

## Small Steps Nurturing Center 2010 Annual Report

Small Steps' mission is to provide an exemplary early childhood program to instill and foster the social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth of economically at-risk children and their families.

Reflecting back on the past year has given us an opportunity to be thankful for everything that God has accomplished through Small Steps in order to reach the children and families that we serve. Some of Small Steps' proudest accomplishments from the 2010 fiscal year include:

- **2010-2011 Program Accomplishments Overview:** In the 2010-2011 school year, Small Steps served 118 students and their 84 families across its two campuses. Twenty teachers taught Small Steps' students, ages 2-6, an exemplary early childhood education and integrated Small Steps' rich curriculum, which includes: The High/Scope Curriculum, Rice University's Classroom Storytelling Project, Neuhaus Education Center's Language and Literacy for Preschool and Reading Readiness, University of Chicago's Everyday Mathematics, and Godly Play. Small Steps provided daily transportation to and from school for over half of its students and served 35,194 meals and 14,443 snacks in the 2010-2011 school year, meeting its students' nutritional needs.
- **Small Steps Provides Resources for Families:** We expanded our services to our families in 2010. Small Steps has always strived to serve the entire family, but this year specifically has shown us the multiplied benefits of a greater number of parent engagement opportunities. In addition to our monthly Parent Education classes, Small Steps now also offers: a "Baby and Me" class that focuses on the value of parent-child interaction and bonding, a weekly evidence-based curriculum class called "Child-Parent Relationship", and a weekly support group and Bible study for parents initiated by their requests. Another invaluable piece of our parent engagement has been a new partnership with Interface-Samaritan Counseling, which has recently begun providing three weekly counseling sessions for parents. All of these opportunities have allowed us at Small Steps to deepen our relationship with our students' parents, encouraging them as the primary teachers of their children and as adults capable of healthy relationships and productive lives.
- **Higher Rate of Teacher Retention:** Hiring and retaining high-quality, caring, and committed teachers is one of the most important aspects of our program. Our teacher retention rate has been 97% over the past five years. Our students have the benefit of a seasoned and well-equipped teaching staff.
- **Higher Rate of Student Retention:** Our student year over year retention rate was 87% and our attendance was 91%. Given the transience of our population, this is extremely high and is significantly higher than HISD schools in surrounding zip codes.
- **Kindergarten Test Scores Indicate Student Readiness:** Departing kindergartners are tested using both an aptitude and achievement test. The 2010 graduating class scored higher on the achievement test as a group than they did on the aptitude test, showing that Small Steps is preparing our graduates to be ready to achieve in elementary school.
- **Strong Placement of Kindergarten Graduates:** Small Steps works very closely with parents to inform and assist them in the selection process for elementary schools for their graduates. Seventy-four percent of Small Steps' graduates over the past four years have entered magnet programs or enrolled in TEA recognized elementary schools.
- **Test Results Demonstrate Increased IQ:** Year-over-year cognitive testing for Small Steps students, first when they enter at either age 2 or 3, and then a year later, has shown great increases in IQ in the majority of our students. This testing demonstrates that our program is able to help overcome some of the delays our students face and also prepares them to learn in a way that is appropriate for their age group.
- **Fiscal Responsibility Recognition:** In December 2010, Small Steps was awarded Charity Navigator's four-star rating (highest rating) for the seventh year in a row. Only two percent of charities have received this rating for seven consecutive years showing, in Charity Navigator's words that "Small Steps consistently executes its mission in a fiscally responsible way." We feel that Charity Navigator's affirmation of Small Steps' management sends a message of trustworthiness to the community we serve and to our volunteer and donor community as well.
- **Partnership with the Museum of Fine Arts Houston:** The Museum of Fine Arts- Houston has continued to enrich the Small Steps program through field trip opportunities for Kindergarten students, Parent Education field trips, and art curriculum coordination. Small Steps' Kindergarten students' art was selected to be displayed at the MFA in the fall of 2010.

- **Continued Partnership with Rice University:** Eight Small Steps teachers participated in Rice University's School Literacy and Culture Project, specifically trained in the Classroom Storytelling Project, during 2010. Our teachers went to trainings, participated in mentoring relationships, and implemented activities they learned in the classroom. These eight teachers created an anthology of their students' work, chronicling the progress their students made as teachers implemented these new tools in the classroom. Rice University's School Literacy and Culture Project also held two teacher in-service training days for our teachers in the fall of 2010. This continued partnership with Rice allowed us to serve our students more effectively and also engage in learning and discussion with a like-minded Houston organization.
- **Small Steps Continues Relationships with Graduates:** Camp Eagle generously provided thirty-four scholarships for our students' older siblings and former Small Steps students to attend Camp Eagle's Headwaters adventure camp this summer. One of Camp Eagle's donors generously provided all of the scholarships to these students ages 8-16, who each attended camp for a week in June or July. Camp Eagle is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Christian outdoor adventure camp in the Texas Hill Country.  
The Youth Development Center (YDC) provided after-school tutoring to several of our former students or our current students' older siblings in the spring of 2010. The YDC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that serves children from the Greater Fifth Ward. Currently, YDC operates an after-school academic remediation program that addresses literacy development for inner city students in grades 3-8.
- **Strength in Numbers:** In 2010, 762 volunteers accumulated 3,997 volunteer hours. Small Steps could not put on this program without the help of our wonderful volunteers.

The following is an overview of Small Steps Nurturing Center's income and expenses for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2010.

Total Support & Revenue:	\$1,957,456
Program Expenses:	\$1,719,362
Management & General Expenses:	\$93,579
Fundraising Expenses:	\$231,183
End of Year Net Asset Balance:	\$3,618,958

Executive Director: Evan Harrel

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*Small Steps Nurturing Center is tax-exempt under 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.*