

# The Power of Two

From one  
generation  
to the next



Issue 18

August 2011

## Two-Generation Learning Works!

In fall 2010, Mothers' Club engaged the applied research institute of **Claremont University's Graduate School of Education, the Institute at Indian Hill ("ILL")**, to conduct an in-depth analysis of over seven years worth of child and parent program data from our Family Literacy Program. ILL completed their report in June, stating:

*"The evaluation activities yielded strong and clear findings about Mothers' Club's two-pronged approach of educating both mother and child. Namely, a robust picture emerged of a program that fosters academic, linguistic, and social learning in a supportive and nurturing environment, resulting in stronger parent-child dynamics that facilitate the success of both parent and child and address the needs of the family and the individuals within it."*



**Key findings** include:

- Mothers' Club children achieve or exceed developmental milestones for their age, **despite demographic factors that would predict otherwise.**
- Daily adult education classes in English as a Second Language form a vital part of the program...**adults show large increases in reading performance with English as a second language.**

See **Evaluation**, Page 7

## From Erika Lopez, our Latest High School Graduate



Erika prepared this speech for our 2011 Annual Meeting:

Good Evening,

My name is Erika Lopez and I'm here to share with you my 5 year experience at Mothers' Club. This has been a very productive journey for me, because this program has given me the tools and the motivation to set and achieve higher goals in my life.

This year in particular is very important - because is the culmination of 2 wonderful events in my life. One, is the completion of my term here at Mothers' Club and the

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*Receive more news and updates, sign up for our E-Newsletter online at [www.mothersclub.org](http://www.mothersclub.org).*

*Mothers' Club has a **Facebook page!** Log into your Facebook account and search for Mothers' Club Family Learning Center*

**Mothers' Club  
Family Learning Center**

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## From the President

**"Not in his goals but in his transitions man is great"**

**- Ralph Waldo Emerson**

Emerson's sentiment applies not only to men but also to women, to mothers and to organizations like Mothers' Club Family Learning Center. July marked the start of an important year for Mothers' Club: This year we transition to the leadership of our new **Executive Director Hector LaFarga**.

I am delighted to be serving as the President of the Board of Directors in Hector's first year. After eight years of experience on the Mothers' Club Board, I served as chair of the Search Committee for the new Executive Director. As Chair, I had the pleasure of getting to know Hector through many interviews and conversations. He impressed the Search Committee as an ideal candidate for the position of Executive Director of Mothers' Club.

The search for our new Executive Director was a careful process. The Committee met with the entire Mothers' Club community to select the attributes that we should look for in a new leader for the organization. Drawing on the insights of members of the Mothers' Club community, we decided that an ideal Executive Director would possess the following strengths:

- **Skills.** The new Executive

Director must have demonstrated through previous work accomplishments and experience that he or she had the skills to excel at the job.

- **Heart.** The new Executive Director must understand and nurture the special culture of our organization, which values collaborative leadership and respects the individual.

- **Passion.** The new Executive Director must be passionate about the mission of Mothers' Club: To help families living in poverty and isolation succeed in school and in life.

Hector LaFarga has **the skills, the heart and the passion** to lead Mothers' Club into the future. In Emerson's words, he will be great in his transition. In fact, Hector has already demonstrated his leadership by setting the following overarching objective for this year:

**Ensure that Mothers' Club remains financially viable, maintains its core values, increases its visibility in the community at-large and remains a healthy and vibrant organization through the Executive Director leadership transition.**

Hector has also already identified the goals and strategies that will help Mothers' Club achieve this objective and that will direct his activities and the activities of his staff.

Hector has the full commitment of a strong Board. The Board's Executive, Development, Finance, Program and Governance committees will be working enthusiastically throughout the year to assist Hector in his efforts.

I am confident that Hector, the staff, the programs and the entire organization will be great in this transition. With your support we will see Mothers' Club continue to grow and thrive as we serve families in Northwest Pasadena.

**- Norah Morley**  
President of the Board



*Norah Morley, President of the Board*

## Thank You to our Generous Foundation Partners for their Recent Grant Awards

The Ahmanson Foundation  
*to expand our solar panel array*

Dwight Stuart Youth Fund  
*for our children's programs*

Patron Saints Foundation  
*for parent mental health programs*

Ann Peppers Foundation  
*for family literacy*

RGK Foundation  
*for family literacy*

Rotary Club of Pasadena  
*for family literacy*

The Schow Foundation  
*to sustain programs*

## Shop at Ralphs? Earn Money for Mothers' Club!

By registering your Ralphs Rewards card with their Community Contributions Program, a percentage of every dollar you spend at Ralphs will go to Mothers' Club. Ralphs requires that you re-register each year on **September 1**, even if you have registered in the past. Please follow these simple steps to register or re-register on September 1:

1. Pick up a Ralphs Rewards card at your local market.
2. Register online at [ralphs.com](http://ralphs.com) and clicking on the upper right-hand link "Sign-In/Register"
3. Once you have an account, click on the "Community Contribution Program" in the left column.
4. Confirm your Ralphs Rewards card number is correct.
5. Locate Mothers' Club by entering our code: 90748
6. Select Mothers' Club and know that you are helping families every time you buy groceries!



## 2011 Annual Meeting

Each June, at our Annual Meeting, we pay tribute to the commitment of our Board of Directors, welcome incoming leadership and acknowledge members whose terms have come to an end. This year, Mothers' Club honored **Pat McLaughlin** who began her relationship with Mothers' Club in 2004 when she volunteered to facilitate our strategic planning process. A year later she became a Board member and throughout her service continued to provide leadership in strategic planning and implementation. Throughout her six-year term, her thoughtful intelligence has been appreciated by both her peers and staff leadership.

**Incoming President Norah Morley** paid tribute to **immediate past President John Carlton** for his two years of service as President, and then welcomed three new Board members. **Warren Bleeker** is Special Counsel with Christie, Parker & Hale, LLP, a 44-attorney law firm located in Pasadena that specializes in intellectual property law. He graduated with a J.D. from the University of California, Berkeley (Boalt Hall) in 2000. He lives in Altadena his wife, Teri Richardson, and their two-year old daughter.

**Jonathan Fuhrman** is a retired IT professional having worked for



*Pat McLaughlin and outgoing President, John Carlton*

the Employers Insurance Group, Nestle, Hughes Aircraft and So. Calif. Edison. Jon is active in community affairs, serving on Los Angeles County and local school district advisory committees. He also serves the Boards of the Pasadena Educational Foundation and the Pasadena Community College Foundation. He and his wife, Dr. Susan Kane, live in Pasadena.

Lastly, **Stephanie Rasines** joins the Board after volunteering as an ESL tutor at Mothers' Club for the last two years. She received her law degree at Columbia University School of Law and went on to work professionally in Venezuela, New York and Los Angeles. Since 2006,

she has served as a Trustee for Scripps College. She has worked with numerous non-profits in Pasadena, including the Frostig School and Young and Healthy.

Norah Morley then introduced our new **Executive Director Hector LaFarga, Jr.** who shared his personal story and enthusiasm for building on Sue Kujawa's legacy. A number of elected officials were on hand to acknowledge the service of all of our volunteer leadership including **Teresa Lamb Simpson from Congressman Adam Schiff's Office** and **Julianne Hines from Assembly Member Anthony Portantino's office.** **Mayor Bill Bogaard** spoke briefly and affirmed his commitment to supporting the Board and Mr. LaFarga during the coming leadership transition.

Finally, a tearful **Mothers' Club participant, Erika Lopez**, brought to life the real impact of Mothers' Club, sharing:

*"This year in particular is very important - because it is the culmination of two wonderful events is my life. One is the completion of my term here at Mothers' Club; and the second one is the achievement of my High School Diploma."*

- Sarah E. Orth  
Development Director



*Incoming Board Members Warren Bleeker, Stephanie Rasines and Jon Fuhrman seen with Sylvia Paz, last year's Nominating/Governance Committee Chair*

## From the Director

Since my arrival at Mothers' Club on June 1st, there are two phrases that have frequently been repeated to me, and are very telling of the spirit and great work we are doing at Mothers' Club. Those that work here or receive our services have told me repeatedly, **"I am very happy to be here"**, and those that support us say, **"I love this place."** What an incredible testament to our mission, which is to prepare families living in isolation and poverty to succeed in school and in life through two generation learning programs.

I have also frequently been asked what brought me to Mothers' Club. Well, having grown up in East Los Angeles, I am a product of a low income, at-risk environment, and I credit my mother as the most important force in my life. Through her attention and sacrifice, I received strong values, a good education and a positive future. That was the impetus for me to dedicate my career to serve and empower those that are most underserved in our communities - it's my passion and personal mission!

As Mothers' Club celebrates its 50th Anniversary, it is evident that the dedication of our staff and supporters is the driving force that allows us to deliver our quality programs and make a significant impact in the lives of the families we serve. In fact, in May 2011, we completed an evaluation of our morning program, in partnership

with the Institute at Indian Hill of Claremont University Graduate School of Education, which revealed significant findings about our clients' learning outcomes. The research team reported that both children and parents experience statistically significant increases in literacy levels. That children and parents who have a longer tenure in the program experience even stronger increases in literacy.

Parents report a higher number of literacy-related activities, including more time reading with their children, more books in the home and more visits to the library. Parents report a marked decrease in stress, and increased involvement with the community and their children's education. They also demonstrate an increased understanding of their own children's developmental needs.

We are very proud of these significant findings, and as we look forward to 2012, some of our focus will be on pursuing a longitudinal study to discover what happens to our families beyond Mothers' Club; expanding and strengthening our afternoon program; and growing our volunteer and donor base.

On behalf of our Board of



*Mothers' Club Executive Director, Hector LaFarga, Jr.*

Directors, our staff and families, we invite you to visit Mothers' Club and consider volunteering and/or supporting our work. Together, we can continue transforming the lives of the families in our community and ensure that Mothers' Club remains a healthy and vibrant organization for the next 50 years!

I am honored to lead Mothers' Club into the future, and like everyone else, "I am very happy to be here" and "I love this place!" Thank you for your support.

Hector LaFarga, Jr.  
Executive Director



## Save the Date!

Come **Fall in Love** at our  
50th Anniversary Celebration!

Saturday, October 22nd  
at our Family Learning Center  
980 N. Fair Oaks, Pasadena

Tickets go on sale August 15th -  
visit our website at [www.mothersclub.com](http://www.mothersclub.com)



# Celebrating Accomplishments

As another year at Mothers' Club came to a close last month, we took time to celebrate the accomplishments of the year past as well as the possibilities of the future.

On June 17th, the **Pre-Kindergarten class of 2011** was the center of attention at our annual "graduation" ceremony. After spending the last year learning critical skills from their teachers Saharai Alvarez, Andrea Huicochea, and Marina Bendy, nineteen children are now prepared to embark on new adventures and challenges in kindergarten and beyond.

With their parents and loved ones watching, glowing with pride, the youngsters marched to "Pomp and Circumstance" in purple caps and gowns. The end of their procession was met with a handshake and hug from their encouraging teachers, Director of Education Julie Espinoza, and former Executive Director, Susan Kujawa. Presented with certificates of achievement, each child beamed with delight at all they had accomplished - and the exciting new world that lay ahead.

For each of these children, a proud parent spent the year preparing for her role as her child's first and most important teacher. In kindergarten parents will be asked to exercise leadership as volunteers, advocates and partners in their children's education. Our programs have prepared them for this and much more.

The accomplishments of all the



*Former Executive Director Sue Kujawa shakes the hand of a graduating preschooler as Julie Espinoza, Director of Education, prepares to hand the student her diploma.*

parents were also honored in June at a Parent Recognition Luncheon, during which mothers received certificates for their many educational, parenting and leadership accomplishments. A special thank you was presented to the National Charity League, whose members generously prepared a delicious buffet for the luncheon - on top of all the projects they completed during the school year.

With the passing of these milestones for both parent and child, the families of Mothers' Club prepare to transition from the supportive atmos-

phere of the center to the demands of kindergarten and real life. Though the great leap forward may seem daunting, their time at Mothers' Club has prepared them to take on the challenges that lay ahead, armed with the social, emotional, and language tools needed to succeed in school and in life. And, if they should encounter obstacles on the road ahead, they know they can always turn to their friends at Mothers' Club for support and guidance.

- Mara Leong-Nichols  
Development Assistant

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**GRADUATION**, *cont. from Page 1*  
second one is the achievement of my High School diploma.

I feel very happy and overjoyed for these two special accomplishments which I wouldn't have achieved without the support of every staff member here.

In this beautiful place called Mothers' Club I found the motivation and empowerment I needed to transform into a person I never thought I would be.

Five years ago I wouldn't have had the confidence I possess now to

stand and speak before all of you. I have more confidence in myself and I owe it to this program.

I now have high expectations for myself. I want to continue to learn and improve as an individual. Mothers' Club planted that seed within me and I'm sure that that seed will continue to grow as I move forward in life.

I would like to thank all of you gathered here tonight, because thanks to all of you I will make a difference in my community and in my daughters' lives.

***Dear Board members: I want you to know - that every meeting you've had, and every decision you've made on our behalf has made a difference in shaping our lives with positive outcomes.***

Thank you and enjoy the rest of your evening.

- Erika Lopez  
Participating Mother

## 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.



Maye Albanes & Tim Marty  
Gwen & Guilford Babcock  
Carole & Mike Babcock  
Ann & Olin Barrett  
Renu Bhat-Hansen &  
Alex Hansen  
Betsy & Gary Birkenbeuel  
Claire & Bill Bogaard  
Clara & Emily Lanzas-Bogaard  
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Jean Fleming  
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Arnold Siegel  
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Kathleen Shields  
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Ellen & Harvey Knell  
Susan Kujawa  
Annette Kunzman &  
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Maxine Tongish  
Lorraine Triolo & Jeffrey Burke  
Heather & Michael VanMeter  
Julie & Scott Ward  
Judith & John Whiting  
Cindy & George Wiley  
Judy & Randy Wilson

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

All gifts to Mothers' Club provide you with 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 can 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.

## Thank you to Our Program Partners

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

California Department of Education, Even Start Family Literacy Grant

Center for Community and Family Services, Early Head Start

First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative

Los Angeles Universal Preschool

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



## Summer Volunteers Enrich Programs



*Volunteers Stephanie Ro (above) and Cailin Beadles (below) make friends with Mothers' Club children.*

Summertime offers lots of perks for the children at Mothers' Club - sunny days spent in our garden playground and walking trips to La Pintoresca water park among them - but perhaps one of the best perks is having the helping hands and happy smiles of "big kids" inside their classrooms. Middle- and high-school-age student volunteers are a mainstay at Mothers' Club throughout the year, but we open many more spots during our summer session. This summer, we had nearly 50 students come through our doors!

Our teen volunteers are a dedicated bunch, offering countless hours assisting teachers with story time, snacks, playground duty, craft projects, and much more. It's such fun to see them singing and playing instruments during group time or curled up

with a book and a child in one of our reading corners. We know they offer great inspiration and motivation to our littlest students, and we thank them for their energy and commitment!

Volunteer opportunities are not just limited to teens, however; we also have plenty of ways adults can assist with and enhance our programs during the school year. For example, our Pen Pal program establishes relationships

between volunteers and our moms; letters are exchanged throughout the semester, giving moms practice with writing in English. The program culminates in a wonderful, in-person meet-up and the chance to have a "live time" conversation. Additionally, our



### Evaluation, cont. from Page 1

- **Children are well-prepared for success in school** when they reach kindergarten; and their vocabulary development in English and in their home language progress together.
- **Parents gain important skills in parenting**, which they use in support of their children, especially in awareness of children's developmental stages, as well as, literacy promotion, communication, stress management, and advocacy in the community for one's children.
- **Parents gain confidence and self-awareness**, increasingly engaging in leadership and service activities at MC, and actively take part in a highly valued network of parents who are mutually supportive.

ILL reported that the gains demonstrated by Mothers' Club participants were statistically significant - meaning that we can confidently expect similar outcomes for future program participants.

The full report is available on our website at:

[www.mothersclub.org/impact.html](http://www.mothersclub.org/impact.html).

## Join us for a Tour of our Two-Generation Learning Program

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, September 13 - 9:00 am  
Thursday, September 15 - 11:30 am  
Tuesday, October 11 - 9:00 am  
Thursday, October 20 - 11:30 am

To provide a courtesy RSVP or for more information call (626) 792-2687 ext. 112

You can also schedule a tour on our website at [www.mothersclub.org](http://www.mothersclub.org)

once-a-month Early Readers' Book Club gets volunteers involved as book readers, modeling read-aloud techniques for our parents and offering great story-time fun for their children.

We'd love to have your help this coming school year! Visit our website's Volunteer page to learn more about how you can become involved at Mothers' Club!

- Sarah Hilbert  
Volunteer Program Coordinator





Mothers' Club Family Learning Center  
980 N. Fair Oaks Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91103

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## Our Mission & Guiding Principles

Mothers' Club Family Learning Center prepares families living in isolation and poverty to succeed in school and in life. 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 On-Line & Learn More at [www.mothersclub.org](http://www.mothersclub.org)**

### **Executive Director**

Hector LaFarga, Jr.

### **Board of Directors**

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### **The Power of Two**

August 2011

Editor: Sarah E. Orth

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