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 certainty 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

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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 of 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

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

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.

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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.

Having more books in the home is proven to propel children years further in their education. However, in low-income neighborhoods, there is only one age-appropriate book for every 300 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. In fact, nearly 52 million hours of school are missed each year due to dental complications.

19,000 distributed over children’s books

1,500 distributed over dental supplies

$1,500,000 distributed over worth of baby items (retail equivalent)
“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 her 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.

“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 Flioniis, Vice President, STAG Industrial, Inc.

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– Miranda Vitello, volunteer

“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

“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
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.

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

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.

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

“Interventions that target parenting can prevent up to half of poverty’s negative impact on children’s development.”

“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.

“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

“There are all kinds of milestones, but the most important are the ones that are met before age three: the milestones that lead to health, nutrition, safety, and the ability to succeed in school.”

- Seth Shaffer, CEO of Room to Grow

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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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
James Athanasoulas • Jeffrey Bellows • Mary E.D. Cannon • Liana Downey • Alexandra of Greece, CLS • Sarah D. Greenhill • Jeff Hoffman • Allison Picott • Carlton Smith • Uma Thurman
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Robyn Carter, LICSW • Executive Director, Boston
Allyson Crawford • Executive Director, New York

LOCATIONS
142 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116 • 617.859.4545 • infoboston@roomtogrow.org
54 West 21st Street, #401, New York, NY 10010 • 212.620.7800 • info@roomtogrow.org

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

You Can Make a Difference

Financial Management
Leveraging resources to create outcomes

2015 Expenses (Unaudited)
70% Program Services
15% Fundraising
15% Administration

$2,500 cost to serve each Room to Grow family annually
13¢ cost to raise $1 in 2015

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财务管理
通过利用资源来创造成果

2015年费用（未审计）
- 70% 项目服务
- 15% 筹款
- 15% 管理

- 每个Room to Grow家庭的成本为2,500美元
- 筹款13美分，可筹集$1

您能做出改变

志愿者
- 作为个人或与朋友或同事群体
- 参加或主办Room to Grow筹款活动
- 组织收集活动或组织婴儿洗澡
- 询问您的雇主有关匹配礼物和其他慈善活动
- 加入委员会并扩大您的网络，同时支持我们的婴儿
- 在社交媒体上传播

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