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## Changing the world, one child at a time

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Linda Pfeiffer was poised, 20 years ago, doctorate in hand, to spend her life in the halls of academe.

She chose instead to found INMED Partnerships For Children. The Sterling-based nonprofit focuses on the needs of children, and it's all about partnerships between the private and public sectors, to make a difference in the lives of kids around the world, Pfeiffer said.

INMED is best known in Loudoun for its outreach to pregnant women and teens, new parents and their children - MotherNet/Healthy families Loudoun. Its effect is felt more in developing countries in Latin America and Africa.

An anthropologist and archaeologist by training, Pfeiffer was doing post-graduate research in Guatemala and in Mexico when her life changed.

By day, she was in the field. By night, she'd find the nearest river, clean up and spend the evening with the women of the village.

I learned about all the issues they had. I saw a lot of aid and donations coming in, and really wanted to get involved.

She turned down a tenure-track teaching job at the University of California and got INMED going. It has migrated in the two decades since from California to Washington, D.C., to Leesburg, to Sterling.

The focus in the beginning was on health and medical programs, Pfeiffer said. It expanded because when you're focusing on children, it's so difficult to focus on just one aspect.

The focus now is a continuum of care to make a difference in the lives of children. That involves education, mentoring, gang intervention, access to health care, prenatal and post-natal counseling.

In 1986, a U.S. Congress commission on reducing rates of infant mortality asked Pfeiffer and INMED to set up an outreach program for families with children at risk. That became MotherNet. MotherNet workers go into homes, mentor and model parenting skills, and guide the families to other services already available in the community - medical, dental, social and educational.

In 1990, Congress turned the program, now active in Loudoun and in one of the poorest neighborhoods of Los Angeles, over to Pfeiffer. But with no budget.

INMED's budget is \$10 million a year. Fairly small for a nonprofit, Pfeiffer said, but the trick is to leverage every dollar's power with partnerships with other groups and agencies.

INMED's community-based children's programs include INMED-Brazil, Healthy Babies, and Our Children, Our Future. CETT - Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training - just completed a five-year pilot, with USAID grant money, in 15 South and Central American countries.

Healthy Babies is designed to reduce the rates of illness and death in both mothers and children in the Amazon jungle of Peru - it targets more than 100,000 women and 53,000 children younger than five in 567 communities. A new venture, Our Children, Our Future, will intervene to break the cycle of AIDS and social collapse for an entire generation in southern

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Africa.  
 rn  
 rnIf you can care for the mothers, and get the babies born HIV-free, Pfeiffer said, it is all for naught if the mother dies and child is sold into the sex-slave trade.  
 rn  
 rnIf you target a whole generation being born healthy, being given a chance in life, if you break the chain of AIDS and poverty, that generation will take care of the next one.  
 rn  
 rnOur goal is to change a family, and to change a whole community,Pfeiffer said.



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