



# BOSTON 2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When Room to Grow’s staff meets each week, our social workers share client stories, reminding us why we have joined together in this important work. Housing, employment, and education are recurring themes of the hurdles our families overcome with the support of our clinical team. What strikes me most, week after week, is the hope that comes through in these stories. Mothers, fathers, and older siblings all want the same thing: what’s best for their new baby. Your support of our work ensures that families can provide for their children in the ways they’ve dreamed.

Our tenth year in Boston was significant. We welcomed new faces to the Room to Grow community in the form of clients, volunteers – even staff. We implemented new systems to better track our families’ progress. You joined us to honor two courageous mothers at the Celebrating Mothers Breakfast and the Fall Gala. More than 4,000 people learned about Room to Grow at the Kids Really Rock festival. There was even a night in December during which the Prudential Center was lit a bright blue for our small but impactful organization. We ended the year being recognized by Charity Navigator with a 4-star rating for the third year in a row – an honor bestowed upon only 14% of nonprofit organizations nationwide.

Thank you for helping us accomplish so much in our first ten years. With your support, we look forward to continuing to provide hope to Boston’s most vulnerable children through 2025 and beyond.

Warmly,  
Robyn Carter, LICSW  
Executive Director, Boston



“As parents of two young children, supporting Room to Grow and the transformative work they do was an obvious choice. For those who benefit from their programs, Room to Grow makes the hard work of raising a baby seem a whole lot easier. It is a supportive and nurturing environment that we are very lucky to have as a part of our community.”  
—Nicole and David Borden, donors

“We are inspired by Room to Grow’s direct, hands-on, educational, and loving impact it makes on parents at a critical stage in their baby’s life. In early 2015, when we first met the team and saw their space, we felt at home. The entire team is truly connected to its mission and how the organization makes a big, positive impact on families.”  
—Kurt Flionis, Vice President, STAG Industrial, Inc.

## FROM OUR FRIENDS

“The volunteer program at Room to Grow is very well organized and I am inspired by the organization’s mission. I have led Boston Cares volunteer groups for several years and I enjoy sorting the donated clothes, toys, books, and supplies, getting them ready to fly off the shelves and into the homes of local families.”  
—Miranda Vitello, Boston Cares team leader and volunteer



Photo courtesy of Nicole Chan Photography

## CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

Growing up in Puerto Rico in poverty, Julianna had an emotionally and physically abusive childhood. Wanting a better life, she moved with her boyfriend to Boston. When Julianna became pregnant, she and her boyfriend were scared and had no family to lean on.



Determined to give her baby a better childhood, Julianna was grateful to be connected with Room to Grow. During her visits, she received all the material goods she needed to keep her son, Jorge, safe and healthy, including a car seat, pack and play, clothes, toys, and books.

At 18 months, Julianna's social worker, Rebecca, observed that Jorge's speech was developmentally behind. Rebecca referred Jorge to Early Intervention,

through which he started seeing a speech therapist weekly. Julianna absorbed the information she received from Rebecca about the importance of language development, reading to Jorge daily. Now, at 24 months, Jorge is beginning to speak.

While Jorge grew, Julianna's relationship with his father faltered. Unable to hold a job, he became abusive towards Julianna. As a result of the confidence she built through Room to Grow, Julianna ended the relationship, continuing her commitment to providing Jorge with the safe, healthy environment her own childhood lacked. Soon after, Julianna was offered a steady, stable job with a cleaning service; within a year, she was promoted to supervisor.

Thanks to Room to Grow, Julianna has more confidence in her parenting and is able to offer Jorge opportunities that she didn't have as a child. She is using the information, referrals, and material resources to build a better life and break the cycle of poverty.

## YOUR IMPACT IN 2015

**103**  
infants were welcomed into the program and given hope for breaking the cycle of poverty

Over **50,000** clothes, toys, books and gear were distributed to families, lessening financial strain and providing tools for meeting developmental milestones

**65**  
three-year-olds graduated, prepared to start school on track for a bright future

**388**  
babies and their families were enrolled in Room to Grow's program, receiving the strong foundation needed for success later in life

**88%**  
of enrolled families continued the program

More than **55,000** baby items were generously donated by individuals and corporations

Nearly **3,000** volunteers dedicated close to **7,000** hours to process donations and provide a dignified experience for families

## LOOKING AHEAD

Evaluation efforts of our program model in 2015 have produced strong indicators of program success. In 2016, tools will be added to track metrics of maternal depression, children's social/emotional development, and school readiness. In addition to better serving our clients, these tools will allow us to analyze effectiveness in more core areas, further assessing Room to Grow's impact.

Investing in data collection and analysis is core to advancing our service model. We will add a Director, Evaluation and Impact to our team to lead the implementation of tools, analysis of findings, and recommendations of data-driven program improvements.

These steps, combined with an updated strategic plan outlining areas of growth, will further demonstrate our impact. This will set the stage for enrolling an increased number of babies in poverty who will benefit from a strong foundation and the hope of a bright future.

**"The most important thing that we can do to help assure a brighter future for children living in poverty is help the adults taking care of them build their own capabilities."**

**—Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D., Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University**

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Room to Grow  
142 Berkeley Street  
Boston, MA 02116  
[www.roomtogrow.org](http://www.roomtogrow.org)



### BECOME MORE INVOLVED

#### TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE

May 4, 2016

#### *Celebrating Mothers Breakfast*

Mandarin Oriental, Boston

#### Keynote Speaker

Massachusetts' First Lady Lauren Baker

Purchase tickets at [www.roomtogrow.org](http://www.roomtogrow.org).

#### FAMILY VOLUNTEER DAYS

Join fellow families to make playmats for the toddlers in Room to Grow's program, and provide the next generation with a unique opportunity to give back! Ages 8 and up with parent or guardian.

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. on the following Saturdays:  
April 30 • July 23 • September 24 • December 3

To register contact  
[infoboston@roomtogrow.org](mailto:infoboston@roomtogrow.org).

### YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**VOLUNTEER** as an individual or bring a group of friends or colleagues

**ATTEND** a Room to Grow event

**ORGANIZE** a collection drive or host a baby shower

**ASK** your employer about matching gifts and other charitable activities

**JOIN** a committee and expand your network while supporting babies

**SPREAD THE WORD!** Like, follow, and share on social media

Join Room to Grow's email list to receive updates and information electronically.  
Click "Join our mailing list" at [www.roomtogrow.org](http://www.roomtogrow.org).