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# For the Kids

Uma Thurman is shedding new light on the fight against childhood poverty.

BY RACHEL BOWIE

WHEN UMA THURMAN became pregnant with her first child, her entire world changed. The actress and Massachusetts native, famous for her roles in *Pulp Fiction* and *Kill Bill*, began to think about what would be the most challenging performance of her life—parenting. It was at this time that her friend and neighbor Julie Burns approached her about Room to Grow, an organization Burns was starting to benefit babies born into poverty. For Thurman, the timing couldn't have been more perfect.

"I think that having a family makes you a citizen in every single way," says Thurman. "You start to realize the importance of supporting your community and the future of your children's community. You want to see as much equal opportunity spread among their peers as they are going to get."

Almost 10 years (and two kids) since that first conversation with Burns, Thurman has become an instrumental part of Room to Grow, a cause that she deems clever and unique. "There's a personal investment that is different from other charities," she says. "Families meet with the social worker for two hours, and an individual relationship develops between the client and



Uma Thurman backs up auctioneer Rick Wester during Room to Grow's charity auction.

the organization. The parent has a place to turn to that is dignified and makes them feel like someone cares."

Growing up in Amherst as one of four children, Thurman remembers the experience as one that

wasn't very different from that of a Room to Grow family. Money was tight for her parents, and, unable to afford new clothing for her children, Thurman's mother took her kids to a local church that sold used clothing. "All my clothes were bought there, and it was a wonderful

thing," she says. "I didn't know any different, because it was clean and it was nice and that's what I thought shopping was. I was fortunate to have wonderful and well-educated parents who just needed the room to grow."

Recently, Room to Grow celebrated its inaugural fundraising benefit in Boston. Ever the supportive player, Thurman couldn't wait to host the event on her home turf.

"I often joke with my friends that I'm more loyal to Massachusetts than I am to the United States of America," says Thurman with a laugh. "I'm not sure what it is—I just feel at home here."

For more information, visit [roomtogrow.org](http://roomtogrow.org).