



World Change Starts  
With Educated Children®



# Spring Newsletter

April 2007

## In the News

### Overwhelming Response from Viewers of "The Oprah Winfrey Show"!



As most of you know, April 3rd was a major milestone in Room to Read's history with John's appearance on "The Oprah Winfrey Show." The episode featured individuals

who are truly making a difference in the world. On top of the fact that our Founder and CEO was featured on one of the most popular shows in America, Ms. Winfrey challenged her millions of viewers worldwide to support our work by donating funds, which in turn enable us to put books into the hands of children throughout the developing world.

John did a phenomenal job of engaging Ms. Winfrey, the studio audience and the TV viewing audience in the early days of starting Room to Read as well as showing how far we have come in building a world-class organization.

Our website received record hits as the show aired across multiple time zones. Our system thankfully weathered the storm and we have processed over 4,000 donations to date totaling more than \$500,000! Donations are still rolling in as people talk about the show and discuss with their family and friends how to get involved. Worldwide syndication of "The Oprah Winfrey Show" to 132 countries ensures the segment will be playing around the globe for weeks to come. Our constituent base is expanding daily as new individuals, corporations and foundations contact us to get involved.

Another great benefit of the show was the surge in interest in John's book *Leaving Microsoft to Change the World*. Prior to the show airing, the book ranked 3,000th on Amazon's sales list. By the evening of April 3rd, the book had surged to 35th outselling the *Tipping Point*, *Freakanomics* and

## Partners

### The Goldman Sachs Foundation Commits over US\$1 million to Room to Read India



#### The Goldman Sachs Foundation

Room to Read is extremely excited to announce that we have received a major grant from The Goldman Sachs Foundation to support the continued build-out of Room to Read India over the next three years. This grant will have a significant positive impact on India's educational system by establishing 450 bi-lingual libraries in both urban slums and rural communities in Delhi, Rajasthan, and Uttaranchal. The grant funding will also increase the quality and capacity of the educators throughout India with vital teacher training to improve reading skills in children from an early age, thereby laying a foundation for academic achievement. Furthermore, funding will support the build out of our India team so that we can continue to reach more children throughout the subcontinent. An estimated 300,000 children will benefit from these libraries.

This grant from the Goldman Sachs Foundation will enable Room to Read to invest in and implement key changes to elevate the quality and sustainability of our programs well into the future. Through the libraries established with The Foundation's support, children will receive access to books and other educational resources, teachers will receive training aimed at improving student engagement and library management, and children throughout India will be one step closer to literacy and enhanced opportunities for learning and academic achievement.

We are very proud to have such a significant and long-term commitment of capital from one of the world's leading foundations and look forward to working with The Goldman Sachs Foundation over the coming years to reach new programmatic and organizational heights.

Barack Obama's *Audacity of Hope*. Harper Collins ordered a third reprint to keep up with demand. As new readers learn of John's story and discover Room to Read, our network will continue to grow as the book circulates around the globe.

Interestingly, one of the most popular pages on our website was the career opportunities page. Our HR team is excited about the new candidates this will attract and we have already received numerous emails from people wanting to work and volunteer for us. More than 300 new volunteer applications await review!

What a remarkable opportunity this has been for a relatively small organization to reach an expanded global audience and share John's story and the mission of Room to Read. Thanks to viewers of "The Oprah Winfrey Show," Room to Read will publish and print over 300,000 local language children's books. We are now one step closer to our goal of opening 20,000 libraries by the year 2020 and inspiring millions of children to read!

### **Room to Read receives Four-Star Charity Navigator Rating!**



In early April, [Charity Navigator](#) announced that Room to Read has garnered its top four-star rating, putting us in the top echelon of charitable organizations in the U.S.! Charity Navigator is the nation's largest and most reputable independent charity evaluator - it investigates the fiscal viability and performance of over 5,000 non-profit organizations. Its rating system measures the efficiency and sustainability of charities objectively and without bias. Only a small percentage of these organizations have achieved this exceptional four-star status, a true honor for Room to Read. You can view [our complete profile](#) at Charity Navigator's website.

### **Local Language Publishing Program Receives Prestigious Award!**

This March, Room to Read's Local Language Publishing Program was chosen to receive the "Breakthrough Ideas in Education" award by the Academy for Educational Development in Washington D.C., one of the world's foremost human and social development organizations. The award was announced at the Comparative and



## Stories from the Field

### **Room to Grow Scholarships Giving Hope and Opportunity to Orphans in India**

Located in a residential area of central Delhi called Patel Nagar, Muneer Baiika Ashralaya (Muneer Girls' Orphanage) was set up by the Muneer Social Welfare Society in 1999 following a horrible fire that took place in Yamuna Pushta Slum in Delhi. Many lives were lost and many families lost their homes and their belongings. Children were left homeless, orphaned, and in serious danger. Young orphaned girls in particular were vulnerable to violence and abuse.

In response to this disaster, the Muneer Orphanage was opened for 13 girls ages 6-18. Years later, it is now home to 25 girls aged 4-17 years who do not have parents or whose parents are unable to support their children. These girls have come from different parts of Delhi and were living in difficult and sometimes life-threatening circumstances. Now at the orphanage, these girls live as one happy family together.

Room to Read is supporting the long-term education of all 25 girls through our Room to Grow Scholarship Program, which provides them with the resources they need to succeed in school.



Barkha is one of Room to Read's youngest Room to Grow scholars in India. An only child, she grew up in Madanpur Khadar, a low-income rural area on the outskirts of Delhi. When Barkha lost her mother to a fire when she was one, she was left with her 80 year-old grandfather whose only income was

his pension of Rs 1000/month (less than one dollar a day). Unable to afford Barkha's food and education, he admitted her to an orphanage so she could have a secure life, and he could visit her on weekends.

Though Barkha just joined the orphanage in March 2006, she quickly made friends with other scholars at the orphanage. Being the youngest and newest to the orphanage, she receives lots of love and support from the rest of the children staying there. Although it is definitely a tough time for her, she is

International Education Society conference in Baltimore, where global educators gathered to share breakthrough ideas in a forum designed to encourage the exchange of information and knowledge in the field of education. Room to Read was one of 6 award winners. Our program was recognized as an innovative tool for addressing literacy in the developing world. For more information, please visit the [Global Learning Portal](#) site.

## Room to Read Buzz

### New Regional Hires

We have hired two new Development Directors to head up our international fundraising efforts:

- Louise Holmes is our new UK Development Director focused on our fundraising efforts in the UK and Europe. She has an extensive career fundraising for major charitable organizations in the U.K including the recent restoration of the Hackney Empire Theatre in East London.
- Robin Fern is our new Asia Development Director focused on Hong Kong and the Asia-Pacific. Some of you may recognize Robin's name from her days as our Chapter Leader in Hong Kong. Robin joins us from Microsoft with a 20 year career in technology and advertising in the U.S. and Hong Kong.

We have also recently hired new Country Directors in Sri Lanka and Zambia to oversee our operations in each of these countries:

- Glenfrey De Mel joins us as Country Director, Sri Lanka with more than 20 years of experience in the development field with international organizations including Save the Children.
- Lovemore Nkhoma joins us as Country Director, Zambia following a lengthy career with World Vision and other NGOs focused on poverty alleviation and development.

Please join us in welcoming these talented new members of our team - we are THRILLED to have them on board as we meet the opportunities and challenges ahead!

### John Wood Honored By USF Center for the Pacific Rim

John received the 2007 Asia Pacific Leadership

adjusting and performing well. On a visit to the orphanage nearly a year after Barkha arrived, Room to Read staff and some of our donors were entertained and charmed by young Barkha's happy, carefree personality. She is looked after like a younger sibling by all the girls, yet seems to always be in the thick of things. Her education is assured now and her future is promising.

With the help of Room to Read and other fantastic organizations like Muneer Social Welfare Society, the girls at this orphanage have gone from struggling day to day to having dreams, high hopes, and the promise of a better future.

## Events

### Join Us for a Room to Read Event and Help Educate Children in the Developing World!

This spring, we have a number of fundraising events taking place around the world. Events are a great way to learn more about Room to Read, meet an interesting group of fellow global citizens, and help children in the developing world gain the lifelong gift of education. For more information, please visit the [Events](#) page on our website.

Singapore - April 25  
New York - May 10  
Denver/Boulder - May 11  
Chicago - May 20

## Chapters and Volunteers

Room to Read's volunteers are a group of dedicated and committed global citizens whose focus on fundraising allows us to keep our overhead low while we continue to offer educational opportunities to thousands of children in the developing world. This year they have committed to raising US\$5 million for Room to Read!

There are a number of ways to become involved with Room to Read, such as holding a fundraising event, organizing a fundraising appeal, volunteering with a chapter or starting a chapter. For more information, please visit our new and improved [Volunteer Opportunities](#) page on our website.

We would like to welcome our new Volunteer Chapters in the **Rockies (Denver/Boulder)**,

Award from University of San Francisco's Center for Pacific Rim Studies for his exceptional contributions in Asia. The award recognized John's work with Room to Read serving under-privileged children as a promotion of understanding, communication and cooperation among the nations, peoples and economies in the region. Way to go John!

### **Room to Read CFO Gives Birth**

Shauna Schmitz, Room to Read's Chief Financial Officer, gave birth to a healthy baby girl - Tikal Elizabeth Schmitz - on February 15, 2007. Mom and daughter are both doing very well.

**Orange County, Tokyo, and Vail**, all of which have already begun organizing events! We now have Chapters in 24 cities around the world. This amazing network of volunteers supports us by organizing events and spreading the word about our work. Visit the [Volunteer Opportunities](#) page on our website if you are interested in volunteering with a Room to Read chapter or starting a new one.