

# Miss Ruby's Kids

Helping parents to inspire a passion for learning in their children

Volume 4, Issue 2

May 2008

## Sixteen happy graduates

Sixteen proud and happy three-year-olds and their family members gathered at Georgetown's Bethesda Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday, May 18th, to participate in the Miss Ruby's Kids program's fourth graduation ceremony.



*Some happy graduates perform Old MacDonald*

Each of these sixteen children and an adult family member have successfully completed the intensive, two-year literacy curriculum developed by the Parent Child Home Program, of which Miss Ruby's Kids is a local replication. For the past two years, they have received bi-weekly visits from a trained Home Visitor, who engaged them in various learning activities. Using specifically mandated books and toys, the Home Visitors' goal has been to prepare each student for success in school – success which will be nurtured in the home by a skilled parent/teacher.

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*Each child received a framed diploma and a backpack filled with "get ready for school" necessities furnished with the help of volunteers and Friends of Miss Ruby's Kids*

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The church was filled with guests of the Miss Ruby's Kids families who came to celebrate the children's achievement. Home Visitor Claudia Blanchette addressed the congregation, telling them about the mission of Miss Ruby's Kids first in English, then in Spanish. When Board Chair Jo Fortuna ended the cer-

emony with a congratulatory message, Ms. Blanchette repeated her remarks for the Hispanic guests. Each child received a framed diploma and a backpack filled with "get ready for school" necessities. The formal ceremony was followed by a festive reception in the church's Fellowship Hall.

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*Miss Ruby's Kids graduates now total 36 when the 2008 class is added to those of previous years.*

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Beginning in September, Miss Ruby's Kids will increase the number of children served from 34 to 40. Eighteen current students will move up to the 3-year-old class and twenty-two new children will enter as 2-year-olds. Places for new students are rapidly filling, as recruitment activities, such as participation in this year's Kids' Fest, and recommendations from satisfied parents have spread the word about Miss Ruby's Kids throughout Georgetown County.

Miss Ruby's Kids graduates now total 36 when the 2008 class is added to those of previous years. The new graduates enter the school system with a solid literacy background and a positive attitude toward learning which will get them off to a strong start.

## A Growth Spurt for Miss Ruby's Kids

The increase in its enrollment from 34 to 40 families is just one of a number of growth issues currently confronting Miss Ruby's Kids.

As the program has expanded during its five years of operation, our compact two-room office could no longer accommodate us. We were fortunate to secure an additional office across the hall, which provides meeting space for staff and Board members, room for the file cabinets in which to secure student records, and shelves on which to stack the year's supply of books and toys used by the Home Visitors. We must also increase our staff, first by hiring another Home Visitor to accommodate the six new children entering our program this fall. As our "graduates" move up through the school system, we are actively exploring ways in which Miss Ruby's Kids can enlist the support of volunteers interested in mentoring and supporting individual children's educational needs throughout their elementary years. We will need a part-time staff member to assist with these and other office duties.

Miss Ruby's Kids is growing in other ways. Our

program is now being presented in two home-based child care operations. In 2008-2009 we will serve three of these homes to model literacy skills to the day care providers. In this way, we will equip them to model literacy skills to more county children.

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*In 2008-2009 we will serve three... small group homes to model literacy skills to the day care providers.*

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An outgrowth of our bilingual Home Visitors service is also in the works. Executive Director Betsy Marlow recently collaborated with Holy Cross Faith Memorial Episcopal Church to assemble representatives of organizations currently serving the county's Latino residents. Participants will develop plans for making access to these services more readily available.

Growth in program is reflected in a corresponding growth in budget. The Miss Ruby's Kids 2009 budget has increased almost 44% over that of 2008. Because our program goals are so ambitious, our funding objectives must be equally so.

*Susan Washington created this chictray, one of the 36 auctioned at the Garden Party. Can you guess who did the doll?*



This spring's Garden Party, our second annual fund raiser, netted in excess of \$19,000. Next year we will set our sights even higher. We currently boast 380 active donors, either individuals or organizations. We must increase the number of *Friends of Miss Ruby's*

*Kids* to sustain our work! We actively seek the support of local foundations, civic and philanthropic organizations, businesses and individuals who share our desire to make positive and long-term changes in the lives of our county's "at risk" children and their families, thereby bringing equally positive and long-term benefits to the community at large.

## Your opinion *still* needed

Have you had your say about this newsletter? Visit our Web site, [www.missrubyskids.net](http://www.missrubyskids.net), and take the link to a brief survey. Ten questions and you're done!

If you have ideas that the survey doesn't cover, give us a call at 527-8560 – we want to please you.

## Be a Friend, Tell a friend, Help us grow!

Mail your gift to: Friends of Miss Ruby's Kids  
PO Box 1007  
Georgetown, SC 29442

Get to know us: [www.missrubyskids.net](http://www.missrubyskids.net)

Give us a call: 527-8560

We'd love to send you some bookmarks, for you or to pass on to new moms, with tips about how to inspire a love of reading in their child. We can also send "tell a friend" cards so you can notify us to add your friends to our newsletter mailing list and send them a program overview.



**Miss Ruby's Kids**  
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*Leading Children to Literacy*