

Room to Grow

# ANNUAL REPORT 2016

*unlocking potential in every baby, transcending the cycle of intergenerational poverty*

**600**  
families in the  
program in 2016

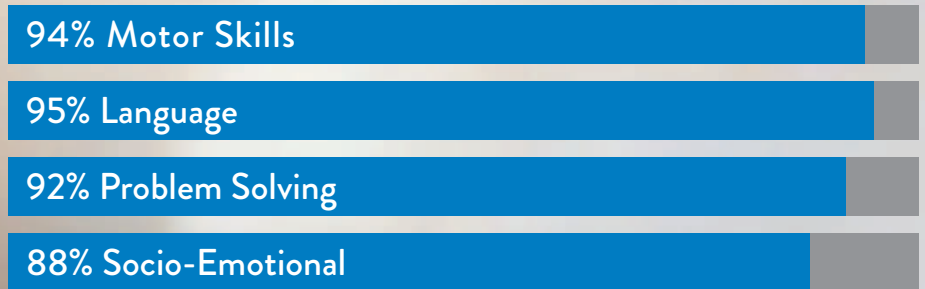
# Room to Grow

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

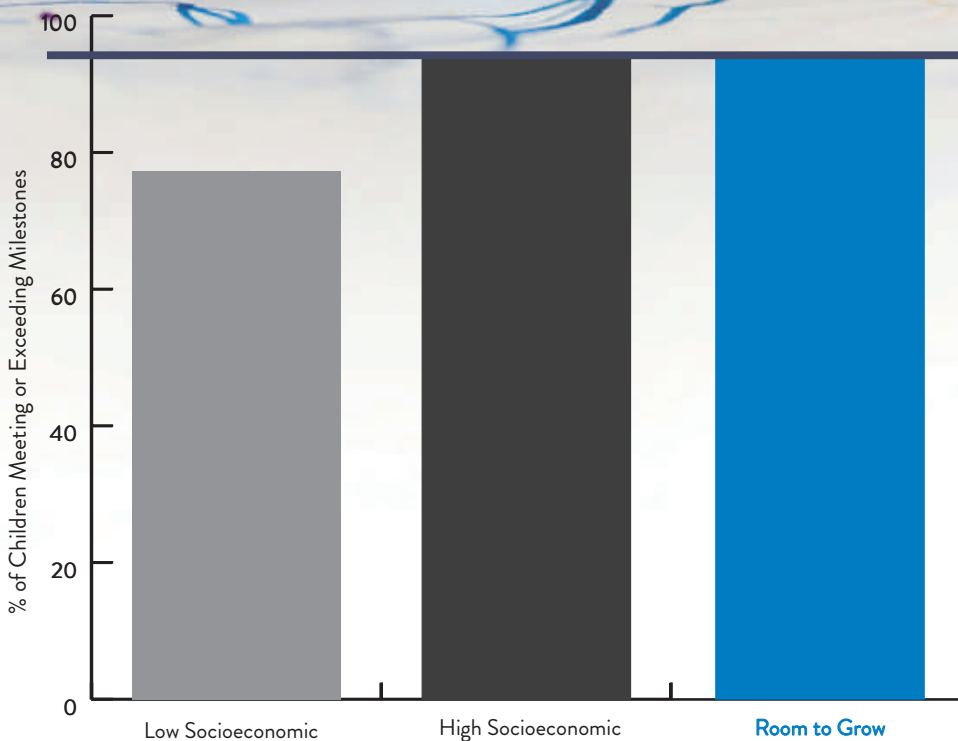
**9** out of **10** Room to Grow children are meeting their developmental milestones on time.



The breakdown:



**99%** of Room to Grow parents report increased confidence and knowledge as caregivers.



**Success!**

## Room to Grow FOSTERS EQUALITY

Our unique, comprehensive approach builds strong developmental foundations for babies born into poverty. **Room to Grow babies are effectively closing the 20% achievement gap between socioeconomic groups**, increasing the probability that they will enter school ready to learn and continue on to meet their full potential in school, work, and citizenship.

National Survey of Children's Health, NSCH 2011/12. Data query from the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative, Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health website. Retrieved 4/6/17 from www.childhealthdata.org.

# SETTING GOALS, SEEING RESULTS



When Gemini first came to Room to Grow, she was nervously awaiting the arrival of her daughter, Journey. During this first visit, Gemini's Room to Grow social worker helped her prepare for Journey's birth, and also guided her through a **strengths-based goal setting exercise**. Gemini was asked to reflect on the next three years of her life and write a letter, filled with long-term goals for herself and her family. The process is intended to build reflective capacity and develop confidence throughout the program.

Having filled her letter with high aspirations for the future, **Gemini came to every visit eager to learn**. At their final visit, Gemini opened the letter she wrote three years ago and read it aloud to Journey who sat on her lap. Gemini smiled as she said, "I hope years from now you can look back and read this letter and know how much of a joy you were before and after you entered the world."

Journey has surpassed many of her age-appropriate developmental milestones and is excelling in preschool, where her teachers describe her as a leader with a large and charismatic personality. In addition, the uncertainty with which Gemini initially entered Room to Grow has been replaced with a **remarkable confidence in her future, and Journey's**.

7x

Individuals who set strengths-based goals are 7 times more likely to stick with them.<sup>1</sup>

69%

69% of all parents, regardless of socioeconomic status, report they would use more positive parenting strategies if they knew them.<sup>2</sup>



## OUR RESULTS

80% of Room to Grow graduates made significant progress on their parenting and personal goals in 2016.

# OVERCOMING THE ODDS



During their first visits at Room to Grow, Tanaysha and Aaron's daughter, Athena, **was consistently meeting all of her age-appropriate developmental milestones.** However, shortly after Athena turned nine months, she experienced a serious medical emergency that suddenly placed her at high risk for significant developmental delays in areas such as her gross motor and language skills.

Athena's parents refused to allow this risk to become a reality. They were determined to do everything possible to ensure that this hurdle would not set her back. **With the help of Room to Grow, Tanaysha and Aaron were connected to specialized services, including an early intervention program.**

With her parents' perseverance and diligence, Athena not only caught up to other babies her age – she exceeded expectations in every developmental area! Now at two years old, Athena's language skills are advanced, and **she is on track to enter preschool later this year.**



“Room to Grow not only provides us with financial relief, but also offers information and advice for our daughter's positive development.”



Low-income families are 2 times more likely to report difficulty accessing medical services for their children than families of higher income.<sup>1</sup>



**OUR RESULTS**  
9 out of 10 Room to Grow children are meeting cognitive & language benchmarks on time, indicating preschool readiness.

# BUILDING COMMUNITY



Julia and her husband, Javier, were living thousands of miles from home when Julia became pregnant with their first child. Without family or friends nearby, and depending solely on Javier's limited income, they did not know where to turn for help.

Fortunately, Julia's medical provider referred them to Room to Grow, knowing the program's warm and encouraging atmosphere would support the couple as they prepared for the birth of their daughter, Thalia. After a discussion about their **feelings of isolation in a new neighborhood**, their Room to Grow social worker helped Julia find a playgroup at her local library.

Julia and Thalia now visit this library together twice a week. Julia has found the sense of community she was yearning for and **Thalia is learning to socialize with fellow toddlers**, preparing for her transition into a child care program.

**Julia is looking forward to the coming year** and plans to attend school full-time. Both parents aspire to continue fostering a calm, loving, and educationally rich environment for their growing girl.

5x

Social isolation can lead to depression, which is 5 times more common among low-income mothers than their higher-income peers.<sup>1</sup>

4x

Children with strong socio-emotional skills are 4 times more likely to obtain a college degree.<sup>2</sup>



**OUR RESULTS**  
Mothers graduating from Room to Grow show a 20% lower risk for depression.

1. Glied, S., & Oellerich, D. (2014). Two-generation programs and health. *The Future of children*, 24(1), 79-97. | 2. Jones, D. E., Greenberg, M., & Crowley, M. (2015). Early social-emotional functioning and public health: The relationship between kindergarten social competence and future wellness. *Journal of Information*, 105 (11).

# A PART OF THE FAMILY

For many, Room to Grow has become a part of their family. From first-time parents who redirect baby shower presents, to teenagers who volunteer with friends after school, supporters of all ages are finding ways to give back!

“Parenthood can be a patchwork of conflicting emotions – joy and fear, wonder and frustration, gratitude and anxiety. We are so humbled by the experience of our own kids that we feel moved to give back to families in the Room to Grow community. Asking for donations to Room to Grow in lieu of birthday presents gives friends and family a tangible way to say ‘Happy Birthday’ and avoids getting yet another toy for a kid who already has it all!” – The Vander Stoep Family



Lavender and her parents collected books from friends and family to donate to Room to Grow kids in celebration of Lavender's third birthday.



Sisters Mabel and Evelyn hosted a lemonade stand and then purchased toys with the money they raised to donate to Room to Grow.



Kids with at least one parent who volunteers are nearly 2 times as likely to volunteer themselves.<sup>1</sup>

# TAKE ACTION TO MAKE AN IMPACT



\$500,000 worth of baby items were donated, including 20,000+ books.



12,000+ service hours were contributed by 5,000+ dedicated volunteers.

## VOLUNTEER

with friends and spend the afternoon sorting baby clothes and toys.

## ORGANIZE

a collection drive of baby items in your office, school, or neighborhood.

## JOIN

the Young Professionals Committee to help raise support for Room to Grow.

## SERVE

on an event committee and apply your creative energy into making our next event the best yet.

## GIVE

monthly to multiply your investment by joining our Nurture Network.

## DOUBLE

your impact with a matching gift from your company.

## CONTACT

[infoboston@roomtogrow.org](mailto:infoboston@roomtogrow.org) or [infony@roomtogrow.org](mailto:infony@roomtogrow.org) to get started.

1. Grimm Jr, Robert, et al. "Building Active Citizens: The Role of Social Institutions in Teen Volunteering. Youth Helping America." Corporation for National and Community Service (2005).

## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

"The TJX Companies, Inc. is happy to support Room to Grow's mission. Through a combination of support including grants, in-kind donations, and volunteerism, TJX helps Room to Grow deliver their innovative program and offer more babies born into poverty the best possible start in life." – The TJX Companies, Inc.



TJX volunteers at Room to Grow Boston. TJX is the parent company of T.J. Maxx, Marshalls, and HomeGoods.

## NEW YORK'S NEW HOME!

In 2016, Room to Grow New York moved to our new home at 7 West 30th Street. With more space, we are ready to expand our outreach in NYC, supporting even more families. We encourage you to come visit us anytime!



Room to Grow New York Family Center

## ROOM TO GROW EVENTS

bringing together Room to Grow supporters



L-R: Proud Ambassador Emma Heming Willis, Ken Burns, Bruce Willis, Founding Board Member Uma Thurman, and Founder Julie Burns at Room to Grow Spring Benefit, New York

"It's important that we continue to support Room to Grow so that they can help all of us by helping more moms be the best moms they want to be, raising children who reach their potential as healthy, vital members of our society, and break the cycle of poverty."

– Lauren Baker, First Lady of Massachusetts



Lauren Baker and Room to Grow child at Celebrating Mothers Breakfast, Boston

"One of the challenges of affluence is that one becomes insulated from need... So the challenge for the affluent becomes how we break down that insulation and expose ourselves and our kids to needs."

– Nick Kristof, *New York Times* Journalist



L-R: Nick Kristof, Juju Chang, and Matt Dowd at Room to Grow Power Breakfast, New York

## MEASURING ROOM TO GROW'S IMPACT

In September 2016, Room to Grow was selected from hundreds of applications across the country to join a new national leadership program to build a culture of health, supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Over the next three years, we will partner with expert researchers at Columbia University to conduct a randomized control trial of Room to Grow's program to demonstrate how the innovative combination of parenting education, material goods, and connections to community resources promote the early health and development of young children. Our research will focus initially on proximal outcomes in the first year of the program (i.e. material hardship/financial stress, enriched early home environments, parenting efficacy and knowledge of developmental milestones, connections to community and social supports, and family mental health/wellbeing) and we hope to expand our research in the future as resources allow.

INTER  
DISCIPLINARY  
RESEARCH  
LEADERS

Support  
provided by  
Robert Wood Johnson  
Foundation

# FINANCIAL HEALTH

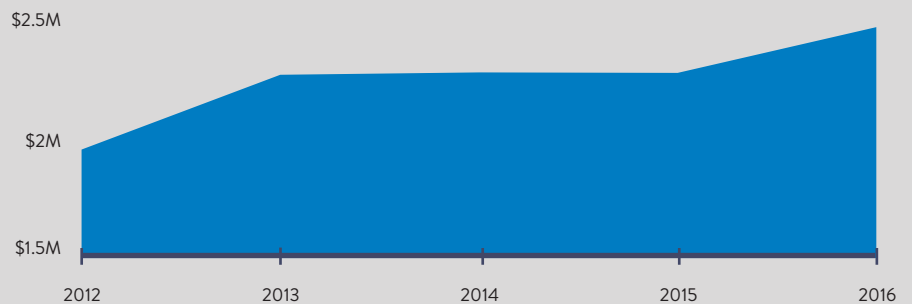


## REVENUE SOURCES

- 60% | Individuals
- 25% | Corporations
- 15% | Foundations

(unaudited financials)

## BUDGET GROWTH



For more information, view Room to Grow financial statements at: [bit.ly/RTG990Form](http://bit.ly/RTG990Form)



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