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Local Leaders Inspire At-Risk Children

STERLING, VA (June 4, 2018): After learning about the importance of public service and community involvement, the students who attend INMED's After-School Academic Enrichment program at the Family & Youth Opportunity Center were treated to the real deal. Virginia General Assembly Delegate David Reid (32nd District), Sterling District Supervisor Koran Saines and a group of Opportunity Center community partners spent more than an hour touring INMED's facility for low-income families and interacting with the children.

Del. Reid shared his story of growing up in intergenerational poverty and his time at an orphanage in Richmond, VA, because his single father could not take care of him. "I didn't know I was poor until the principal called me to his office to give me a box of clothes collected for the poor students," recalled Reid. "I wanted the children to know that I faced challenges, but I took advantage of every opportunity," said Reid. He was adopted at age 16 and later attended college in Oklahoma and earned a graduate degree in international development from American University as well as a master's degree in strategic intelligence from the National Intelligence University. "I am thankful for all the people who helped me along the way, and everyone at this center is here to help you reach your dreams too," Reid told the children.

Sterling District Supervisor Koran Saines, a long-time supporter of INMED's Opportunity Center, also shared his story of growing up in Sterling and encouraged the children to dream big, despite difficult circumstances. He was inspired by visiting the monuments in Washington, DC as a child and dreamed of becoming a public servant. "Listen to your teachers, ask a lot of

questions and work hard in school,” Saines told the children. “If you do these things, good things will come back to you.”

Community partners Lara Major of 100WomenStrong, Network Nova’s Renise Leresche, Virginia Regional Transit (VRT) CEO Bruce Simms, VRT Operations Director Phil Thompson and VRT Loudoun Area Transit Manager Eric Lev Dahl also toured the Opportunity Center to see how their ongoing support is helping at-risk children and families in need.

“We are so thankful for the support of our community partners and political representatives,” said Opportunity Center Programs Director Maria Elena Vasquez-Alvarez. “We would not be able to achieve the great progress we’ve made in low-income communities of Loudoun County without their help.”

About INMED:

INMED Partnerships for Children is an international humanitarian organization that has improved the lives of millions of children and families in 100+ countries for more than 30 years. Headquartered in Sterling, Virginia, INMED has served at-risk children and low-income families in Loudoun since 1994 by providing child development and family/parenting education, after-school academic enrichment, skills development and job readiness services as well as intensive home visiting services/case management for first-time at-risk parents. For more information, contact Maria Elena Vasquez-Alvarez at mvasquez@inmed.org or visit <https://opportunitycenter.us>.