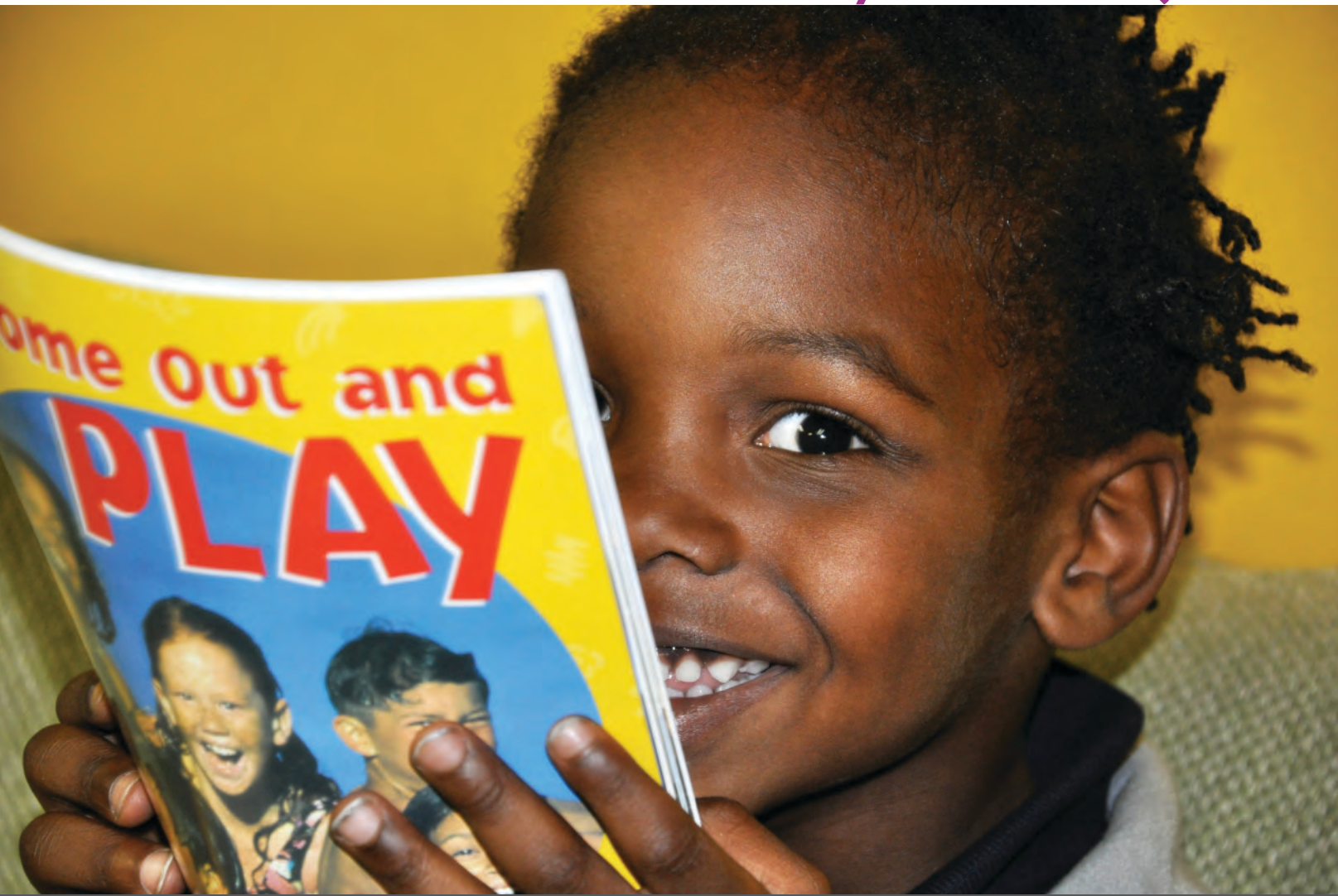


Homeless Children's Playtime Project



*Families Deserve Housing;
Children Deserve Play*





Dear Friend of Children,



Homelessness among families continues to grow in our nation's capital while funding for housing shrinks, leaving more children entering shelters bearing the battle scars of the recession from having slept in cars, stairwells, or bus stations. When children enter our beautiful shelter-based playtime programs, they are greeted by the familiar faces of volunteers they can count on. They are invited to cook up a play dough feast in our play kitchen, play with dolls in our giant dollhouse, or join a lively game of soccer and catch in the backyard. There is laughter in the imagination station as children dress up as superheroes and play freeze dance in the shelter hallway. Other children search for clues in the scavenger hunt based on a book they just read with a volunteer, while another group intently paints clay sculptures.

While homelessness introduces stress and trauma to a child's one and only childhood, our program works to counteract these forces by ensuring a steady supply of joy all year long. We appreciate our five shelter partners for opening up their doors to Playtime and allowing us to serve the incredible families in their care. This 2010 Annual Report tells the stories of our children, parents, and volunteers who make playtime happen fifty weeks a year thanks to the generous support of our donors who make play possible. In 2010:

- We expanded our program to bring the power of play to DASH's Cornerstone Program, a new domestic violence shelter, where children can now enjoy our new playspace while their mothers receive support.
- We cut the ribbon on our two new playrooms at DC General, the largest family shelter in the city, and started a baby program at Park Road as well as arts and reading initiatives in each of our five sites.
- We provided 60 parents living in shelters with referrals to access housing, employment, job training, legal assistance, and furniture for their families, as well as tutoring, mentoring, and developmental assessments for their children.

We believe homelessness should not get in the way of creating happy childhood memories and opportunities for families to find some stability and support amidst the storm. We hope you will continue to support our efforts to make it all happen. Thank you for being there for us so we can be there for children.

Jamila Larson

Jamila Larson, LICSW
Executive Director, Co-founder
Homeless Children's Playtime Project





Our Mission:

The mission of the Homeless Children's Playtime Project is to nurture healthy child development and reduce the effects of trauma among children living in temporary housing programs in the District of Columbia.

Our Vision:

We believe that play is a human right that all children deserve, regardless of housing status. We seek to help create a city that provides every opportunity for children in homeless families to succeed by advocating for affordable housing and safe shelters for all families.

What We Do:

We set up playrooms where our trained and screened volunteers provide weekly activities, healthy snacks, and opportunities to play and learn for hundreds of children in five emergency shelter and transitional housing programs in the District of Columbia.

Our Sites:

More than 120 volunteers provide eight weekly playtime programs at these shelters:

- D.C. General Emergency Family Shelter (Tuesday and Thursdays, 6:30 pm–8:30 pm)
- Park Road Emergency Family Shelter (Wednesdays, 6:30 pm–8:30 pm)
- Turning Point Center for Women & Children (Mondays and Thursdays, 6:30 pm–8:30 pm)
- Northwest Church Family Network (Mondays and Wednesdays, 6:30 pm–8:30 pm)
- District Alliance for Safe Housing's Cornerstone Program (Saturdays, 11:00 am–1:00 pm)



Playtime Year in Review 2010

January

- Park Road Playtime site opens doors to children
- Volunteers honored at annual Volunteer Appreciation Holiday Party
- Soccer Star Emily Janns teaches soccer games at NCFN
- Teen field trip to ice skate and climb Washington Monument

March

- Executive Director testifies before City Council Briefing on Youth Homelessness
- Spring Break backpacks distributed to every child

May

- Site Coordinator Spring Retreat where 14 Site Coordinators learn new leadership skills
- Field trip with 60 children from all of HCPP's sites to Nationals Baseball Game

July

- Site Coordinator Kathleen Fawcett wins Hometown Heroes award from Jenny's Heroes, bringing in \$10,000 in supplies for Playtime sites
- Volunteers from Greater DC Cares clean and refurbish new playrooms at DC General

September

- Back to School backpacks delivered to 150 children
- Opening of two brand new Playrooms at DC General
- Park Road Baby Room opens to serve toddlers in the basement of the shelter
- HCPP Visioning Session provides Board opportunity to begin strategic planning

November

- HCPP reaches goal of 300 walkers in the annual Help the Homeless Walkathon
- Park Road hosts "Harvest Festival" for families in honor of Thanksgiving



February

- Volunteers visit snow-covered DC General for a "Snow Day Playtime"
- Play Therapy Inservice Training for volunteers
- Teen field trip to the West Wing of the White House, featured in the *Washington Post*

April

- Volunteers become "Lunchtime Lobbyists," visiting DC council members' offices to advocate for affordable housing
- HCPP highlighted in *Washington Post* article about concerns at DC General shelter
- Easter parties thrown at four shelter sites around the city

June

- Youth field trip and picnic at the National Zoo
- Teen field trip to make kites at the Carnegie Institute of Washington
- Launched "Summer Reading Challenge" at all Playtime sites

August

- Art Coordinators recruited for each site to lead art activities every week
- Pet Therapy comes to Turning Point with black lab "Lincoln"
- 30 youth go to Six-Flags for an end-of-the-summer field trip celebration!

October

- "Be a Superhero for Children" first annual Fall Fundraiser held
- Site Coordinator Fall Training on safety and enhancing program quality
- HCPP's DC General playrooms featured in the *Washington Post*
- Halloween costumes delivered to 300 children at six shelters and parties held at every site
- Site Coordinator Ashley Wiegner testified at City Council about DC General conditions
- NASA Astronaut Leland Melvin visits 40 children at DC General

December

- Our newest Playtime site, DASH's Cornerstone program, opened its doors
- Holiday gifts delivered to 200 children with the support of many donors
- Children enjoyed special holiday parties at every site
- HCPP featured on NBC 4 Twelve Days of Giving



Playtime Gives Children in Shelters the Time, Space, and Tools to be a Child



Andrew: The trauma that children experience sometimes comes out in Playtime, and six-year-old Andrew can present difficult behavior. He does best when working one-on-one with our volunteers. Andrew loves living things and asked where an ant's habitat was. A volunteer brought in a children's greenhouse activity and they planted seeds together while the other kids were playing outside. Andrew looked at the volunteer in the middle of planting seeds and said, "I like you."

Calita: A mother of two at the shelter, Calita told a volunteer that her girls had to go to school dressed in costume for Halloween but that she couldn't afford to outfit them. Her plan was to cut out paper stars to tape to their clothing and convince her daughters that they were "rockstar princesses." But her five-year-old daughter didn't buy it, saying "Mommy, there's no such thing as rockstar princesses." After entering the shelter hallway, decorated for Halloween with costumes to choose from, their mother began crying. She helped her daughters pick out two princess dresses, complete with crowns and wands. As she left, she hugged the volunteers and said to her girls, "Now you get to dress up like the real princesses that you are. Always remember that you are mommy's princesses and at the end of the day, we have each other, and everything has a way of working out."

What new things have you learned at Playtime?

You can meet friends anywhere. I made new friends.

I've learned how to play new games

Being nice to the little kids

How to make a plaster mask

I learned in Playtime how to draw a cat

The hummus: I said I didn't like it but then I did

To play the guitar

We built a volcano

I learned that we don't hit, punch, kick or bite anyone and to help people feel better and be cheered up!

I learned how to play checkers

How to read better

Here's what the children we serve have to say about the Playtime Project

"I feel happy because of all of the kids I can play with. I feel better when I am at Playtime; I get away from the things that keep me mad. The volunteers help me and play with me. They try to make people laugh. I wish Playtime Project was every day, not just on Tuesday and Thursday!"

Playtime Project participant

"I asked a six-year-old girl who was moving out of the shelter what she would remember about Playtime that was new for her. 'You pat my back,' she replied. 'You pat my back when I cry. No one has ever patted my back when I cried before. I like it.'"

Volunteer

"When we returned to the shelter from our first field trip, Jonathan's mother had just gotten off work and was waiting outside for us. Her son raced around the corner, chasing another teen, as laughter echoed through the dirty, old ambulance tunnel. She thanked us for giving her son this opportunity and said, 'I know he had fun because I haven't seen him smile in days.'"

Volunteer

"We are having a good time in your playroom; we enjoy playing in here. We love it because we get a chance to play, we have snack time and the snacks are good and that's why the children including me, we love you all."

Playtime Project participant



Playtime Gives Volunteers an Opportunity to Serve Their Communities

A few profiles of our diverse volunteer corps who make Playtime happen each week

When **Skyler Badenoch** and **Sahar Moghadam** moved to Washington, DC, in 2009, they wanted to make sure that they found a way to give back to the community once a week. Skyler frequently travels to Haiti, Nicaragua, and Malawi where he manages international programs to build rural schoolhouses for children. Sahar, a senior consultant at a major consulting firm, is getting an advanced degree in cyber security, planning a wedding, and taking care of her family. Still, this Washington couple makes time to prioritize the children at Playtime each week. *"After our first night, we left physically and mentally exhausted, but we were hooked. The kids at Playtime challenge us in ways we never imagined. They make us laugh, they make us hope for a world with more opportunity, and they make us sad when they move on. Watching the kids develop over even a few months' time is always a remarkable experience, and we have had the privilege of getting to know them as they've grown up over the past two years. When given the opportunity, kids will find a way to play. Seeing kids come to Playtime for the first time quiet and shy transform into confident, creative, and fun children is something that I'll always remember."*

Megan Thompson has been volunteering at DC General for one year, along with her husband **Chris Dockery**. As a legislative correspondent for Senator John Kerry, her work focuses on health and child welfare. Megan says that she comes back to Playtime because she enjoys the opportunity to work directly with the same group of kids that she impacts through her federal policy work. She loves when the children learn a new skill that they can use in school. *"[Being at Playtime] reminds me of the real faces behind why we need to keep working to improve conditions for low-income families."*

Sarah Mashburn is a volunteer who leads a yoga class each Tuesday as part of Playtime at DC General. Sarah has worked with children in India, Peru, and the U.S., and decided to volunteer with HCPP because she wanted to expose children to yoga as a form of exercise and stress relief. *"It was exciting for me when I was teaching yoga to two middle school-age boys at the shelter, and one of them told me that yoga is great training for basketball!"*

Becky Huban began Playtime as a volunteer at NCFN in 2009, then took on the Site Coordinator role when Playtime launched a Tuesday night program at DC General. She works for First Book, a national organization providing books to children in need. She was once a teacher and loves when she has breakthrough moments with kids and sees them using coping strategies she has taught them. Becky remembers teaching one child to "shake it out" when he was frustrated, and was thrilled to see him using it. She started volunteering with Playtime as a way to gain experience to prepare to go back to school for social work.

Tresa Schlecht has been volunteering for Playtime for seven years, serving as a baby "guru" ever since Playtime was at DC Village in 2004. She works as an attorney at the Department of Veterans Affairs and volunteers because her own children are grown and she wanted to put her parenting experience to good use. Tresa also volunteers doing literacy outreach through the libraries to distribute free books to children in Playtime and she enjoys hearing how children are doing after leaving the shelter. *"My belief is that a totally different strategy and approach is needed to ensure that these beautiful children do not grow up doomed to repeat the cycle of poverty and homelessness or to further swell the population in jail."*

Zach Wineburg is from Greensboro, NC, and works with the Democratic Governor's Association. He ran his first marathon recently, is going to Harvard this fall, and has visited 44 of the 50 states. His favorite part about volunteering at DC General is being able to build relationships with the kids, as well as watch them learn and grow through the program. *"I'm a better leader because of my time volunteering; [after Playtime] coming back to the professional environment is a piece of cake. I'm also probably better prepared to be a father [someday]."*

Nicole Smith, a Turning Point volunteer for a year and a half, also mentors through Big Brothers, Big Sisters and works as the Vice President of Business Development for the Global Diversity Consulting Group. Seeing the kids' smiling faces keeps her coming back to Playtime. *"Children are resilient. They go through troubling times, but they can still have fun at Playtime...and that fun is a big part of being a child."* She believes that, *"as adults we could take a page out of their books,"* and have fun even during hard times.

Anna Fogel works for Shore Bank International managing international projects in housing finance, small business finance, and microfinance. When she's not traveling to Kenya, Mongolia, or Turkey, she can be found deep in conversation with a toddler as one of Playtime's 16 Site Coordinators in 2010. She finds Playtime to be an incredible support system for both children and their families. *"By volunteering, I have been able to watch the kids and their families grow, and have a much better understanding of Washington, DC, as a city."*

Keith Cummins works for the U.S. Department of Education and has been a volunteer with Turning Point since 2007. He loves playing the guitar and has continued attending Playtime weekly, even after he moved across town to Capitol Hill. His favorite parts about Playtime are the kids, playing with all the toys, and seeing kids bond with volunteers. *"Playtime has made me appreciate what I had growing up—and makes me want to do everything I can to make sure these kids have the same joy!"*







Playtime Gives Homeless Parents a Break

Twenty-four-year-old **Stephanie Williams** began her journey into homelessness when she was just a child. In the absence of her mother, who was also homeless, her grandparents and aunt raised her. When they passed away when Stephanie was sixteen, she had few supports. She tried staying with other relatives, but after experiencing physical and verbal abuse she thought it was best to strike out on her own. At the age of sixteen, Stephanie found herself sleeping in abandoned buildings.

Stephanie dropped out of school and at seventeen, began her first job working as a cashier at McDonald's. Working gave her the opportunity to earn money and get away from the abuse she experienced in unstable homes. After bouncing from place to place, she would find herself in three different shelters by nineteen. **Her son Alex** was two months old when she moved into the DC General Emergency Family Shelter and then transferred to Park Road shelter where he participated in Playtime every week.



Stephanie appreciates the opportunities Playtime gave Alex to interact with his young friends in a safe environment which helped him get used to day care. She is grateful for the support she received from Playtime's social work intern, who helped Stephanie find a G.E.D. class so she can continue her education to eventually become a Licensed Practical Nurse. Playtime also connected her with a referral to receive free furniture when she moved out of the shelter. "The Playtime Project is like a vacation for parents and children," Stephanie said. "I am grateful for what you all do!"

Parents share what the Playtime Project means to them

"We went through the stress of being homeless, losing everything we had, but at least [Playtime] gave my youngest son a sense of hope. He could be a little kid there and not wear the stigma of being homeless and breathe a sigh of relief...and it also kept me from being an angry, stressed out mom."

Playtime Project mother

"My child loves going to Playtime; she can't wait until Tuesdays and Thursdays. Our kids need it!"

Playtime Project parent

"Everything is just wonderful and also the volunteers are very nice and respectful to the kids and parents."

Playtime Project parent

"Volunteers give you motivation by listening and understanding who the kids and parents are as people, getting to know them, taking kids on field trips. We as parents take care of needs, and you all help with wants. Playtime is a place where you can come and get relief from stress. When Wednesday comes, all those kids are running down to see you, and the parents do too. All the parents respect and trust the Playtime Project."

Playtime Project father

"This program is really helpful towards the kids and is very reliable. I wish that there were more programs like Project Playtime; I greatly appreciate this program."

Playtime Project father

"The Playtime Project is a great way for children to enhance skills such as: social skills, problem solving skills, teamwork, and leadership skills. It also gives moms a chance to catch up on things like cleaning, sleep, or in my case, study time!"

Playtime Project mother

"Thanks for taking your time out to play with our kids."

Playtime Project parent

"You guys have given so much of your time, attention, and love to the Playtime Project. You are a support mechanism in the shelter. You have something these children need. I see it."

Playtime Project mother

"I appreciate the fact that it's free and it's acclimating my child to a first daycare experience."

Playtime Project parent

Typical Playtime Schedule



6:15 pm	Volunteers arrive at the shelters from work to set up for Playtime
6:30 pm	Parents enroll or sign their children in
6:30–6:45 pm	Volunteers go over rules and children select activities from a variety of choices
6:45–7:45 pm	Children play active games outside, read books with volunteers, do art projects or science projects, engage in free play or imaginative play, and do interactive learning activities
7:45–8:00 pm	Clean-up time
8:00 pm	Snack time with fresh fruits and vegetables
8:15 pm	Quiet time with reading and music
8:30 pm	Parents pick up children and volunteers hold debrief about how the night went



Why Community Partners Support Playtime

From shelter providers to physicians, astronauts to public servants, the community celebrates the important void Playtime fills in our community

“The Playtime Project provides a safe haven for children to pursue their dreams no matter what obstacles their families may face. As an emergency department physician, I know the importance of prevention programs like Playtime to help children stay on the right track. As a father, I know how much children need the stability and consistency that Playtime provides.”

Dr. Geoffrey Mount Varner, Chief of Emergency Medicine and Interim Chairman, Howard University Hospital

“Children and families who are homeless are often hidden from public view, disconnected from the support of community that children need to thrive. The Playtime Project provides the support of a community of caring volunteers who deliver joy to children and parents in shelters all year long.”

Valerie Plame Wilson, former CIA operations officer and citizen activist

“I am so thankful for the Playtime Project. It’s really a godsend for us. Thank you for creating safe and happy experiences for the children.”

Tommy Wells, Ward 6 DC City Councilmember and former Chairman of the Human Services Committee

“The Playtime Project has a long and successful history of working with homeless families and children in the District of Columbia. The project has been an important partner in addressing the needs of homeless children by providing activities that would otherwise not be available and are often taken for granted by traditional service providers. Homelessness in our community is too big of a problem for any one program or agency to solve, so we rely on partnerships like the Playtime Project to help take the sting out of homelessness for children.”

Sue Marshall, Executive Director, Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness

“I met the next generation of space explorers at the D.C. General Shelter where I had the pleasure of sharing my space mission with forty eager little astronauts-in-training. The Playtime Project’s focus on learning through play is exactly what our nation needs to foster curiosity in our children, and it was an honor to be a part of this mission!”

Leland Melvin, Associate Administrator for Education, NASA

“Since 2007, the Playtime Project volunteers have provided free children’s programming at our transitional housing facility two nights per week. This has made it possible for us to facilitate weekly house meetings with the parents as well as classes to provide support to parents and prevent child abuse and neglect. The parents really appreciate having time away from their children and knowing they are safely cared for by the volunteers. The staff appreciates the fact that children have something positive, organized, and constructive to do. The children absolutely love Playtime and look forward to having their time with the volunteers. The Playtime Project makes a big difference for us and we consider them to be one of our most valued partners.”

Jerry Coleman, Executive Director, Northwest Church Family Network

“It has been an absolute privilege to volunteer at DC General and be part of such a remarkable transformation over the past year plus. Now, because of the leadership, support of volunteers, and great attitudes, DC General Playtime is in a very good place. We are so lucky to have found an organization that cares deeply about its volunteers and the people it serves.”

Raymond Mueller, Interior Designer



Playtime Project Makes an Impact. In 2010

Children

- The Playtime Project served **714 children** between the ages of 0–18
- 57 percent of the children served were between the ages of 0–5
- 33 percent of the children were between the ages of 5–10
- 10 percent of the children were over the age of 10



Families

- The Playtime Project served **490 families**
- The average family has 1–2 children enrolled in Playtime, up to 5 children
- Most parents are single mothers, but some are two parents and some are single fathers
- Half of the parents surveyed were displaced due to eviction and the other half experienced problems with family members they lived with, including domestic violence

Client Satisfaction

- **87 percent** of parents surveyed reported that their children learn new skills in Playtime that help in school and life
- 93 percent of parents say their children feel safe and secure in Playtime
- 98 percent of parents report feeling happier, calmer, and less stressed after Playtime gives them a free 2- to 4-hour break each week
- 100 percent of parents surveyed report their children are happy in Playtime and are treated warmly and affectionately by the volunteers

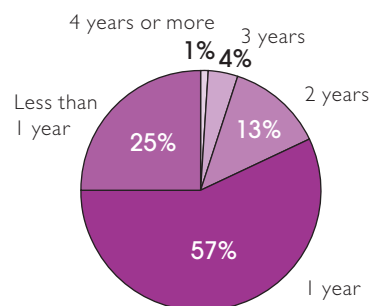
Volunteers

- **204 volunteers** provided Playtime in our 8 weekly programs
- Our typical volunteer is a young professional in his or her mid-20s, but we also have volunteers who are grandmothers, fathers, mothers, and teens—our volunteers are members of the military; work for the federal government; nonprofit organizations; or corporations; teach school; study in school; and travel the world

Resource Referrals

- **60 parents**, representing more than 100 children, received referrals from the Playtime Project to other resources in the community
- The majority of referrals were housing related, followed by referrals for employment, children's services, adult education, clothing, and transportation for children to get to school
- The Playtime Project's social work intern also helped a mother get media and police attention for her missing daughter, connect a father to legal services whose son was kidnapped and abused by the mother, and get 10 children evaluated for possible developmental delays so they could be connected to early intervention services

Length of Volunteer Service



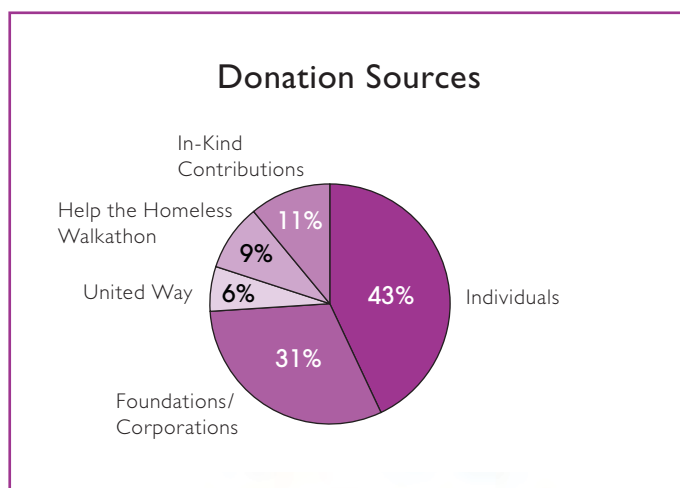
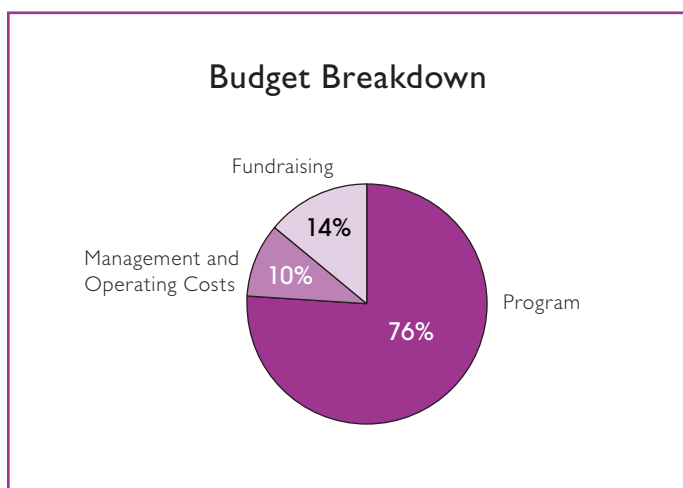
Revenue and Financials



2010 Revenue: \$160,672.27

2010 Expenses: \$154,943.74

(\$20,000 in-kind donations distributed)



What your donation funds



\$30 funds a healthy snack of fruits and vegetables for **40** children

\$50 funds transportation for **15** children to attend a Saturday field trip

\$100 funds training for **20** volunteers, arming them with best practices and child development research

\$250 funds a celebrity visitor to Playtime, like professional athletes, theater groups, or musicians

\$500 funds HCPP's resource guide for families, filled with vetted social services that families connect with to find needed services

\$1,000 funds the purchase of art supplies for two shelter programs for **one year**

\$2,500 funds HCPP's field trip program for teenagers for **six months**

\$5,000 funds snacks to all eight weekly Playtime programs for **one year**

\$10,000 funds all supplies, program materials, toys and books to DC General shelter for **one year**

Total program cost for a site for one year: average of **\$30,000**; ranging from **\$14,300–\$44,650**

Thanking Our Supporters

The Playtime Project is grateful for the support of the following individuals, foundations, corporations, and organizations whose generous contributions make our work and play possible. This list reflects all gifts received in 2010

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- Tara Vassefi
- Terrace City Lodge 1499
- Brook and Geoffrey Mount Varner
- The I Do Foundation
- William J. Scher
- William Lewis

\$500–\$999

- Alternative Gifts Of Greater Washington
- Caroline Ramsay Merriam
- Laurel Lennon
- Lisa Brown
- Nicholas Baldick
- Patricia Wonder
- Saint Patricks Day School Parent's Association
- Tresa Schlecht

\$1,000–\$4,999

- Bob Edwards
- Capitol Hill Community Foundation
- Carol Wheeler
- Gelman, Rosenberg & Freedman
- Jean and Fredric Edelman
- Jean Milbauer
- Jon Rybka
- Karen Zizmor
- Kirsten Lodal and Jeff Himmelman
- Laura and Jon Ginns
- Lawrence Bentley
- Lois Riley
- Lynn Larson and Deb Pyne
- Ramsay Merriam Fund
- SBI
- Schrayer and Associates, Inc
- Shannon Rozner
- The Elno Family Foundation
- Thomas Birch

\$5,000–\$9,999

- Crowell & Moring Foundation
- Edward Fowler Memorial Foundation
- Stein, Sperling, Bennett, DeJong, Driscoll & Greenfeig P.C.

Over \$10,000

- The Brightsight Group LLC
- The Commonwealth Foundation
- The Community Foundation For The National Capital Region
- The Jenny Jones Foundation (in kind)
- United Way of National Capital Area



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Clinic for the Homeless*

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Program and Operations Manager

Carrie Beaudreau
Development Associate

Mariam Wardak & Tosin Ogunyoku
Social Work Interns

HCPP Site Coordinators 2010–2011

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Heather Provencher
Michelle Smith
Sierra Blake

DC General Tuesdays

Aileen Collins
Becky Huban
Francisco Lopez
Grace Lynch

DASH Cornerstone Saturdays

Lauren Waterhouse
Thalia Bishop

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Nina Capriotti
Robin Ngo

NCFN Wednesdays

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Kathleen Fawcett

Park Road Wednesdays

Haley Adams
Stefanie Sproy

Turning Point Mondays

Lana Tilley
Heather Casciato
Mary Crom

Turning Point Thursdays

Anna Fogel
Frances Patton
Megan Fletcher







THE CATALOGUE FOR PHILANTHROPY: Greater Washington is pleased to recognize the Homeless Children's Playtime Project as "One of the best small charities in the Washington Region" for 2011–2012

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