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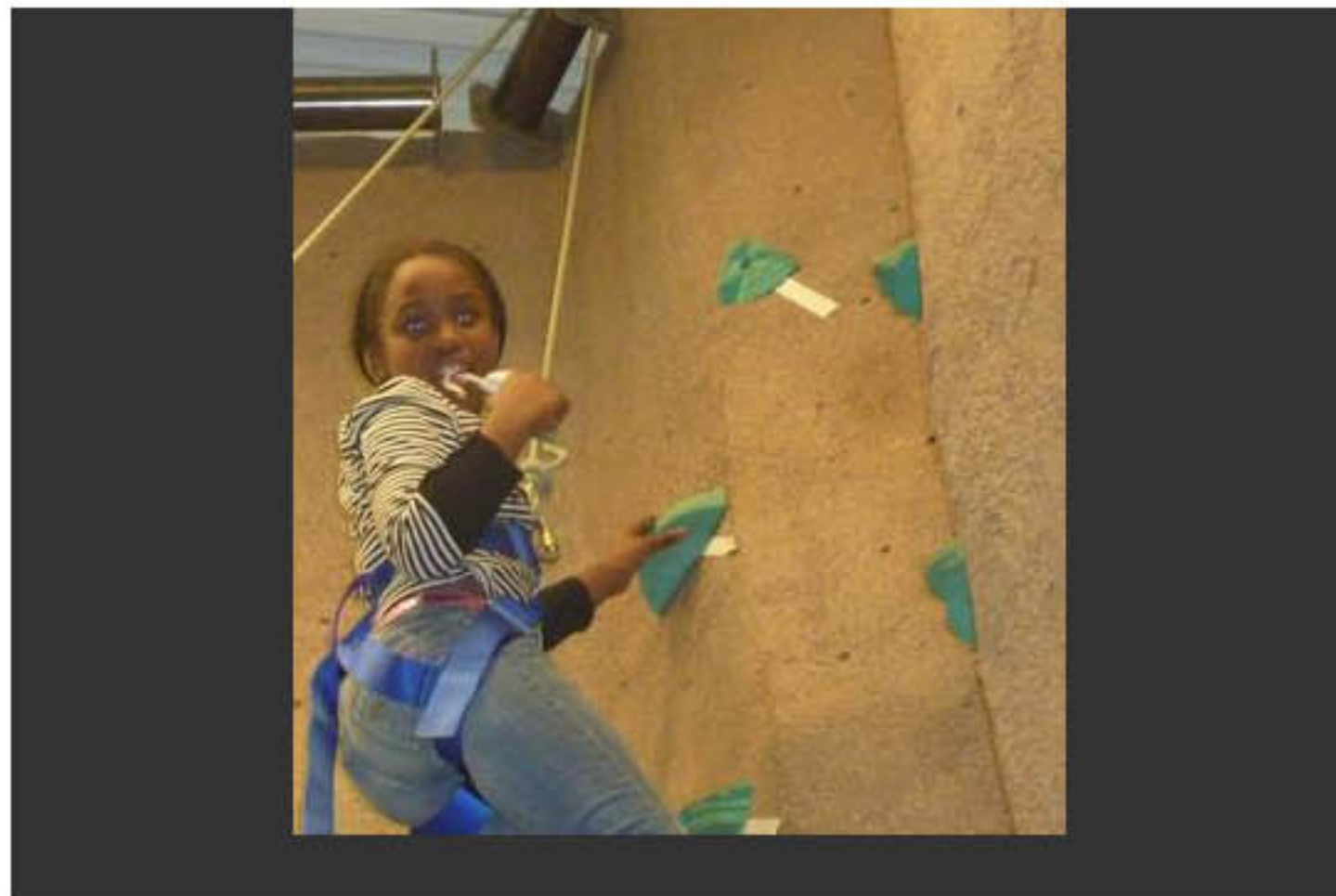
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Norwalk Kids Keep Climbing for the Top

by **Tom Renner** 12/22/10



Francesca, 9, climbs the rock wall at Norwalk's Sono Field House.

Photo Credit: *Tom Renner*



Nine-year-old Francesca watched as her sister, T'Keyha, 6, climbed the rock wall Monday at the [Breakthrough Options For Families](#) holiday party at the [Sono Field House](#). "I'm going to go higher than her," Francesca said as she watched her sister make it halfway up the wall.

When Francesca's time came, the fourth-grader at [Side by Side Community School](#) worked her way up the 30-foot wall. One careful step at a time, she navigated her way to reach a candy cane placed at the top. "I was nervous and scared that I was going to fall," Francesca said. "I was proud that I made it to the top for the first time. I was also thinking about my sister. I wanted to tell her that she did a good job and maybe that when she's my age she'll be able to reach the top of the wall."

Children ages 14-and-under from nearly 20 families associated with Breakthrough Options celebrated the holidays at the event. The agency helps improve the quality of life for single parents and their kids. Sono Field House allowed families and children to climb the rock wall as well as run, kick and throw on its athletic fields. It also provided food and entertainment. Adventure Area Director Jessica Clow helped organize the event.

The rock-climbing wall was the biggest hit. With help from Sono's Students of the World Cares, the kids took turns. "It was hard," said 8-year-old Jasmin, a third-grader at Side by Side. It was a little tough for her to climb: She was clutching candy tightly in her left hand. "I didn't want to drop my candy cane. It made it a little bit harder."

"We have kids as young as 3 on up give it a try," said student Michael Mordekoff, who helped the climbers. "When they're about 8 or 9, they started get the hang of it a little bit. Under that, we have to give them a hand."

The children appreciated the opportunity to experience the field house "This is the first time I've been here, and it was kind of amazing," Francesca said. "I feel lucky that I'm able to come here today."

President Akisha Cassermere and Vice President Patricia Nivakoff started Breakthrough Options more than four years ago and are looking for more mentors. People interested in helping can contact them through the [website](#).

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