

Room to Grow news

FALL 2009



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*The philosophy of families with plenty helping families with less has always been a cornerstone of Room to Grow's mission. Many more fortunate parents are delighted to learn that the items their children have outgrown can be used by those in need, and they go out of their way to provide these generous donations. Volunteers take the time to collect, organize, and prepare these items for the families we serve. Thus Room to Grow has created, even in a city as large as New York, an intimate community of families helping families. There are many ways that you can help now. Host a winter coat drive to help us provide this essential item to each child as the weather turns colder. Become a member of the Holiday Party Committee to help make the holiday season memorable for our client families. Join us at **Celebrate Room to Grow**, our gala event at Christie's. Volunteer to help prepare baby items at our program site. We would love to see you.*

Lexy Mayers, Executive Director, **Room to Grow**, New York

DID YOU KNOW?

The achievement gap begins early: a June 2009 Child Trends study finds disparities in cognitive, social-emotional, and health outcomes between poor, at-risk children and more advantaged children as early as nine months of age—extending prior research that primarily focuses on disparities at kindergarten entry and beyond. Room to Grow helps parents raising babies in poverty to provide a wealth of experiences that support healthy childhood development, and also provides the educational toys, books, and other materials to enrich early childhood.

CLIENT SNAPSHOT: Ufuoma George

At 17, Ufuoma was pregnant and forced to leave her family's home. She entered foster care and lost contact with friends and siblings. By the time her daughter Sarriah was born, Ufuoma was without financial or emotional support. At 18, her foster care eligibility ended and she and Sarriah had to move into a shelter.

Ufuoma came to Room to Grow in 2007, shortly before Sarriah was born. She received information about programs such as Food Stamps, and was empowered to apply for subsidized housing. In 2008, Ufuoma received a child care voucher that enabled her to begin training as a nurse at Hostos Community College. She also secured a rent subsidized apartment.

With the basics of housing, food, and child care in place, and with clothing,

toys, books and other supplies for Sarriah provided by Room to Grow, Ufuoma could focus on other pressing issues. She took charge of her own health and decided to feed Sarriah only organic foods. Today, Ufuoma works as a home health aide and is studying nursing. With Room to Grow's support, she continues to develop the confidence and capacity to take care of herself and her daughter, and Sarriah is thriving.



Safiatu Samake decorates a picture frame at the Motherhood Club.

RECENT HAPPENINGS

May 2 | 2009

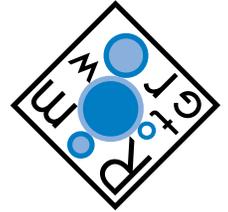
Motherhood Club

Twenty-eight mothers, including Room to Grow clients, supporters and staff, gathered at Room to Grow to celebrate motherhood and to share their experiences. Participants decorated frames and bibs for Room to Grow families and also donated needed baby items, including over 150 books. As one participant remarked, "It was a wonderful opportunity to sit with other moms and talk about the joys and challenges we all face, regardless of background or circumstance."

Spring | 2009

Early Literacy Initiative

Room to Grow has always provided books to each family at each visit over their three years in the program. This year, we are enhancing our focus on reading and pre-literacy skills through a pilot Early Literacy Initiative generously supported by The Marks Family Foundation. In partnership with Read to Me, Room to Grow social workers have received training in strategies for active reading to infants and toddlers. These include gestures, repetition, encouraging verbalization, and singing. Our social workers spend time with each client modeling and teaching these methods.



SAVE THE DATE

November 19, 2009

Celebrate Room to Grow
at Christie's

Room to Grow returns to Christie's for a festive benefit event. The evening includes cocktails, silent and live auctions, and presentation of the Client Inspiration and Founder's Awards.

To purchase tickets or learn about sponsorship opportunities, contact Veronica Farje, Development Director, at veronica@roomtogrow.org.

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Co-Head of Worldwide Literary
Department*

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What We Need Now

Room to Grow needs winter coats, especially sizes 2T-4T, and winter boots in all sizes to children's 11. Please help with donations of new or nearly new items to ensure that babies have warm essentials this winter.

Join Room to Grow's email list!

Sign up at www.roomtogrow.org to receive email updates and details about events.

DONOR AND VOLUNTEER SNAPSHOT

In March 2009, Ridgewood Savings Bank contacted Room to Grow to arrange a volunteer event at our program site. Eight employees visited Room to Grow to sort through donations of baby items, prepare them for display and for distribution to client families. The experience was so positive that Ridgewood Savings Bank organized seven more visits, with more than 40 employees participating between March and June. The Bank's commitment went even further. One of the volunteers arranged for employees at several of the Bank's branches to collect children's clothing and also for a raffle with proceeds benefiting Room to

Grow. The drive yielded 25 bags of baby and toddler clothing in excellent condition, which was immediately made available to families in need, as well as a financial contribution to help Room to Grow continue providing parenting support.

