

The Power of Two



Issue 5

July 2007

Capital Campaign Passes 90% Mark

Major grants bring Mothers' Club closer to reaching campaign goal of \$6.5 million.

Since our last campaign update in February, Mothers' Club has raised more than \$1.3 million dollars in our capital campaign. **The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation**, a long-time supporter of Mothers' Club programs, expressed their approval of our new home with a grant of \$500,000. Just two weeks later, we were pleased to receive our first ever grant from the **Annenberg Foundation**, whose name will adorn the facility's Zero to Three Center in honor of their \$250,000 grant.

When school opens this fall, Mothers' Club will have a dedicated pre-kindergarten classroom for the first time in our history. To support our pre-k program during the first two years in our new home, another long-

time supporter of our programs, **The Eisner Foundation**, has awarded us a \$100,000 grant.

Other generous grants have been made by the **Whitecap Foundation**, **The Schow Foundation** and the **Patron Saints Foundation**, which is making a long-term investment in our mental health services by funding our new counseling room with a \$25,000 grant. **The City of Pasadena** approved a \$15,000 Community Development Block Grant to purchase play equipment for our children's outdoor play area. And, in direct response to our Kresge Challenge grant, gifts have been made by the **Kathryne Beynon Foundation** and Pasadena's **Junior League Sustainers**.

Many other community members have pledged their support as well, investing in Pasadena's future families. Now's your chance to join them!

- Sarah Orth, *Development Director*

DID YOU KNOW?

As a new and reoccurring feature, we will be bringing you updates and information on the scope of issues that Mothers' Club works to address in our community.

Children's Mental Health Linked to Future Success

Mental health is a key component in a child's healthy development. It impacts their ability to bond, trust, develop social skills and learn. In order for children to maintain positive mental health, they need to have the least possible amount of obstacles. Obstacles can be due to biology (prematurity or physical anomalies), relationship with caregivers, and environment (poverty, malnutrition, violence, neglect).

Children's mental health is a wide spread and often misunderstood problem. The American Journal of



"Many risks can be addressed in the early years, starting with quality prenatal care and interventions in the earliest stages of life. Thus, literally, reducing disparities begins with babies."

Johnson and Theberge 2007, *Reducing Disparities Beginning in Early Childhood*, NCCP.

See **Mental Health**, page 2

In This Issue...

Wescom Credit Union Gives Back

Financial literacy classes: basic budgets to long-term planning - parents learn it all.....Page 2

Young Philanthropist Raises Funds for Mothers' Club

Programs reap benefits of 5th grader's bake sale.....Page 2

A Letter from the President.....Page 3

Last Dance at Orange Grove

Community applauds graduates and celebrates new beginnings.....Page 4

Wonderful Success of the Family Book Club

Reading together to meet goals, learn and treasure their time together.....Page 5

Our Guardians.....Page 5

Program Grant Awards...Page 5

Mothers' Club Family Learning Center

526 East Orange Grove Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91104
626.792.2687 Office
626.793.1832 Fax

Visit our website at
www.mothersclub.org

WESCOM Credit Union Gives Back

This summer, parents at Mothers' Club are benefiting from a specialized class. The team at Wescom Credit Union is providing a 5-week financial literacy program that covers savings, spending wisely, budgeting, and how to use money to save the world. **David Bactor, Community Relations Officer**, indicated that the Wescom team is "learning as much as the parents because of the diverse cultural backgrounds of the mothers at Mothers' Club." He stated that the parents are great students - willing to learn and eager to ask questions.

Wescom conducts these free financial literacy workshops for the community because they are "proud to be partnering with organizations and



give back to the community." We are happy that they are partnering with us and expect that our moms will have better skills not only as they manage their day-to-day budgets, but as they plan for their future financial stability.

-Julia Heintz-Mackoff
Development Associate

Young Philanthropist, Alyssa Rivas, Raises Funds for Mothers' Club

Earlier this year, eleven-year-old **Alyssa Rivas**, a 5th grader from Chandler School, volunteered at Mothers' Club with her classmates. She spent the morning playing, reading and having fun with the infants and toddlers in our program. She loved it and decided she wanted to make a difference by fundraising for our organization.

Alyssa came up with the perfect plan all on her own: she would hold a Bake Sale - since she loves to cook - in her home! With determination and confidence she carried out her plan by designing flyers to publicize the event, choosing the best dessert recipes to sell and personally inviting family and friends. With planning and advertising taken care of, Alyssa took to the kitchen. She baked and decorated scrumptious chocolate peppermint cupcakes, carrot cake, lemon cookies, sugar cookies, rice crispy treats, raisin cookies and beautiful lady bugs (made with strawberries, grapes and chocolate morsels). She even enlisted the help of her two younger siblings to assist her during the event.

At the bake sale, Alyssa shared her passion for Mothers' Club with



Eleven year-old Alyssa Rivas

her invited guests and reiterated that the proceeds from the sale would be donated to benefit the families attending the program. Alyssa raised \$188 dollars that afternoon!

Alyssa further astounded the staff by personally delivering the money raised to our office. She showed remarkable dedication by following through from beginning to end, from an idea to a generous gift. Thank you Alyssa for your support and for showing us all how to successfully fundraise - you are an inspiration!

- Julie Espinoza
Family Literacy Coordinator

Mental Health, cont. from page 1

Psychiatry reported in 2002 that 75-80% of children needing mental health services were not likely to receive them. Research has also shown that race and income levels play a part in the accessibility of proper mental healthcare. Of children needing mental health services, African American, Latino and Native American children are the least likely to receive them. Prevention strategies from professionals can help identify problems and lead to informed and consistent treatment. However, children's mental health needs are not being met.

Due in large part to poverty, one of the growing threats for children in Pasadena is the **inaccessibility of mental health services**. The majority of children under 18 (54.7%) enrolled in Pasadena Unified Schools live in an area of town which claims the lowest per capita income and the greatest concentration of poverty. Gaps in access to services, unequal treatment, and adverse health conditions lead to early health risks that can have long-range implications for physical, emotional, and intellectual development (Johnson and Theberge 2007).

One of the many ways this need for proper mental health development and support services can be addressed is at the early childhood level. According to the National Center for Children in Poverty, many disparities in health and well-being are rooted in early childhood.

There are effective treatments, services and supports that can help children and youth with mental health problems, identify those at-risk and provide skills to thrive and live successfully. However, due to the lack of early intervention, low-cost treatment, and quality infant /toddler care, most children do not receive intervention or mental health services.

This need requires urgent attention. Children's mental health is a key component to their ability to be self-confident, trusting, empathic, inquisitive, competent in using language to communicate and relating with others. All of these skills influence cognitive learning such as literacy, numeracy and language skills (Cohen, Onunaku, Clothier and Poppe, 2005).

- Silvana Casalegno
Parent Program Director

From the President

Dear Friends,

The baton has been passed. At our annual meeting on June 21st we thanked some long-time members of our Board of Directors and our past leadership as we welcomed five newcomers to our Board and a new leadership roster.

A Well Deserved Thank You

The year has been nothing short of extraordinary. Under **Judy Wilson's** careful guidance as President for the past two years, we are over 90% toward reaching our capital campaign goal. We are completing the building of our first permanent home. We have been acknowledged by national foundations for our two-generation learning program, "an exemplary program" as one funder described it. Judy Wilson passed the baton to me, but not before we had a chance to thank her with a gift that said "never underestimate Judy Wilson."

Of course, many people joined Judy in creating this success. One of them is leaving the board after 7 years, **Nancy Carlton**. Nancy has done so much, not the least of which is teaching the "Cook n' Chat" class, where mothers practice their English while they learn and share culinary secrets. Perhaps the most fitting tribute to Nancy was the standing ovation she received at the mothers' graduation ceremony in June. Nancy has also been the powerhouse behind every successful benefit gala event for the past several years. The good news is that she is continuing to volunteer her time in both these areas.

Betty McKenney, after years of leadership service as president and past president leaves our executive committee this year. Betty laid the groundwork for our extraordinary growth by doing the heavy lifting of helping us define ourselves as a board supported by professional staff.

Maria Minervini also left the board this year. She did a yeoman's job on our silent auction two years ago and we will miss her charm and warmth.

Mayor Bill Bogaard gave us some very uplifting comments at our annual meeting. He reminded us of where we were just 10 short years ago when we were a well-kept secret in the community, and how much has been

"More than ever, this world needs what Mothers' Club has learned.

As we struggle to bring our teenagers back from the brink of dropping out of school, joining gangs and heading straight toward irrevocable bad choices - we wonder, where are their parents, where are their mothers? If they knew what Mothers' Club mothers know - would the outcome be the same?"



Incoming President Judy Smith Asbury

accomplished since then. "Today Northwest Pasadena, Tomorrow the World" was the Mayor's challenge to us as we move forward.

Welcoming New Leadership

The annual meeting is also the time we welcome the newest members of our Board. This past year, led by **John DeWitt**, the Board Nominating and Governance Committee recruited 5 new leaders:

Renu Bhat-Hansen who recently retired from a 30 year career as a grade-school teacher;

John Carlton, a partner in the Los Angeles office of Arnold & Porter, a national law firm headquartered in Washington, D.C. (and yes, the husband of Nancy Carlton);

Ramon Pack III who worked for the United States Securities and Exchange Commission as a staff attorney in the Enforcement Division and is now in private practice in Pasadena, focusing primarily on Estate Planning;

Aty Rotter who recently retired after working for 32 years for Pomona Unified Schools teaching various grade levels and mentoring new teachers; and

Lori Watson, Senior Adjunct Instructor in the Admission Based on Life Experience (ABLE) program at Pacific Oaks College. We are thrilled to welcome these new leaders and look forward to their valuable contributions to our organization and the community.

Reflecting on our Past: A Luxury of Limitations

For the past 40 years, Mothers' Club has operated out of a collection of rooms and spaces at the Friends Meeting House on Orange Grove Boulevard. While this has indeed been difficult, it has also had benefits. It gave us the luxury of limitations.

In our small space, with limited hours, and facilities, the staff developed a program that grew straight out of the need of isolated mothers with young children. As a result, we have developed a highly relevant program with some of the highest success rates on every evaluation measure we've studied.

Because we were too small a facility to be licensed - while our program was outstanding, our space did not conform to license requirements - that meant that we had to have the mothers in attendance, and they couldn't leave their children to go somewhere else. That, in turn enforced our parent program, and we saw what a difference it made for them. If we were given a choice of whether moms had to be there or not, this fact might not have been so apparent.

Because of our limited facility, our program could only serve so many families. As word of mouth spread over the years, so did our waiting list. Though our families have many difficulties in every day survival, they know that coming to Mothers' Club is a privilege.

See From the President, page 4

Our Last Dance at Orange Grove

With our move to our new home fast approaching, we find ourselves celebrating, or acknowledging, many “last times.” This past June, for the last time in our old home on Orange Grove Boulevard, we celebrated the graduation of both mothers and children who are leaving our program. To mark the occasion we used the auditorium of the Messiah Lutheran Church to hold two celebrations - one for the parents and another for the children. For the parent graduation, **Teri Davis**, our liaison with the **National Charities League**, took charge of decorating the space with balloons, banners, and flowers, while Board member **Nancy Carlton** prepared a delicious lunch. Local Girl Scouts and other NCL volunteers helped out in the children’s program so each parent could attend the party. It was wonderful to see the moms all dressed up, enjoying this special time.

Outgoing Board President **Judy Wilson** spoke to the moms and praised their hard work and commitment to their families. Moms were presented with certificates of achievement for their improvement in learning English, in reading to their children, in taking on leadership roles, and for participation in parent education classes. There were *MANY*



Sue Kujawa with graduating preschooler Jason Solorio

well-deserved certificates! Each parent was also given two disposable cameras, a photo book, and a gift certificate for film development - a graduation gift from the National Charities League. During the ceremony, board members, staff, and parents gave a standing ovation to Nancy Carlton for all she has done for the parents during the past years.

The next day, we gathered again to celebrate as 13 bright, energetic preschool boys and girls received a happy send off to begin their elementary school education. Parent **Araceli Zavala** had worked with the children to do a traditional Mexican waltz; it was obvious from their serious performance that they had practiced

a lot! Then each child was called forward to receive a certificate and gifts. Once again the National Charities League contributed with a wonderful basket for each child filled with everything needed for a happy school beginning, including band aids for the inevitable skinned knee. Back packs full of school supplies for graduating preschoolers were provided by Girl Scout **Alison Montiel**, and by **Karen Bagnard** and the **Soroptamist Club of Altadena/Pasadena**. Proud parents took many pictures using their new cameras, a great way to record this special ending - and a new beginning.

- Sue Kujawa
Executive Director

From the President, continued from page 3

Because of this, and our outstanding program development, we have one of the highest retention rates among comparable programs.

Our space was only available to us in the mornings. So, what did we do? We created an intense, highly personal two-generation program that is winning accolades from national foundations and evaluators.

Lastly, because of the support of the Friends who donated and later leased their facility to us at cost, we have had the luxury of being able to exist on a minimal operations budget.

The Challenge: How Do We Grow?

But, now, we will have a glorious space - space that is ours 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. What are we going to do with that space? How are we going to grow? How will we continue to meet the community’s needs - what new needs are arising in our community? How can we grow and keep true to our mission? How are we going to fund the increased staff, increased resources and growth? How do we grow and maintain our standard of excellence?

In a recent inquiry from one of our funders, how do we move from being an exemplary program to being a leader in the field of two-generation

learning? We need to explore our leadership responsibility. More than ever, this world needs what Mothers’ Club has learned.

As we struggle to bring our teenagers back from the brink of dropping out of school, joining gangs and heading straight toward irrevocable bad choices - we wonder, where are their parents, where are their mothers? If they knew what Mothers’ Club mothers know - would the outcome be the same?

It is an exciting time. I am looking forward to this new chapter for Mothers’ Club.

*Best Regards,
Judy Smith Asbury*

Wonderful Success of The Family Book Club



A mother charts the hours she has read with her children at home.

Every year Mothers' Club runs a special literacy activity: The Family Book Club. This Club focuses on encouraging moms to read books to their children beginning at birth. The Family Literacy Coordinator, Julie Espinoza, leads these mothers year after year in this task, by offering books, literacy materials and tips to make reading aloud to their children a nice and nurturing event. The moms in the Book Club report the time they spend reading together with their children each week. This year they decided that they would collectively read to their children for a total of 1600 hours and they exceeded their goal by 100 hours!

Every Wednesday in the meeting room, the moms met to report on their progress. Moms with very young infants and toddlers reported 45 to 50 minutes, but those with older children reported an average of 150 minutes per week. The moms took on the responsibility of reaching their goal very seriously. Every Wednesday they would come and ask, "How many minutes are left?" They would go to their friends and encourage each one and offer to follow up with anyone who had not completed their report.

One of moms could not attend the meetings on Wednesday since it was her day to volunteer in her child's classroom. Remaining committed to the Book Club; she would come to Julie's office every Thursday morning to report her activities and shared all the fun she spent with her daughters. She was very happy knowing that her contribution was not only going to help reach the goal, but would increase the success of her daughters in their school years.

This past year was most delightful because the moms learned while having fun with books and through hands-on activities with their children. Also, they are preparing themselves and their children for the challenges of kindergarten. In the end, the moms and kids reap a life-long love of books and treasured time together! Thanks Julie.

- Maria Juarez
Family Literacy Assistant

Recent Grant Awards

Our sincere gratitude to these grantors for their support of our programs for children and their parents in Northwest Pasadena:

Los Angeles Times Family Fund
Pasadena Tournament of Roses Foundation
The Patron Saints Foundation
Rotary Club of Pasadena
San Gabriel Valley Learning Centers

Our Guardians

Individuals who sustain our programs with annual giving of \$1,000 or more:

Ann Kelsey Babcock
Gwen & Guilford Babcock
Carole & Mike Babcock
Ann & Olin Barrett
Renu Bhat-Hansen & Alex Hansen
Paula & David Blacher
Claire & Bill Bogaard
Jeannine Bogaard
Marie Campbell
Nancy & John Carlton
Joan & Michael Cathcart
Jinny Cobey
Mary Anne Cunningham
Leslie Dennis
Dorlys Devereux
Bonnie & John DeWitt
Christine & Ira Felman
Jean & Louis Fleming
Susan Futterman & Arnold Siegel
Mary Genis
Jennifer & Mark Giles
Stephanie & Dale Harvey
Adelaide Hixon
Jane Kaczmarek
Ellen & Harvey Knell
Valerie & George Leiva
Kathy & Tony Magistrale
Judy & Stephen McDonald
Betty & Charles McKenney
Patricia McLaughlin
Margaret & David Mgrublian
Norah Morley
Richard & Janice Morris
Wendy Munger & Leonard Gumpport
Henry & Nanette Nevins
Mary Lois Nevins
Beth & Christopher Orndorff
Kathleen & Donald Orth
Jessica Osaki-Howell &
Houston Howell
Sue Parilla & Theodore Krontiris
Teresa Payton
Marsha Rood
Aly & Howard Rotter
Michael Schneickert &
Karen Leiko Otamura
Fran Scoble
Carol & Carl Selkin
Judy Smith Asbury & Greg Asbury
John Tongish
Maxine Tongish
Heather & Michael VanMeter
Maria Low Way
Julie & Stephen Webber
Judith & John Whiting
Cindy & George Wiley
Judy & Randy Wilson

Executive Director

Susan Kujawa

Board of Directors

Judy Smith Asbury, *Chair*

Renu Bhat-Hansen

David Blacher

Marie Campbell

John Carlton

Leslie Dennis

John DeWitt

Susan Futterman

Ellen Knell

Kathy Magistrale

Betty McKenney

Patricia McLaughlin

Norah Morley

Ramon Pack III

Aty Rotter

Marsha V. Rood

John V. Tongish

Heather Boyle VanMeter

Lori Watson

George Wiley

Judith Wilson

Community Advisors

Judith Brown, *Chair*

Carole Babcock

Christle Balvin

Joan Cathcart

Jinny Cobey

Congressman Adam Schiff

Ann Erdman

Jean Fleming

Victor Gordo

Adelaide Hixon

Judy McDonald

Mary Lois Nevins

Fran Scoble

Maria Low Way

Ann Marie Weinstein

The Power of Two

July 2007

Editors, Julia Heintz-Mackoff

& Sarah E. Orth

Mothers' Club is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Tax ID 23-7275324

About Mothers' Club

Founded in 1961, Mothers' Club prepares families living in isolation and poverty to succeed in school and in life. We promote strong parent/child relationships and encourage friendship and mutual support among mothers through our educational programs and social services, thereby creating a stronger community for all families. Since our inception, we have evolved in direct response to the needs of families in our community. Today we are a model family support and education center.

Learn more at www.mothersclub.org

A Quick Look at What's Inside...

Incoming President Judy Smith

Asbury looks to the future as Mothers' Club prepares to move into its first permanent home, asking:

"Now, we will have a glorious space - space that is ours 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. What are we going to do with that space? How will we continue to meet the community's needs - what new needs are arising in our community? How can we grow and keep true to our mission? How do we grow and maintain our standard of excellence?"

Wescom Credit Union brings Financial Literacy Class to parents.

A new regular feature, "Did you know?" will bring you updates and information on the scope of the issues that Mothers' Club works to address in our community.

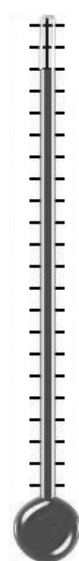
This month - how children's mental health is linked to future success.



Family Book Club - parents exceed reading goal!

Parents & preschoolers celebrate their last graduation at our long-time home at Orange Grove Boulevard.

Capital Campaign Passes 90% Mark!



\$6,500,000 - Goal

\$6,070,000

With just 3 more months to reach our Challenge Goal - we need your help **TODAY!**

If you have been thinking of making a gift to our campaign - **now is the time!**



Mothers' Club Family Learning Center
526 East Orange Grove Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91104

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Pasadena, CA
Permit No. 265