

## Celebrating Babies, All Over the World



Every year, Roots of Empathy (ROE) thanks its youngest teachers with Baby Celebrations held in towns and cities across the globe. The babies, parents, classroom teachers, principals, ROE Instructors, sponsors, and ROE staff gather to celebrate the school year that has passed and fête the little infants – now, relative to when they started, all “grown up” at 12 months of age – for creating a caring world. Thank you to our volunteer parents for sharing the miracle of your baby’s first year, and the power of your loving relationship with the students. To view photos from the events in various cities, including Revelstoke, Richmond, Grande Prairie, Edmonton, Toronto, Toronto Catholic, Montreal, and Seattle, Washington please click [here](#).

## New Research Shows ROE Creates Climate for Learning

Two new research studies by Dr. Veronica Smith from the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta, Canada, show once again that ROE instruction makes a significant difference in facilitating social and emotional development in children. But now, in the first time that it has been measured in an ROE program, one of the studies has shown a positive link between increased social and emotional understanding and higher literacy scores. The results demonstrate the importance of addressing social and emotional literacy in the classroom setting. Other findings include that children experiencing ROE are more positive about parenting and are better able to express and regulate their emotions (think before they speak).

## Notes From the Field

Roots of Empathy is an evidence-based program. But it is not just scrutinized by researchers and educators. Each year, participating children, teachers, Instructors and ROE families are asked for their feedback. Tens of thousands of feedback forms come in from the field, along with many drawings (children in kindergarten give their feedback through artwork). Here are some recent examples.

From a Grade 3 teacher in New Brunswick: *“I do feel that most of my students are now more in touch with their feelings and can better express their emotions. ...I feel better able to relate to some of my students because of what I’ve observed in ROE.”*

From a Grade 7 student in Ontario (in response to the question “What could Roots of Empathy teach the world?”): *“They can teach the world to respect one another and when you see someone being bullied to help that person.”*

From a Grade 4 student in a francophone Catholic elementary school in Ontario:

*“It can teach the world that you have to treat your baby well, and children, and family, and to have good relations with others, to be nice.”*

From a Roots of Empathy parent in British Columbia:

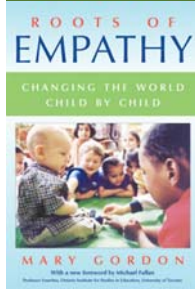
*“It was outstanding! We loved it. My baby LOVED the children and we always learned new things. We felt so lucky and grateful to be a part of the program.”*



*“My happiest thing in Roots of Empathy was the feeling song when the kangaroo part.”*

This kindergarten student in British Columbia has used art effectively to express her emotions and understand those of others. She has illustrated the ROE “Feeling Song,” which equates emotions with various animals (“When I get excited, I jump around like a kangaroo!”). Her happiest thing was moving and singing with her classmates to this ROE song.

## Roots of Empathy Now a Bestseller



More than 22,000 copies of Mary Gordon’s *Roots of Empathy: Changing the World Child by Child* have now sold in paperback and hardcover. Praised by educators internationally and endorsed in a powerful foreword written by educational consultant Dr. Michael Fullan, the book outlines ROE’s “bold and wonderful idea” (The Globe and Mail). All proceeds from the book support Roots of Empathy. To learn more, sample the foreword or first chapter, or buy the book, click [here](#).

## Mary’s Message



Recently the Government of Canada issued a national apology for past atrocities committed against Aboriginal children in residential schools. It was a historic moment. Canada’s treatment of Aboriginal children has devastated many lives, and affected generations. The curtain has finally been drawn on this genocide of culture and language, history books will tell different stories and we can begin the national healing process. Roots of Empathy is committed to making its program available to all Aboriginal children.

We are at the close of another successful year. Roots of Empathy has now reached 215,000 children in 8,700 classrooms worldwide since it began in 1996. In 2007-08, the program was introduced in the state of Washington, USA, while New Zealand, Australia, and Canada continued with their programs. My heartfelt thanks to our government, foundation, corporate and private supporters who made this possible. I would also like to thank the many organizations and school boards who donated the in-kind support of their employees’ time. Roots of Empathy is a community program that raises the bar on meaningful school connections.

In 2008-09 we welcome the Isle of Man into the ROE family. A new year opens, and we begin again with our work of changing the world child by child.

Why is our newsletter called *Green Blanket*? In Roots of Empathy classrooms, children gather around a green blanket where the loving relationship between a parent and baby is the lever for learning. The green blanket is where learning and sharing takes place – and that’s what we want this newsletter to be, too!

Green Blanket is a bi-monthly update on what’s happening with Roots of Empathy. If you know someone who would like to be added to our distribution list, please send complete contact information to [greenblanket@rootsofempathy.org](mailto:greenblanket@rootsofempathy.org). If you’d prefer not to receive future issues of the newsletter, please click [here](#) to unsubscribe.