



Baby Corner News

Spring 2011

Changing the world one diaper at a time...

Helping Orphans in Japan

The generosity of in-kind donors made it possible for the Baby Corner to support KIRO FM's relief effort.

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Effect of Public Health Cuts

Staff reductions in the Maternity Support Services program may have long-term consequences.

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Mailing list update We try to keep our mailing list as current as possible. If you would like to make a correction, addition, or deletion, please e-mail bhainley@accutek.net. Thank you!

Visit our website! If you prefer your news via the Internet, the most recent two or three issues of *Baby Corner News* are posted as PDFs. In addition, our website has frequently updated information about important Baby Corner events. Please visit us at www.seattlebabycorner.org.



st. joseph's
Baby Corner

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"To serve the immediate and unmet physical needs of infants and children living in poverty"

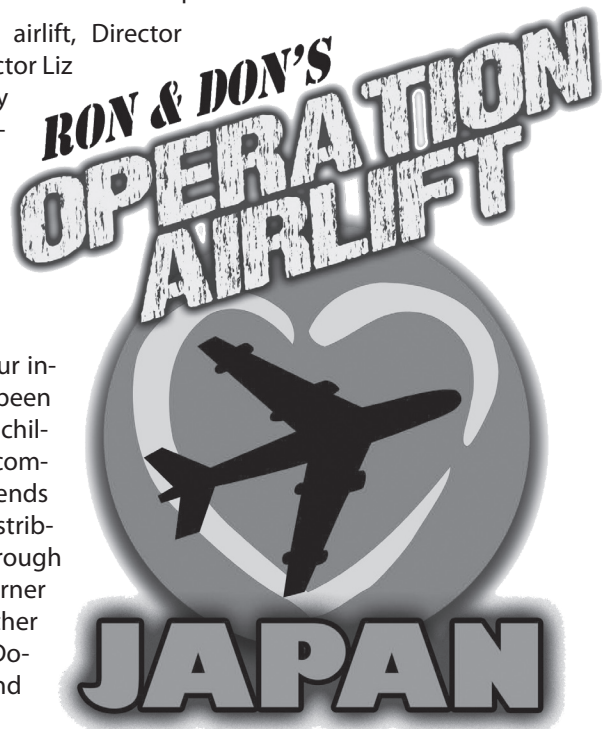
Baby Corner Joins Airlift Effort

A week after the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan, a small orphanage in Shichinohe, Aomori Prefecture, was struggling to care for its 43 residents, ages 4 to 17, as well as an influx of newly orphaned children who had lost everything. Located on the northern tip of the main island of Japan, Shichinohe was still in the throes of winter, with new snow falling. The orphanage had little food and was in need of warm clothing and water, when word reached Ron Upshaw and Don O'Neill of 97.3 KIRO FM.

The radio talk show hosts learned that a U.S. Navy couple stationed with nearby Naval Air Facility Misawa had elected to stay behind and help. When they began their airlift campaign, Upshaw and O'Neill asked listeners to donate food, water, clothing, sleeping bags, toys, and other items for 63 children at the Bikou-en orphanage. By March 29, the number of children "adopted" by Operation Airlift Japan had swelled to 436.

When they heard about the airlift, Director Jeannie Jaybush and Assistant Director Liz Holz quickly filled bags with baby afghans, blankets, handmade toddler sweaters and hats, and dozens of Beanie-Baby-type toys. Holz delivered the bags to KIRO on Thursday, March 24, and was interviewed briefly by reporter Rachel Belle.

Because of the generosity of our in-kind donors, the Baby Corner has been able in recent years to respond to children in crisis outside of our local community. The Baby Corner regularly sends goods to the Skagit Valley, to be distributed to migrant worker families. Through personal connections, the Baby Corner has also delivered clothing and other items to families in need in the Dominican Republic, Belize, Zambia, and Ethiopia.



Breakfast for Babies—Coming May 3!

The Baby Corner's biggest fundraiser is coming to Campion Ballroom at Seattle University again on **Tuesday, May 3, from 7:30–9:00 a.m.** If you have never attended and would like to, e-mail us asap at babies@blarg.net. Suggested donation is \$40; check-in begins at 7:00 a.m.

How easy can fundraising be?

Late last fall, the Baby Corner registered with **GoodSearch.com**, a search engine that directs 50 percent of advertising revenue to registered nonprofits.

How does it work? Simply go to the GoodSearch website, choose St. Joseph's Baby Corner to search for, and then surf the Internet! Each new search earns a penny for the Baby Corner.

If we get 100 supporters on board, doing one search a day (just *one!*), at the end of a year the Baby Corner will have earned \$365. If each supporter does three daily searches, the year-end total will be more than \$1,000. And that's at absolutely *no cost* to the supporter!

Wait, there's more! You can also **GoodShop** (same website). Shop with any of the 600 on-line retailers, and a percentage of each purchase will go to the Baby Corner—books, chocolate, airline tickets, electronics, outdoor equipment, toys... Again, at no extra cost to you!

Please encourage family and friends to join you in this effective, very easy way to support the Baby Corner!

Public Health Cuts Affect Families

FOR LOW-INCOME PREGNANT WOMEN IN KING COUNTY, there's no such thing as a trickle-down effect when it comes to budget cuts; the impact is immediate. In January of this year, responding to a loss of \$23 million in state funds, Public Health–Seattle & King County eliminated 123 positions, effective February 28. Among them were service providers—nurses and social workers—who routinely visit the Baby Corner to pick up baby and toddler items for their clients.

A 50 percent reduction in Medicaid funding for Maternity Support Services necessitated the cuts, according to the county. The state program, which serves some 30,000 low-income women and infants in King County, uses a team approach to provide health assessment and education, intervention, and counseling to clients.

According to a Public Health fact sheet, MSS has had a significant effect on health disparities, reducing low-birth weights among Hispanic women by 20 percent and among African American women by 50 percent. Low-birth weight has been linked to developmental delays in infants, increased risk of learning problems in young children, and long-term health problems. Through MSS, at-risk mothers receive help not only with nutrition but also with substance abuse, tobacco cessation, and parenting skills. For the state, the benefit is significant savings in hospitalization costs and other interventions that would otherwise be necessary for vulnerable women and their children.

In short, the service providers who pick up bags filled with infant and toddler goods from the Baby Corner deliver a lot more than diapers, clothing, and toys to their clients. At the Baby Corner word of the staff reductions not only caused concern for service providers but also raised the question, How will necessary items get to the families who need them? While hoping for the best (rehiring of staff at some future date), the Baby Corner has also been distributing items through the following organizations, among others: The Northwest Center Child Development Program, Brettler Family Place, MOM-Care Program–UW, Stepping Stones program of Providence Hospice, Children's Home Society, Childhaven–Broadway Branch, and Seattle Public Schools Head Start.

For more information on Maternity Support Services in King County and the budget, please visit <http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/budget>.



On February 14, the Baby Corner held a lunch to thank service providers and wish them well.



Assistant Director Liz Holz and volunteer Allie Berendts unpack a recent shipment of bottles donated by The Good People Fund of New Jersey.

The Baby Corner's Toy Story

At the Baby Corner, sometimes a toy is more than a toy—it can also be a tool for building relationships.

High up on a top shelf at the Baby Corner there is a stack of brand-new chunky wooden puzzles, a soft dress-me doll, a big wooden clock for teaching time, and sets of wooden and magnetic alphabet letters. They are toys that would delight any child, but they have been specially culled from the other toys and set aside for service providers like Trina Hopkins, PHN, of Public Health—Seattle & King County.

For the last year Hopkins, who works with families referred by Child Protective Services, has been involved in the Promoting First Relationships program, run by the University of Washington's Center on Infant Mental Health & Development. The program trains professionals so that they can support and guide parents and caregivers in developing nurturing and responsive relationships with very young children.

For the families served by the Baby Corner, building healthy emotional and social relationships is especially chal-

lenging; most are low-income families with few resources and many stressors in their lives.

That's where the toys come in. In a videotaped session, caregivers engage their children with the toys, then watch the tape and receive positive feedback from a professional like Trina Hopkins. The insights they gain through these sessions increase their competence as caregivers as well as deepen their commitment to their children.

Young children, in turn, learn from more positive early relationships, gaining self-confidence, trust, and a positive outlook. It's a huge return for such a small thing—a toy.

"At first I brought my own toys," said Hopkins, "but now I can get them through the Baby Corner. We're very thankful."

Director Jeannie Jaybush encourages service providers to allow families to keep the toys, promising that there will be more. She knows that while the adults see the toys as a valuable teaching tool, for toddlers a toy *is* a toy after all.

Wish List

- baby hygiene products (wash, lotion, diaper rash ointment)
 - Onesies (newborn)
 - PJs, outfits (0-3 mo; 3-6 mo)
 - long-legged pants or sweats (3T, 4T)
 - equipment: high chairs, bouncers, umbrella strollers*
- * Equipment must be in good condition, have all parts and hardware, and meet current safety standards.

In Gratitude

A celebration of Shirley Mencarelli Jones's life took place at St. Brendan Church in Bothell in early March. Shirley was one of the dedicated group at St. Brendan's who assemble the layettes that the Baby Corner has been distributing for nearly twenty years. Each diaper bag, crammed with diapers, wipes, blankets, clothing, and other items needed by a newborn, is worth \$150-\$200.

The Diaper Bag Project began in a Scripture study group in 1992, and Shirley was involved from the very beginning. "She always had such a positive attitude and a smile on her face, even when things got tough health-wise," said the group's leader, Kathleen Espedal. "I could always count on Shirley's support and helpful suggestions. We all miss her very much."

We wish especially to thank Shirley's family for including the Baby Corner among those organizations receiving memorial gifts.



ORGANIZATIONS SERVED BY THE BABY CORNER:

- Swedish Medical Center, First Hill
- Sea Mar Community Health Center, South Park
- St. Vincent de Paul Parish Conferences
- Seattle Indian Health Board
- Jewish Family Service
- St. Mary's Food Bank
- Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

AND MANY MORE!

Thank you's

BabyLegs, the generous sponsor of this year's Breakfast for Babies.

Seattle Girls' Choir, for a beautiful concert in December that brought in \$1,000 in donations.

Providence Health & Services for a generous donation of \$5,000.

The families of Katherine Welch Clancy and Shirley Mencarelli Jones, for asking that memorial gifts be made to the Baby Corner.

Gary Hagaman, general manager of the Silver Cloud Inn–Bellevue, for donations of hotel soaps, lotion, and shampoo.

BuzzBee Company and **CEO Michele Keeffe**, for a donation of 300 much-needed winter jackets.

Children's Hospital Shoreline Thrift Shop and **all our crib communities**—especially St. John, St. Joseph, Our Lady of the Lake, St. Bridget, and St. Catherine—which make regular donations of goods.

Jerry O'Connell, who first became acquainted with the Baby Corner through his work on the Mission Committee of Providence Health & Services. After retiring, he became a regular volunteer, served on the board for seven years, and served as treasurer for six. Jerry's dedication, level head, and sense of humor were a gift. We wish the O'Connells well as they relocate to Colorado!

All our donors, known to us or not.

St. Joseph's Baby Corner is a nonsectarian 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization and is listed as a charitable organization with the Office of the Washington Secretary of State. Financial disclosure information may be obtained by calling 360-753-0863.



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