

2010 Annual Report



Advocates for Children & Families

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Let's get creative! Children from the Play House West have fun drawing and painting.

A Message from the Board President & Executive Director

Behaving as though we are all connected to one another and understanding that what happens to any one of us has resonance for all of us is the basis for advocacy. After all, what is advocacy if not empathy in action?

Children Today's advocacy roots were put down early in our history. Established nearly 15 years ago to address an unmet need – caring for young children experiencing homelessness while their parents worked to obtain housing and financial stability – Children Today became a founding member of the Long Beach Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Program. The organization's founders and early supporters advocated to be part of the homeless services infrastructure in Long Beach, and in so doing, brought attention to the unique needs of young children experiencing homelessness.

Since that time, Children Today's board and staff members have been involved in countless conferences, meetings, presentations, and forums at the local, regional, and state level to bring attention to the issue of child homelessness. The goals for these engagements are always the same: to counter the prevalent but false assumption that homelessness doesn't happen to children; and to propose best practices for helping these children overcome the trauma that homelessness creates.

Of course, advocacy is not just about bringing attention to an issue and influencing policy decisions. It is also about leveraging relationships to effect change, one child, one parent, and one family at a time. And this model of advocate as relationship-builder cuts across every type of interaction at Children Today. It informs how teachers relate to the children in their care, and how they help them develop positive relationships with each other. It influences the partnerships that our program staff builds with parents as they work towards common goals. It impacts the collaborations we have with other social service providers, which are based on open communication and reciprocity. And it guides our involvement with the greater community as we invite people to learn about Children Today and the reason we exist, with the hope that they will be moved to become advocates and supporters of the children and families we serve.

For those of you who have been moved to action, we thank you for your time, resources and talents. We thank you for being our advocates, and supporting us in so many critical ways.



Alex Cherin, President of the Board of Directors



Dora Jacildo, Executive Director

Services to Children and Families



Families served in 2010

- The Play House programs served 81 families with 115 children.
- 90% of families had single heads of household, the vast majority of them women.
- Families reported an average income at entry of \$764.00 per month. 30% of families who exited the programs had increased their income.
- Of the families who exited the programs, 67% had obtained housing and were no longer in shelters or transitional housing facilities.
- Children stayed an average of 8 months. The shortest stay was two weeks; the longest stay was 32 months.

Smiling faces!



Services provided in 2010

- The Play House programs provided 9,910 days of unduplicated high quality child care and preschool services to 115 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.
- Our cook prepared 26,384 healthy meals and snacks.
- Staff distributed thousands of diapers, food, clothing, hygiene products and toys to families.
- Staff worked in collaboration with dozens of social service organizations to ensure seamless coordination of services to families.

The Play House Programs

Early childhood education teachers are natural advocates. Nowhere else in the educational landscape do we see such widespread development of curricula and environments which are designed directly from children's needs and interests as opposed to the more typical standardized instruction that begins in elementary school, and has, by necessity, a more prescribed approach. Early childhood education teachers focus on children's unique developmental needs, and advocate for getting those needs met.

Like in a lot of quality early childhood education facilities, our Play House teachers work hard to set up the right learning environment. Using the Creative Curriculum (a comprehensive and widely used curriculum) as a guide, teachers:

- conduct careful observations of children to understand their development, needs, and interests;
- create a variety of tools and teaching methods to address individual and group needs;
- respond appropriately and specifically to each child;
- plan different interest areas to promote exploration and learning; and
- strive to develop strong partnerships with families, understanding how integral they are to their children's success.

But beyond what one might find in quality, mainstream early childhood education facilities, the Play House programs are distinguished by an added level of advocacy and support geared towards children and families dealing with the traumatic effects of homelessness. Program staff leverage their relationships with a comprehensive network of partners and community supporters to ensure that families get the resources they need to move forward. These run the gamut from helping families find furniture for their new homes, to collecting donations of shoes and clothing, to guiding families through complicated assessments and tests to qualify their children for needed special education, developmental, or mental health services.

It's only natural that this type of advocacy and support occurs in an early childhood education setting. Where else are staff and families alike more focused on achieving the same goal – happy and healthy children poised for success in later life?



Gina Guffy
Play House North Program Director



Marisela Villalobos
Play House West Program Director

Play House teachers “strive to develop strong partnerships with families, understanding how integral they are to their children’s success.”

Contributor Spotlight



Bonnie Lowenthal

California Assemblymember Bonnie Lowenthal has a long and distinguished record of public service dating back to 1994 when she was first elected to the Long Beach Unified School Board. With a master's degree in Community Clinical Psychology, Bonnie has used her expertise and her passion for community service to tackle such issues as care for senior citizens, addressing racial and economic discrimination, and otherwise finding remedies to assist the underserved. She recently joined Children Today's board of directors.

Her work as Vice Chair of the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness helped create the infrastructure for much of Long Beach's homeless services, including the Multi-Service Center for the Homeless, and Bethune Transitional Center – an education annex designed to help students who are homeless transition successfully into Long Beach schools. As an advocate and public servant, Bonnie has worked hard to better her community. We asked her about her experiences, and what she feels makes a good advocate.

Bonnie Lowenthal is a member of the California State Assembly, representing the 54th District.



“For me, Children Today serves as a vital link in a child's development.”

On how to get involved in your community: “People can become involved in helping our community by listening or going to City Council meetings, reading all the Long Beach press, and getting more information from the Long Beach Non-Profit Partnership as well as the Volunteer Center. There are so many options, from senior support activities, to helping out at the parks, at youth clubs, or helping to raise funds for the many nonprofits.”

On why she chose to get involved with Children Today: “For me, Children Today serves as a vital link in a child's development. It's an introduction to structure and loving support from teachers and caretakers. Children Today can create a positive atmosphere for education, good health, and self-esteem.”

On what makes a good advocate: “A good advocate is a good listener! And one who is passionate about the needs he or she is trying to address.” A good advocate “sees the problem in the context of community opportunities that may or may not exist.”

Bonnie's own words on advocacy exemplify her long history of community service. We are thrilled to have her be a part of Children Today and look forward to taking advantage of her knowledge and passion to make the organization even stronger.

Family Spotlight



The Hernandez Family

Finding your way out of homelessness isn't just about finding housing. The Hernandez family - Ruben and Corey, and their four kids ranging from three to nine years of age – are still on a journey to make a home for themselves a full year after becoming homeless, and months after securing a house.

Their lives changed last year when the house they had been renting in Palmdale was unexpectedly foreclosed. Finding themselves abruptly without a place to live, they moved to Los Angeles and stayed with cousins, which meant 10 people sharing two bedrooms. Ruben and Corey enrolled their kids in school, and quickly looked for other housing. Worried that accessing emergency shelter services in Los Angeles meant staying Downtown, they were relieved to learn of the Long Beach Multi-Service Center for the Homeless (MSC). Within days of Ruben's first meeting with a case manager, the Hernandez family moved into a Catholic Charities shelter, applied for Section 8 housing, and enrolled their youngest in the Play House



What drives Ruben and Corey to persevere is their kids - "to make sure they have...they're happy...they're taken care of...that's not optional. They won't be compromised."

West. They expressed appreciation for the support their family has received through the MSC, complimenting the Catholic Charities staff and describing the Play House West teachers as very loving and concerned. By March of this year, they had gotten a Section 8 voucher and Ruben had found a house.

You can lose a lot of things when you're homeless. The family's car was stolen while they were still in a shelter and although it was recovered, a lot of their kid's clothes and all of their important documents (birth certificates, social security cards, school forms) were gone. Corey says it's hard to deal with the losses, "you think you have something, and then you remember you don't... you've lost your daughter's favorite outfit."

Losing their home only exacerbated challenges the family was already facing with their children. Two had been diagnosed with ADHD, one was struggling with emotional issues and one had a speech delay. Ruben and Corey worked hard to make sure their children got the help they needed. This meant navigating through a daunting, bureaucratic maze of meetings, assessments, and specialists, and advocating for their children. "You have to be organized", Ruben explains. "Don't be afraid to ask and persevere – respectfully. When someone sees that you are serious about your family's well-being, they take you seriously."

"When someone sees that you are serious about your family's well-being, they take you seriously."

Both Ruben and Corey are devoted not just to their children, but to the interests of all children. In fact, Ruben’s long-term ambition is to open group homes that are good to kids. With first-hand experience in the foster care system - having been raised in foster care and group homes since he was three – Ruben knows that sadly many children don’t get the love and support they need to thrive, and that this lack of care can have serious consequences for those children as they grow into adults.

In the meantime, Ruben and Corey are busy doing what they need to do for their family. While Corey studies to become a Notary, a Supervised Visitation Monitor, and a Process Server, Ruben works and takes care of many of the family’s to do’s. And there are many. Children must be taken to and picked up from school as well as weekly counseling sessions and regular doctor’s appointments. Ruben and Corey must also continually advocate for their children’s special education services. Corey credits her husband with leading the family, and thanks him for being so dedicated to making sure their needs are met, so she doesn’t have to drop out of school.

When asked to reflect on what the family has been through, Corey pauses, then notes, “a lot of people go through things they may not have the maturity to deal with. Being homeless with children will skyrocket you to a different level of maturity.” And for others who may be facing similar struggles, she says, “appreciate the help you get, don’t take it for granted. And don’t give up.”

On the Horizon



The Play House North’s New Yard

Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) – a non-profit organization committed to providing quality preschool to every 4-year old in Los Angeles County – has worked in partnership with Children Today since 2009. Our Play House programs serve as demonstration sites for LAUP, showcasing to other preschool facilities, how to provide effective care to children experiencing homelessness. In 2010, LAUP awarded Children Today a grant to do a much needed remodel of the play yard at The Play House North. The remodel, slated to be completed in the summer of 2011, will give our kids a much more beautiful, interactive, and developmentally appropriate space to run, jump, and play. Thanks LAUP!



Thanks to LAUP, the kids at the Play House North will enjoy a beautiful new play yard!

Children Today's Community of Supporters

It takes a lot of work and resources to care for 64 children and families every day. Children Today's dedicated staff members and hands-on board of directors do all they can to ensure the agency has what it needs to provide excellent care to some of the most vulnerable families in Long Beach. But we could not be as effective without the generosity of a network of community supporters who have taken on our mission as their own. We are proud to highlight the work of just some of these individuals and groups, many of whom offered us their talents and resources without even being asked.



Fundraisers:

- **Long Beach Kid's Connection:** for the last three years this fundraising group has put on the *Taste of the Coast* – a food and drink extravaganza held at the Belmont Pier benefiting local nonprofits.
- **The Dawn Patrol:** in 2010 this small group of swimming enthusiasts swam from Catalina to Long Beach (28 miles!) to raise money for Children Today.
- **Vons:** when Vons held a grand opening for their new store in Long Beach, proceeds from ticket sales went to Children Today.
- **Long Beach Community College, Pacific Coast Campus:** for years, students from the Cultural Affairs Committee have put on the *Reggae Festival*, a music and arts event for the students at LBCC. Since 2009, they've also turned into a fundraiser.
- **Love in the Mirror:** this local non-profit hosted fundraising events to provide our children with backpacks and socks.



In-Kind Contributors:

- **RGS Incorporated:** Thanks to Mike & Mary Ellen Roide from RGS for donating their time and resources over the years to handle our printing needs. They've been so generous!
- **Sandlarks Auxiliary:** The Sandlarks do so much for our families. Among many other things in 2010, they arranged classroom visits with the fire department, sent flowers to our program moms for Mother's Day, and helped each Play House set up a fall Family Feast.
- **Holiday Store:** We thank these generous donors to our Holiday Store: Long Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau, Glenda & Ed Sewell, Long Beach Kids Connection, Long Beach Pride, Senn Delaney, Business Owners & Manager's Association, Kilroy Realty, Community Hospital Foundation, Union Bank Building, Arco Center, Better Balance for Long Beach, Harbor Trucking Association, Carolyn Byrnes, the office of Bonnie Lowenthal, Coastal Kids, and Sandy Williams.



Toddlers have fun in the Play House North yard!



Donations in 2010

To all the donors who so generously contributed to Children Today in 2010, we extend our heartfelt thanks.

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Suman & Ulrike Naresh
Syeda Naureen
Andrew Neff
Sewite Negash
Leo Nelms
Leslie Nelson
Natasha Nelson
Network for Good
Scott Newumann
Tahlia Neumann
Diane Nevarez
Becky Nevin
Miles Nevin
Anita Nichols
David Nixa
Tanya Nofs
Joseph Nordstrom
John O'Brien
Kelly O'Brien
Rev. Edward Henry Opuko
Nadine Ortega
Elizabeth Ortiz
James Osgood
Diana & Ken Ott
Joshua Owen
Robert Page
Kathleen & John Palley
Sharon & Don Parkins
Charlene Parrish
Hiteshbhai Patel
Mitva Patel
Pravin Patel
Priti Patel

Rohan Patel
Jyotsna Pattnaik
Anna Patton
Kathleen Patton
Linda & Jerry Patton
Rohit Paudey
Francis Paulino
Don Pealey
Evelyn Pedroza
Ashley Perez
Julio Perez
Michael Phipps
Pi Beta Phi Alumnae Club of Long
Beach
Plumbers Lcoal Union 78
Brooke Posen
John Posen
Christine Posen
Angela & Keith Powell
Pushpa Prasad
Trudi Pressman
DL & EL Price
Ricardo Pulido
Theresa Qinlan
Angelica Ramirez
Isaac Raymondi
Michael Recuperio
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Shelley Reid
Susan & Philip Requejo
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Laura Reyna
Jill Reynolds
Daymond Rice
Maria Rico
Joseph & Mary Riddick
Betty Risner
Karen Rivera
Levin Robb
Andrew & Jennifer Rocha
Lilia Rocha
Amy Rodrigues
Amy Rodriguez
Ginna Rodriguez
Emma Rong
Nary Rong
John Roper
Marcelo Rosales
Ingrid Rose
Daniel Rosner
Celeste Rothstein
James Rouse
John Royce
Julie Ruhlin
Andy Rupp
Glenn & Laura Russell
Mike Russell
Jennifer Ruste

Colleen Ryan
Dianne Sadoski
Guadalupe Saldana
Yaneli Saldana
Mary Jane Salk
Regina Salvucci
Mark Samo
Renita Samuel
Mary Ellen Sanders
Sabrina Sanders
Patricia Sargeant
Mona Sashital
James Sattler
Pam Sattler
Alan Savitt
Beverly Sawrey
John Sawyer
Brook Schaaf
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Doris Schofield
Sue Ann Schoonmaker
Trina Schoonmaker
Len & Kathy Scott
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Janet Seiter
Robert & Carol Senske
Orville Sewell
Jean Shapen
Pamela Sheble
Mark & Shannon Shenouda
Karen Sherman
Tom Shey
H.L. Shields
Melody Shortle
Haim & Paula Shtrum
Linda & Peter Shuttleton
Anna Sines
Sharon & Matt Sloan
Liliana Smith
Nancy Smith
Medora Snacks
Ernesto Solorio
Steve Spangler
Raja Srinivasan
B.J. Stansfield
Waltereise Stanzell
Patrick Starnes
Thomas Stebbins
Carissa Steefel
Gayle Stevens
Daniel & Margaret Stuver
Russell Stuver
Terri Stuver
James Suarez
Nora Suarez
Katherine Sue
Orzalla Sulaimankhil
Maureen Sullivan

Superior Court of CA, Santa Clara
Simon Tam
Asami Tanaka
Lisa Taub
Earl Taylor
Niki Tennant
Sean & Kelley Tenney
Luke Tharasri
The Storyworks Co.
John Thomas
Tony Thomas
Marily Thompson
Kevin Thurber
Herb Toplan
Jason & Janice Toppen
Rosie Toscano
Anna Totta
Renee Tracy
Richard & Fay Tracy
Julie Trujillo
Joseph Truscello
Aiting Tung
Ginger Turner
Becky Tyo
Victor Ugalde
Union Bank Employee Workplace
Campaign
United Way of San Diego County
United Way, Inc.
Justin Vaicek
Felipe Valencia
Pauline Vallejos
Elaine Van Beveren
Theresia VanCampen
Bonnie Van Cleve
Adonis Vancampen
Isabella Vancampen
Jacqueline Vancampen
Jasmine Vancampen
Ana Varela
Jose Varela
Mauro Varela
Alexis Vazquez
Bobbi Vial
Marisela Villalobos
Derek Visaraga
Jeannie Vukovich
Sharon Wadman
William Wallace
Amy Walter
Arline Walter
Elizabeth Walter
Ginger Walter
Mary Wangsness
Michael Warren
Benjamin Watson

Sheyonna Watson
Kevin Wattier
Greg Waugh
Waytas Family
Evan Weber
Pat Weber
Nathan Weiner
Shannon & Mike Wells
Western Health Insurance
Services, Inc.
Kelly Steuber Wigod
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Adelaida Will
Renee Williams-Smith
Lyndon Williams
Felton Williams
Rochelle Williams
Sue Williams
Lilly Willy
Amy Wong
Latabia Woodward
Patti & Jim Worsham
Gordon Wren
Kristen Wright
Raquel Wright
Brian Wroblewski
Lisa Yamada
Shirley Yap
Sandra Yavitz
E.Y. & T.S. Yen
Cannan Yim
Andrew Young
Mary Young
Paul Yuch
Farnaz Zadeh
Julio Zelaya
Inessa Zherebnenko
Liliya Zherebnenko
Sunna Zia
Jennifer Zubieta
Ryan Zummallen

Government Funding

U.S. Department of Housing &
Urban Development - \$226,672

California Department of
Education, Child Development
Division - \$172,002

California Department of
Education, Child & Adult Care
Food Program - \$41,033

Major In-Kind Contributors

Ampco Parking
RGS Incorporated
Mike & Mary Ellen Roide
The Sandlarks Auxiliary
The Swig Company

Children Today has made every effort to include all donors who contributed in 2010. We apologize if your name was omitted or misspelled. We will continue to be as thorough as possible.

2010 ANNUAL SOURCE & USES OF FUNDS

Statement of Activities

For the year ending December 31st

Support

Government Grants	\$496,121
Private Funding	\$487,572
In-Kind Contributions	\$16,903
Total Support	\$1,000,596

Revenue

Program Services	\$20,000
Special Events	\$19,654
Interest	\$5,472
Total Revenue	\$45,126

Total Revenue and Support	\$1,045,722
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Operating Expenses

Program Services	
The Play House North	\$420,906
The Play House West	\$447,464
Supporting Services	
Management and General	\$180,220
Fundraising	\$60,619

Total Operating Expenses	\$1,109,209
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Change in Net Assets	\$(63,487)
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Beginning Net Assets	\$1,574,504
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Ending Net Assets	\$1,511,017
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Statement of Financial Position

For the year ending December 31st

Assets

Current Assets	\$531,550
Fixed Assets	\$51,596
Other Assets	\$1,000,437

Total Assets	\$1,583,583
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Liabilities

Current Liabilities	\$72,566
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Total Liabilities	\$72,566
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Net Assets

Unrestricted Net Assets	\$517,543
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	\$993,474

Total Net Assets	\$1,511,017
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Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$1,583,583
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Board of Directors/Associates/Advisors

Directors

Alex Cherin – President

The Cherin Group

Theresa Bixby – Vice President

Co-Founder

Masy Bunnell – Vice President

Total Network Solutions

Michael Chun – Treasurer

Certified Public Accountant

Christine Lorenzetti – Secretary

Senn Delaney

Chimene Armstrong

Community Liaison

Byron Breland, PhD

Long Beach City College

Jude Correa

TABC, Toyota

Gary DeLong

Long Beach City Council, 3rd District

Mike Duree

Long Beach Fire Department

Erin Earlywine Vince

Fitness Coach

Robert Garcia

Long Beach City Council, 1st District

Matt Knabe

Englander, Knabe & Allen

Cory Kristoff

The Swig Company

Bonnie Lowenthal

California State Assembly, 54th District

Josh Lowenthal

Free Conference Call

Shaun Lumachi

The Long Beach Post

Heather Morris

Port of Long Beach

Marsha Naify

The Marshall Foundation

Marisa Semense

LB Community Action Partnership

Ex-Officio

Dora Jacildo

Executive Director

Sandlarks President

Carolyn Carey

Associates

Becky Blair

Tracy Cunningham

Dave Erickson

Steve Goodling

Martin Howard

Julie Jackson

Carl Kemp

Jeff Klaus

Gary Lamb

Marie Morales

John Morris

Carla Mullio

Sharon Piercecchi

Mary Ellen Roide

Steve Sheldon

John Thomas

Brian Ulaszewski

Advisors

Ruth Beaglehole

Patrick Burkhardt

Leslie Larsen

Jyotsna Pattnaik, PhD

Kyrie Sankaran, PhD

Gregory Uba

Children Today Staff Members

Children Today Staff

Dora Jacildo
Executive Director

Marisol Ascencio
Administrative Assistant

Elia Rocha
Grants & Contracts Manager

Janice Toppen
Fiscal & Office Manager

Play House Staff

Celia Ascencio
Cook

Lisa Taub
Child & Family Counselor

Play House North Staff

Gina Guffy
Program Director

Jan Vianka Adupe
Floater

Michelle Diaz
Preschool Teacher

Ayano Eren
Lead Preschool Teacher

Melissa Jansen
Toddler Associate

Angelica Moreno
Lead Toddler Teacher

Melissa Noel
Floater

Play House West Staff

Marisela Villalobos
Program Director

Rachel Gutierrez
Toddler Associate

Annastacia Patton
Infant Teacher

Reasey Phann
Preschool Teacher

Laura Reyna
Lead Infant/Toddler Teacher

Araceli Salcido
Toddler Teacher

Margaret Valentine
Preschool Teacher

Alexis Vazquez
Lead Preschool Teacher



*The hardworking and dedicated staff of
Children Today*

Our Mission

The mission of Children Today is to provide community based services to children and families facing homelessness, fostering long-term stability and success.

Our Vision

Our vision is that all children under age six will have a safe, nurturing environment where they can spend their days playing, learning and growing, while their parents take steps toward stability.

