

Miss Ruby's Kids 2008 Annual Report

Helping parents to inspire a passion for learning in their children

October 2008

Dear Friends of Miss Ruby's Kids,

Sixteen graduates celebrated completion of two years of effort in a ceremony held at Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church in May while scores of family members looked on. Their Home Visitors could not have been prouder if they were the parents. We thought you might want to hear about two of the children who were typical of the others who took this special journey.

The first child was a boy whose beginning language scores put him well below average and at risk of school failure. His ending scores placed him above average among his peers rated nationally. Though he began as a fidgety child, unable to concentrate and attend for a 30-minute home visit, he ended as a self confident four year old able to work for the entire visit despite many distractions. Others in regular contact with him noted his progress. At his day care, he was moved to a higher class. His former day care provider asked to receive group literacy instruction. His transformation is a testament to his mother's willingness to arrange her busy work life to accommodate the twice-weekly home visits and to practice reading and playing with him between sessions.

The second child, also a boy, faced the challenge of a mild developmental delay possibly due to a parent who has her own challenges. During home visits his mother learned how important it is to read with her son to insure his future success in school. She learned how to wait for him to respond to questions instead of answering for him and how to praise his efforts, even if he responded incorrectly. His Home Visitor noted dramatic improvements in his learning behavior toward the end of his second year. Though this child may continue to require extra help because of his circumstances his view of himself as a learner is firmly in place. He is curious and ready for preschool. The new Education Mentor Program starting up this fall for Miss Ruby's Kids graduates will insure that he gets the help he needs as he moves through the school system.

We celebrate the 34 children served this past year and the 40 children being served in 2008-2009 thanks to your help! You can be assured that your investment in them will be repaid by their future successes and in your heart many times over.

Betsy Marlow
Executive Director

Jo Fortuna
Chair, Board of Directors



Vision

All children in Georgetown County will enter school prepared to learn, supported by their families, and will graduate from high school as productive citizens of their community.

Mission

Miss Ruby's Kids enables families lacking in resources to inspire a passion for learning in their young children by preparing parents to be their child's first, best teacher

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The communities we serve

Miss Ruby's Kids again provided services for children in families across Georgetown County in 2007-2008 in a continuing effort to fulfill our vision that all of Georgetown County's children will enter school prepared to learn. Each year we actively recruit families from the outlying areas of the county in various venues, such as Give a Kid a Chance Day in Pawleys Island, at Kids Fest in Georgetown, at day care facilities, in churches, and by referrals from satisfied parents of children who have "graduated".

Research shows that 84% of children who complete the two-year program go on to graduate from high school 14 years later.
www.parent-child.org/research/



The programs we offer

Because research shows that vocabulary is an important predictor of a child's school success, the programs offered by Miss Ruby's Kids are designed to stimulate verbal interaction between the parent and child and to build parents' confidence as their child's first, best teacher. Programs are limited to children at risk of school failure and are offered free to families and care providers.

Parent-Child Home Program: Miss Ruby's Kids replicates this research-based and home-visitation program to prepare some of the estimated 300 children born at risk of school failure each year in Georgetown County for success in school. Specially trained Home Visitors come to homes of 2- and 3-year-old children twice-weekly for two years and model to parents ways in which children can become enthusiastic learners through books and toys. Research shows that children who complete the two-year program go on to graduate from high school at the rate of 84% compared to South Carolina's 53% rate in June 2006.

Center-based PCHP: Building on the highly successful Parent-Child Home Program model, our experienced staff models to day care providers proven methods to stimulate verbal interaction with their client children over nine months of twice-weekly visits. The children's parents receive a notebook of guides to the curriculum books, receive a monthly newsletter of literacy-based activities, and are encouraged to borrow the books to use at home.

Education Mentor Program: A pilot project that will provide trained volunteer mentors for the families of children who are graduates of the two-year program to insure their success throughout their school years. Mentors will work with the children, school administrators, and parents to ensure their support.

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2008 Fiscal Year Finances

July 2007 – June 2008

Income

Grant income	\$ 118,255
Individual & other income	89,100
Contract income	<u>8,100</u>
	\$215,455

Expenses

Program	\$82,553
Operating	66,351
Restricted to future expenses	36,419
Reserve fund	<u>30,132</u>
	\$215,455

In light of the current economic turmoil, it is reasonable to ask what will happen to the reserve fund shown above. It is our intention to keep it safe and readily accessible should it be needed to supplement income (heaven forbid). Questions are welcome!

Why pay Home Visitors?

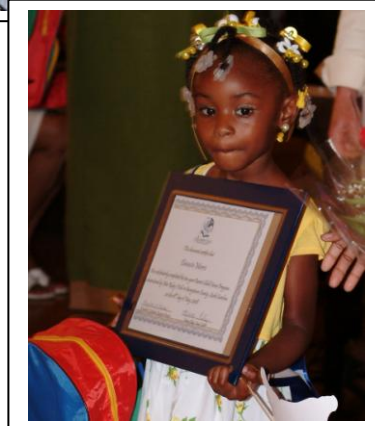
You would think that preparing a child to read well would be easy. Families with a literacy tradition do it all the time. The truth is that it takes years and some families simply lack the skills. Transmitting those literacy skills to a family is not simple. First, you must retain the family for the two years required to ready an at-risk child for preschool - not an easy thing to do just from a scheduling standpoint. The loss of a family after a few months or a year represents a loss of the investment in the books and toys they have been given, of the salary paid to the Home Visitor, and a child who is inadequately prepared.

Though the program is free to participating families it requires a significant investment of time and effort on their part. Parents sign agreements that they and their child will be available for two weekly half-hour sessions at set times during 23 weeks of the school year. The curriculum is delivered to the parent and child together, in their home, by Home Visitors who must gain their trust.

With families scattered throughout the county, one family can represent an investment of 5 hours per week for a Home Visitor including travel time and the mandatory weekly staff meetings, not to mention the cost of fuel. Before they may make visits, these paraprofessionals pass background checks and complete 16 hours of Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP) training and 2.5 hours of sex abuse prevention training. Home Visitors must also be available to assist with workshops and events during the program year.

Because the PCHP is research-based, it is highly structured with many assessments that require experience and continuity in the relationship between the Home Visitor and the family. Home Visitors and the children in their care are regularly evaluated and monitored to insure the quality of program delivery. They are entrusted with delivery of \$250 in curriculum materials to each family as well.

In summary, of the hundreds of Home Visitors in South Carolina, we know of only one who was willing to work without pay. Too much depends upon these key people to leave their work to chance. For all these reasons, we pay Home Visitors. We want to insure that the children who complete the Miss Ruby's Kids program have the same chance for success in school as do their middle class peers.



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2008 by the numbers

- 34 Program children and their parents served
- 170 Assessments made of children's progress/status
- 1,564 Total visits to program families
- 16 Graduates of the two-year program
- 6 Parent/family orientation/enrichment workshops
- 11 Group program children served
- 48 Total visits to group provider
- 95 % children of color served, all services
- 22 Total Storyteller workshops provided to 6 First Steps child development centers
- 90 Parents attending Storyteller workshops
- 11 Board members
- 9 Staff members
- 31 Volunteers
- 1,350+ Board and volunteer hours



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Jan Jones
Amy Webb

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Ive Carr, Home Visitor
Zelma Carr, Home Visitor
Barbara Logan, Home Visitor
Carolyn McBride, Home Visitor
Marva Riley, Home Visitor
Alice Young, Home Visitor

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