



In Toddler Classroom, Seeds Bring Growth

In the play yard just outside the Toddler Classroom at Mothers' Club, a crate cradles two dozen eggshells outfitted with drawn-on smiles and tufts of green chia sprouts growing wildly from within. A teacher keeps close watch as a toddler waters the tender shoots flourishing inside a shell marked with his name. Nearby, two toddlers stand at a sensory table filled with soil, where one child carefully fills a bucket one scoop at a time; the other plunges his hand into the dirt with a wide smile.

This spring, the Toddlers Classroom embarked on a special study of seeds. The "chia pets" served as an introduction to learning about how seeds germinate and become living plants. Next, the children grew cilantro from seed, taking the plants home to care for them as an activity with mom or dad. "Although most of our toddlers don't verbally communicate yet, parents

observed how excited their children were to care for the cilantro plants, reminding the adults to water them and place them in the sun," shared Martha Hernandez, a teacher in the Toddler Classroom.

Toddler Classroom continues on page 5



Toddler Jared proudly displays his sprouting cilantro plant

Saluting Silvana Casalegno

Throughout our history, Mothers' Club has had many "mothers" that have comforted our families, taught us valuable lessons, and shaped our identity as an organization. Mara Moser founded an informal "club" for mothers in 1961; Taka Nomura established our developmentally appropriate early childhood program in the 1960s; Sue Kujawa's leadership turned us into a professional nonprofit organization; and numerous other women have contributed to the warmth, growth, and development of this organization which values individuals and acknowledges the importance of healthy, happy families within our community.

Standing amongst the great forebears of our organization, Silvana has been the "heart" of Mothers' Club

for 22 years. In 1995, she came to us as a parent educator from Pasadena City College, teaching parenting skills and child development to families in our program. In 1999, she was hired full-time to offer support, guidance, and care to the overwhelmed parents at our center.

Saluting Silvana continues on page 3



Silvana and a graduating PreK student

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Letter from the Executive Director

Last month, the parents in our Afternoon Program allowed me to join them for their annual **Goal-Getters luncheon**. I have had many impactful moments over the past six years I've spent at Mothers' Club, but this luncheon was truly something special. The young moms opened up and shared their personal experiences and how Mothers' Club has empowered them to take control of their lives. I was able to hear their real stories and I now believe more adamantly than ever in the strength of our holistic, two-generation approach. Mothers' Club has really, truly impacted the lives of these parents for the better and I am proud to contribute to this organization. I want to thank the afternoon parents and our Program Coordinator, Andrea Huicochea, for allowing me to join them for this special day.

The Goal-Getters Luncheon is just one of several end-of-year celebrations that acknowledges the accomplishments of our parents and children. In June, we will have two **Bridge to Success** ceremonies to celebrate PreK students in our morning and afternoon sessions and transition them to kindergarten. Whole families are invited to join us for the ceremonies and to accompany their young student across our *bridge to success*, symbolizing the transition from Mothers' Club to the next step in their education.

At the end of May, we attended the **Pasadena City College Adult High School Graduation Luncheon**. Two of our parents, Perla Castellanos and Lorena Olvera, earned their High School



Sungmin is ready to cross the bridge to success in his cap and gown

diplomas! As you can imagine, the road to get there was not easy, but they remained persistent and overcame the obstacles along their way. Both women thanked Mothers' Club for preparing them to achieve this milestone and look forward to continuing their learning journey. They were beaming with pride – and so were we!

As parents and children celebrate the end of the school year, staff and the Board of Directors are busy preparing for our next fiscal year, which begins on July 1st. The **2017-2018 fiscal year** is going to be very exciting for our organization, filled with progress, changes, and celebrations. We will be welcoming new families and new Board Members. We will be expanding our partnership with **Pacific Clinics/Early Head Start** which will net an additional \$85,000 annually to provide early childhood education to infants and toddlers. We will be re-branding and launching a new website.

But even as Mothers' Club evolves as an organization, our heart remains the same. The stories I heard at the Goal Getters Luncheon and the smiles of children at the *Bridge to Success* ceremonies show



Education Director Julie Espinoza with Lorena Olvera and her daughter at the Pasadena City College Adult High School Graduation



Executive Director Hector LaFarga, Jr. and PreK students pose for a selfie at "Enzo & Joseph's Haircut Store"

how much our programs and services mean to the families who rely on them. We will continue to work to meet the needs of families in our community and provide empowerment, education, and engagement through our unique two-generation approach. **Thank you for joining us!**

Hector LaFarga, Jr.
Executive Director

Join Us for a Tour

The best way to learn about what happens at Mothers' Club is to visit our Center and take a guided tour with staff.

Upcoming Tours:

Tuesday, July 11 - 9am
Thursday, July 20 - 11:30am
Tuesday, August 7 - 9am
Thursday, August 17 - 11:30am
Tuesday, Sept. 5 - 9:00am
Thursday, Sept. 14 - 11:30am

To RSVP or for more information call (626) 792-2687 ext. 122 or email mara@mothersclub.org.

Saluting Silvana, continued from Page 1

As the Program Director, she provides oversight for all program activities and works closely with each family to determine their needs and establish their goals. This summer, Silvana will be retiring – hanging up her megaphone and clipboard to pursue her other interests!

Throughout her tenure, Silvana’s empathy, perseverance, and guidance have provided the backbone of our holistic services and helped hundreds of families overcome the challenges of isolation, poverty, stress, and abuse. Many families come to our center feeling lost, alone, and scared. Silvana has made it her personal mission to get to know each family, learn their story, hear their struggles, and identify what help they need. Without intimidating or belittling them, Silvana is able to look into their fears and limitations and pull out their strengths, talents, and dreams for the future. Silvana helps parents find their own identity, set goals for their future, and become the best parents and people they can be.

Silvana is a catalyst for change within families and in the

community. She inspires others to give back as generously as she does every day. Over the years, she has developed personal bonds with donors, service providers, and volunteers, encouraging them to support Mothers’ Club in whatever way possible. Her relationships with the National Charity League, Junior League, and Girl Scouts have provided volunteer power and supplies to support the wonderful programs she puts on for families. Annually, she orchestrates a massive Adopt-a-Family Program, inspiring hundreds of volunteers to “adopt” Mothers’ Club families by providing gifts, clothes, and food for the holidays.

Silvana always jokes that it seems like we have a lot of parties at Mothers’ Club. The truth is, Silvana uses celebrations, holidays, and fundraisers to teach parents valuable skills, develop their confidence, and help them build close relationships. Every field trip, fundraiser, Thanksgiving play, and Spring



Silvana surrounded by a group of proud mothers displaying their Recognition Certificates

Fling carnival transforms parents into valuable, confident, and prepared leaders that will have the power to change our community for the better.

As she transitions to the next phase of her life, Silvana’s daily presence in the center will be missed. Her distinctive voice will no longer fill the halls with welcoming calls of “¡Hola, mi bella!” but her legacy and imprint on our mission, programs, vision, and values will forever be felt. She, along with all our forebears and current leadership, have created a culture of empowerment, respect, warmth, and understanding that will remain at the core of our organization for years to come. Silvana won’t be going far – she will still be teaching Parent Education at Mothers’ Club on Friday mornings, and we are very happy to keep her close. Thank you, Silvana, for all you’ve done for Mothers’ Club, our staff, and the many, many families whose lives you’ve touched.

If you would like to thank Silvana for her years of service or wish her well, you can email her at silvana@mothersclub.org or send a note to 980 N. Fair Oaks Ave., Pasadena, CA 91103.

*- Mara Leong-Nichols
Development Director*

“Silvana embodies the spirit of Mothers’ Club. She is a fierce advocate of the mothers. She has high expectations for all the families and knows that they can do anything they set their mind to. Her belief in them enables them to do all they can do.”

- Sue Kujawa, Former Executive Director



Silvana and the mothers from the Morning Program celebrating Mother’s Day at Descanso Garden

Team-Building at Mothers' Club

Volunteering together as a team is one of the best ways to build comradery and relationships amongst individuals! By organizing a day of service at Mothers' Club, groups can have a fulfilling experience getting to know each other outside of their usual environment while giving back to their community. This is a great opportunity for corporate work teams, service groups, or membership organizations.

We recently welcomed team members from the Disney Store and Granite Properties, both local companies headquartered in Pasadena and Glendale, to our center for team-building volunteer days. Co-workers were able to volunteer together to enhance our services for families, provide mentorship to parents, and engage with our children.

Granite Properties recently sent a team of four employees to

volunteer in the children's classrooms while parents were treated to a special Mother's Day celebration. Since parents usually spend one day a week assisting teachers in the classrooms themselves, having the Granite Properties team on-site gave our parents a break and allowed all of them to participate in the Mother's Day activities. Lauren, a staff member from Granite Properties, expressed that their team was thrilled with "just how much we got out of the day, how much fun we had, and how much we would love to come back."

VoluntEars from the Disney Store organized a team to lead the May Early Readers' Book Club, an interactive story time for young children and their families, held one Saturday morning a month with the intention of promoting literacy and effective reading practices. Disney VoluntEars read *The Giant Turnip* aloud to the children and then guided them in a craft to decorate a pot and plant seeds.

Ginger Mort, a dedicated Mothers' Club volunteer, organized the group of Disney Store team members to



Disney VoluntEars at Early Readers' Book Club

participate in the Early Readers' Book Club. Her favorite part of volunteering with her coworkers was sharing her love of Mothers' Club with them. "This gives others a chance to know what I've known for years, that Mother's Club makes a difference in the community and the lives of the families they serve."

Corporate groups provide a wonderful resource of engaged volunteers that have a huge impact on the programs we provide here at Mothers' Club! There are various opportunities for teams to get involved, including workshops for parents, weekday classroom volunteering, or special events. If you are interested in bringing your staff or colleagues to Mothers' Club for a day of team-building and making a difference, please email Sarah Kimbrough at volunteer@mothersclub.org.

*- Sarah Kimbrough
Volunteer Coordinator*



Jake from Granite Properties joins Preschool circle time



Granite Properties team member, Lauren, engages with two girls in the PreK Classroom

Upcoming Adult Volunteer Opportunities

Literacy Pen Pals

Build a relationship with one of our mothers by helping her practice English through letter writing. Volunteers will be matched with a mother in September and exchange monthly letters during the school year.

Early Readers' Book Club

Lead an interactive story time for young children and their families in order to help promote literacy and effective reading practices. Early Readers' Book Club takes place one Saturday morning a month starting in September.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Sarah Kimbrough at 626.792.2687 ext.121 or volunteer@mothersclub.org

Toddler Classroom, continued from Page 1

While the study of seeds facilitates wonderful early science-based learning for the toddlers, they are growing in more ways than meets the eye. For example, handling delicate seedlings growing in eggshells teaches impulse control and concepts such as gentleness and empathy. These socio-emotional skills positively impact how toddlers interact with classmates, siblings, and teachers. Furthermore, motor skills are honed through the process of planting

seeds, watering them, and working with potting soil. Additionally, the classroom activities invite participation from parents and include them in the learning process.

The final project in this springtime adventure came just in time for Mother's Day, when the toddlers of Mothers' Club were able to present a home-grown sunflower to their first and most important teacher – mom.

- Berit Anderson
Development Associate



Above: Jasmine uses a magnifying glass to observe the chia plants in the Toddler Classroom.

Left: Crates of eggshells outfitted with drawn-on smiles and tufts of green chia sprouts.

Right: Toddlers check in on the progress of their seedlings.



SAVE THE DATE

*Twilight
Tasting*

OCTOBER 14, 2017

Goal Setting in the Afternoon Program

At Mothers' Club, we are constantly looking for new ways to engage our families and increase the impact of our programs. Last fall, as the new fiscal year began, we decided to create a goal-setting program for our Afternoon Program parents where we would provide them with encouragement and guidance to reach their personal goals. I am pleased to share that nearly a dozen Mothers' Club parents participated in the new program, which ran from September through May.

In the fall, I met individually with each mom to discuss their goals and hone in on an aspiration to work towards. I utilized the S.M.A.R.T Goals framework to help participants identify a realistic goal they would like to achieve and outline specific steps in order to reach it. Goals set by parent participants included building a personal business website, losing weight, and enrolling in classes at Pasadena Community Education Center. We worked together to answer questions such as: what is the purpose or benefit of accomplishing this goal and why is it important to the goal-setter? Roadmaps were created by each individual, including calendaring benchmarks and target dates. Most importantly, the objective set by each parent needed to be tangible in order to encourage accountability and negate fatigue.

Every month, I met one-on-one with each participant in the goal-setting program for an hour to check in on their progress. Each parent shared their exciting milestones as well as their setbacks. They gained valuable insights such as the need to be flexible with one's goals when other priorities arise.



Standing: Elvia Montenegro, Brenda Quiroz, Saharai Alvarez, Adriana Munoz, Tania Munoz, Beatrice Lopez, Marlene Castillo. Seated: Rozalyn Corona, Andrea Huicochea, Jovana Telles

Many times, parents at Mothers' Club experience difficulties in life which make reaching personal goals difficult, but these challenges make setting goals and making plans all the more necessary and impactful.

As the program year drew to a close, I realized that, more than anything else, these parents need someone to listen to them, guide them, and provide positive support and reinforcement. The core of the goal-setting program is accountability, and our monthly meetings and self-identified written frameworks helped them stay focused. Most of the goal-getters had never done anything like this before and were excited and motivated to try a new approach in identifying, setting, and working to achieve their goals.

In May, we held a Goal-Getters Luncheon for the parents who participated in the program, to recognize their hard work and progress, regardless of if they had already achieved their goals or were still working towards them. The special luncheon was an emotional experience that affirmed the growth of these parents and closed the year celebrating all the progress made, goals reached, setbacks encountered and surpassed, and most of all, unrelenting perseverance.

*- Andrea Huicochea
Program Coordinator*

Mothers' Club programs are funded in part by the following agencies:

Pacific Clinics, Early Head Start

California State Preschool Program

U.S. Department of Agriculture's Child and Adult Care Food Program

City of Pasadena, Community Development Block Grant

Pasadena City College Community Education Center

Thank you to our foundation partners for our recent grant awards

Ahmanson Foundation to re-brand and develop a new website

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California Community Foundation for core support

Eisner Foundation to grow multi-generation learning opportunities

Fitzberg Foundation to provide Early Childhood Education

Goodwin Family Memorial Trust to provide Early Childhood Education to young boys

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Patron Saints Foundation to support Bilingual Mental Health Services

Pasadena Tournament of Roses Foundation in support of the Volunteer Program

Rose Hills Foundation to fund two-generation learning

Tikun Olam Foundation to provide Early Childhood Education

Thank You to the Mothers' Club Guardians

The *Guardians* provide sustaining support for our programs and operations by donating \$1,000 or more to our annual fund.

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Leave a Legacy to Future Generations, Remember Mothers' Club in Your Will

All gifts to Mothers' Club give you the personal satisfaction of providing critical services to our community's most vulnerable children and families. Planned gifts can give you even more in return.

By including Mothers' Club in your will or living trust, you can ensure that Mothers' Club will remain a valuable resource for generations of families to come. We can refer you to professionals who will help you design a charitable gift plan that benefits Mothers' Club and enables you and your family to fulfill your personal financial goals.

If you would like to learn more, please contact our Development Office at (626)792-2687, ext. 122.

Thank you for partnering with us to meet the needs of future children and parents.





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Mothers' Club Family Learning Center prepares families living in isolation and poverty to succeed in school and in life through two-generation learning programs. Our programs are built on two guiding principles: in order for significant, long-term change to occur within a family, you must reach both parent and child and educate them together; and, the most critical time to reach a family is when children are proven to be most vulnerable and impressionable, between birth and 5 years-old.

The Power of Two-Generation Learning

We fulfill our mission by providing FREE programs to disadvantaged families with children ages 0-5. Our two-generation learning model helps mothers and children gain the knowledge, skills and confidence they will need to break out of poverty. National research and our own evaluation results confirm that increasing the education levels of both a parent and their child is an irrefutable way to promote long-term, positive change within a family and a community.

Donate Online & Learn More at www.mothersclub.org

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