

2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

# Room to Grow

*Building a strong foundation for babies in poverty*



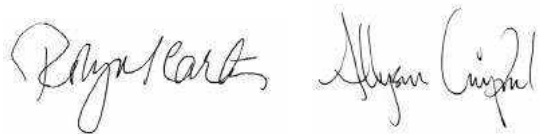
Dear Friends,

It has been over 50 years since the declaration of the War on Poverty in the U.S. Yet families in low-income communities are still struggling to get by. One in four children under the age of three in our country is living in poverty. Fortunately, we have a new level of clarity about the fact that positive early childhood experiences can contribute to breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty. Our knowledge about how to effectively eradicate problems at their inception is unprecedented in its breadth and resolve. Protecting early experiences in formative years gives babies the best chance at lifelong success. Consistent with the science behind what works, Room to Grow tackles poverty at its root by working with babies and their families right from the start, the inflection point from birth through age three.

2015 was a significant year for Room to Grow. The impact that our incredible clinical team achieved in partnership with families is proven by the compelling outcomes outlined in this report. We hope you enjoy reading about this year's successes and learnings as much as we enjoyed living them.

Energized by our long-term vision to achieve broad social impact in cities with concentrations of poverty, we embark upon 2016 with enthusiasm. We look forward to building and continuing powerful partnerships with our friends, supporters, and client families to bring this vision to life. Together, we can build a strong foundation for babies born into poverty, giving every baby the opportunity for a bright future.

With warm appreciation for your support,



Robyn Carter, LICSW  
Executive Director  
Boston

Allyson Crawford  
Executive Director  
New York

## Our Impact This Year

# 763

babies and their  
families served in  
Boston and New York



**94%** of children are meeting their developmental benchmarks on time

**88%** retention rate  
families who continued in the program this year

**100%** of parents engage in interactive playtime with their babies at home

**98%** of parents report increased confidence as caretakers

**88%** of families read together regularly at home

  
distributed over  
**\$1,500,000**  
worth of baby items  
(retail equivalent)

Material hardship, an indicator of the inability to meet basic needs, can affect the overall health and development of children.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, 37% of our local population suffers from severe material hardship.<sup>6</sup>

To challenge this statistic, Room to Grow families receive the retail equivalent of **\$10,000** in material support

on average, over three years in the form of books, toys, clothing, and gear.

  
distributed over  
**19,000**  
children's books

Having more books in the home is proven to propel children years further in their education.<sup>1</sup> However, in low-income neighborhoods, there is only one age-appropriate book for every 300 children.<sup>2</sup>

To challenge this statistic, Room to Grow children receive a home library of **130 books**

and parents learn techniques to inspire a love of reading in their children.

Establishing good oral health in the earliest years is critical in combatting tooth decay, one of the most common, yet preventable, chronic infectious diseases among children.<sup>3</sup> In fact, nearly 52 million hours of school are missed each year due to dental complications.<sup>4</sup>

To challenge this statistic, Room to Grow families receive oral health education and dental supplies

and are encouraged to instill lifelong healthy dental habits from day one.

  
distributed over  
**1,500**  
dental supplies



# Room to Grow BOSTON



**1 in 3**

children under age five in Boston live in poverty<sup>1</sup>



approximately  
**400**  
babies  
and their families served



over  
**50,000**  
baby items distributed  
to offset financial hardship and support child development



**88%**  
retention rate  
families continued in the program this year

**“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

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.

## Family Spotlight



**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.**

**“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.



close to  
**7,000**  
service hours  
contributed by volunteers this year

**“The volunteer program at Room to Grow is very well organized and I’m inspired by the organization’s mission. I have led 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, volunteer

## Passionate Supporters

**“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

### WITH GRATITUDE

Thank you to all our individual donors, supporters, and volunteers for being a part of a successful year.

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<sup>1</sup>. Children in Poverty by Age Group, 2014. Kids Count Data Center, A Project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation

## Room to Grow NEW YORK



approximately  
**400**  
babies  
and their families served

over  
**2,000**  
clinical service hours  
provided by our social work team

**88%**  
retention rate  
families continued in the program this year

## “Interventions that target parenting can prevent up to half of poverty’s negative impact on children’s development.”<sup>2</sup>



Ferdina, Malcolm, and their two children at the Spring Benefit

**“Back then, I didn't know anything about being a parent – I learned it all with Room to Grow by my side.”**

With help from Room to Grow, Ferdina and Malcolm transitioned from living in homeless shelters to their own apartment, gaining confidence and stability as they cared for their young son and daughter.

Ten years later, they shared their reflections at Room to Grow New York’s Spring Benefit. Today, Ferdina is a supervisor at HSBC, Malcolm is a restaurant manager, and both children are doing very well in elementary school.

### Family Spotlight

Eva and Coleman at the Fall Power Breakfast



**“How you’re raised greatly determines who you become in life.”**

Having neither help nor emotional support from their families, Eva and Coleman are determined to create a better environment for their daughter than either of them had growing up.

The couple was recognized at Room to Grow’s Fall Power Breakfast for their commitment to excellent parenting. Today, both parents have completed their college degrees and Eva is a teacher. They’re proud to share that their two year old daughter is meeting all of her milestones ahead of time.



**“Giving is an essential part of a full life.”**

– Arianna Huffington, Editor-in-Chief of The Huffington Post and author of *The Sleep Revolution*, at Room to Grow New York’s Fall Power Breakfast

Arianna Huffington spoke at Room to Grow’s Fall Power Breakfast about redefining success through health, wellness, and generosity. Her powerful message resonated with attendees, helping to raise over \$100,000 to support Room to Grow’s program.

over  
**3,000**  
service hours  
contributed by volunteers this year



### Passionate Supporters

**PIMCO**  
FOUNDATION

**“Room to Grow aligns directly with our mission, as they are at the forefront of providing tailored support to children and families during the first three years of life.”**

– Amber Skalsky, The PIMCO Foundation

**“Doing work that we know will benefit so many families is such a rewarding experience.”**

– Mary Wheeldon, Young Professionals Committee member and volunteer group leader for over nine years

#### WITH GRATITUDE

Thank you to all our individual donors, supporters, and volunteers for being a part of a successful year.

#### THANK YOU TO OUR CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION PARTNERS

The Acorn Foundation For the Arts & Sciences, Inc. • Baby2Baby National Network • Bank of America • Bonpoint • Bloomberg • Clark R. Smith Family Foundation, Bank of America, N.A., Co-trustee • Convent of the Sacred Heart School • Duane Reade Charitable Foundation • The Durst Family Foundation • The Edith Glick Shoolman Children’s Foundation • Global Atlantic • Grace Jones Richardson Testamentary Trust • Happy Family Brands • Harman Family Foundation • Helen Hoffritz Charitable Trust • Horncrest Foundation • Houlihan Lokey, Inc. • Hunt Lane Capital • The Hyde and Watson Foundation • Imperial Woodpecker • International Flavors and Fragrances • Judy and Warren Tenney Foundation • Marion E. Kenworthy - Sarah H. Swift Foundation • Lightspeed Express Delivery • The Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Inc. • M&T Bank • Morgan Stanley Foundation • Polo Ralph Lauren Foundation • The Ray and Tye Noorda Foundation • Robertson Foundation • The Robert W. and Susan T. Brown Family Foundation • Rodney White Foundation • Susquehanna International Group • Tervis • Theda and Tamblin Clark Smith Family Foundation, Inc. • Tracy Family Foundation • The PIMCO Foundation • Select Equity Group Foundation • USPA Accessories LLC • Valentine Perry Snyder Fund • The Wallace Foundation • WellCare Health Plans Inc. • Wilmington Trust, N.A. | An M&T Bank affiliate

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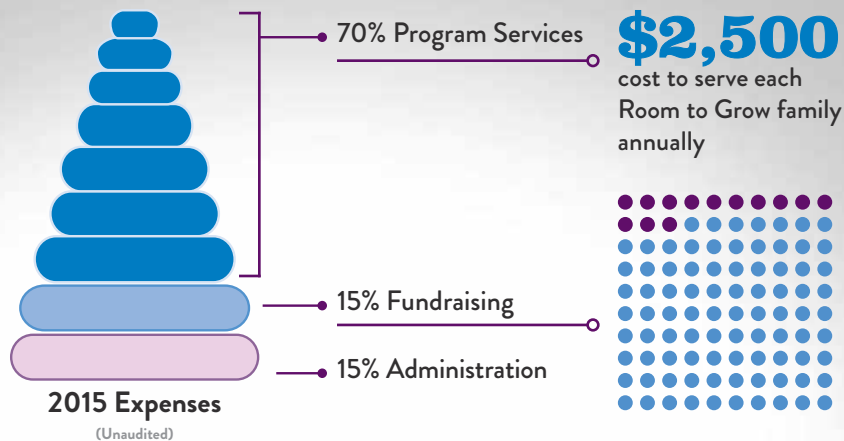
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# Financial Management

Leveraging resources to create outcomes



You Can Make a Difference

- VOLUNTEER** as an individual or bring a group of friends or colleagues
- ATTEND** or host a Room to Grow fundraiser
- ORGANIZE** a collection drive or throw a baby shower
- ASK** your employer about matching gifts and other charitable activities
- JOIN** a committee and expand your network while supporting our babies
- SPREAD THE WORD** to friends and family on social media



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## ABOUT ROOM TO GROW

Room to Grow provides babies born into poverty with a healthy and secure start in life. Over a three year period, families receive individualized parent education and support, high-quality material items, and referrals to vital community resources.

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## LOCATIONS

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