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Season of Giving

Volunteers in the News

Hispanic Families Gather to Celebrate Thanksgiving

INMED, the Leesburg Police Department and a Local Restaurant Partner to Provide Families with a Meal and Fellowship

By [Christian Brown](#) | [Email the author](#) | November 25, 2010

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For Hispanic families in Loudoun County, isolation from the larger community can be an added challenge ir

But celebrating Thanksgiving and other United States holidays helps Latino families integrate into the culture. INMED Partnerships for Children's Loudoun County chapter.

INMED Partnerships for Children's Loudoun County chapter celebrated a Thanksgiving dinner on Tuesday in Leesburg.

The dinner was donated by the Leesburg Police Department and Spanky's Shenanigan's Pub. The Leesburg Police Department has prepared the meal for the past three years, and Spanky's Shenanigan's has prepared it for two.

Police Chief Joseph Price said it was an opportunity to show Hispanic immigrants, who may have a negative view of the community that the police serve and protect.

"We are very grateful as a police department to be able to serve a community like you," he said.

The children involved in INMED's programs in Loudoun County presented a card to Price and also for Jeff Ayers, the manager who prepared the feast.

Ayers said his two favorite Thanksgiving dishes to prepare are the ginger-orange cranberry relish and gravy.

"I make the gravy from scratch," Ayers said. "It's a four-hour process. It's my mom's recipe. I can't say enough about it."

INMED offers a variety of educational programs to Hispanic families in Loudoun County on the subjects of literacy, job training, and sufficiency. But because these families often feel isolated, INMED offers another important service to them.

"They love to come here," Vasquez said. "Besides knowledge, they get a support system."

INMED offers a variety of other services, including MotherNet/Healthy Families Loudoun, a long-term program for families whose children are at risk for health and developmental problems; Parent education and support groups; Family parenting, and family violence prevention; Opening Doors, a case management program for pregnant women; Loudoun County's emergency homeless shelters and transitional housing that helps them find stability and safety; Homelessness Prevention, a home-based case management program aimed at preventing homelessness through counseling, referrals, and support groups and agencies; Fathers' Support Group, which provides a venue for interaction and support for fathers.

Vasquez said she was thankful for the partnerships that exist between INMED and other organizations, including the National Capital Area, the Freddie Mac Foundation, and the Virginia Family Violence Prevention Program and the Loudoun County Recreation and Community Services, which donates the Douglass Center for the organization's use.

She also said she was thankful for the families who take part in INMED's programs.

"I'm thankful to every single organization that we partner with in the community," she said.

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