed, she worried about supporting herself and her growing babies. During her initial appointment at Room to Grow Luisa felt a great sense of relief that someone would listen to her and answer questions about raising children. Although the father of her daughters Adriana and Jocelyn was living out of the country, Luisa no longer felt alone. In the years following, Luisa's social worker provided her with tremendous emotional support, and offered advice and information to navigate the challenges of raising twins. They talked about everything from helping the girls sleep through the night to developing family mealtime routines. In addition, Luisa

received all of the clothing, toys, books and other baby essentials she couldn't otherwise afford. Luisa's confidence as a parent grew over time. Determined to provide for her children, Luisa found a retail job and a loving daycare provider for her girls. Recently, Luisa's dedication at work earned her a promotion to shift supervisor. Her children are thriving and Luisa is hopeful about their future as a family.



At our first Family Breakfast at Fenway Park, children enjoyed activities by My Gym, face painting and a tour of the home of our beloved Red Sox.

RECENT HAPPENINGS

September 10-12 | 2010

Kiki's Baby Shower

The Franklin Park Zoo held a baby shower to support Room to Grow in honor of expectant mother Kiki, one of the zoo's gorillas. Guests who brought a gift for a baby born into poverty received a discount off zoo admission. Room to Grow received sippy cups, books, toys, clothing and financial donations.

September 25-26 | 2010

Rodman Ride for Kids & Family Breakfast at Fenway Park

Five cyclists completed the 100-mile course on the Rodman Ride for Kids

to benefit Room to Grow. The following morning, we celebrated at our first Family Breakfast at Fenway Park. The Rodman Ride matched all donations from these two events by 10%. The Rodman Ride raises funds for youth-focused social service agencies in Massachusetts.

October 10-13 | 2010

All Baby & Child Kids Expo

Dorel Juvenile Group and Halo Innovations invited Room to Grow to join them in Las Vegas to meet leaders from the juvenile products industry. We are excited to partner with many new industry companies willing to supply essential baby items for our growing number of clients.

SAVE THE DATE

February 2011

Boston Cares Shoe Drive

Boston Cares is organizing a second annual shoe drive to support Room to Grow. Last year the Tummies to Toes drive received more than 800 pairs of shoes, ensuring all of our babies had warm toes and strong soles. Visit www.roomtogrow.org for more details.

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DONOR AND VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Brooke Bass, Development Committee Member

Brooke Bass has become a strong ambassador for Room to Grow. Her first introduction to us was as a volunteer when her team at Liberty Mutual Insurance Group participated in our bi-annual Seasonal Switch. With a smile, Brooke quickly jumped in to sort and fold clothing. Through Twitter, Brooke soon discovered we were searching for new leadership on our Development Committee. Brooke has brought great enthusiasm to the role, introducing us to new supporters at our Fashion Forward event, and securing sponsorships and auction items for our Fall Gala. We are so appreciative of Twitter and Liberty Mutual for introducing us to Brooke.

What We Need Now

Room to Grow has an urgent need for Spanish books. Help promote early literacy for babies of Spanish speaking families. Please donate new or gently used soft, board or early reader books. ¡Muchas gracias!

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