



July 2009 Newsletter

Treatment to Fight Parasitic Worms a Gateway to Health, Trust for Change

Johnson & Johnson, Janssen-Cilag keep up fight against worms with donated medicine



Children infected with parasitic worms line up to receive medicine that eliminates infection within a matter of days.

Parasitic worms have been a part of life for millions of children in developing and emerging nations worldwide. So too have been the resulting lethargy, inattention and poor performance in school that they have suffered through.

But all that – and more – is changing.

With medicines donated to INMED Partnerships for Children over more than 20 years, more than 5 million children in 15 countries have been freed from infection with multiple types of intestinal worms.

One of the current focus areas for INMED's deworming program is Brazil, where in some locations more than four out of five children have tested positive for worms. Yet with medicine donated to INMED from Johnson & Johnson and its affiliate, Janssen-Cilag, children can expel the majority of these worms within days. From there, other dramatic differences soon unfold.



Russ Deyo, Vice President of J&J, and other J&J executives, spent time with children in INMED's Healthy Children, Healthy Futures program in Brazil.

Suddenly, children possess a zest for life their parents and

Students: We Want Our Vegetables

California Endowment-funded program brings parents, schools together for healthy food access

Congress, kids do like their vegetables.

As congressional members consider the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act this year, they might want to hear what some 50 grade- and middle-school students in south Los Angeles County told INMED Partnerships for Children.

They want more healthy foods.

The students were part of focus groups at schools in the Compton Unified School District. The focus groups were organized by INMED's Food for Thought program, designed to bring parents and the district together to address obesity among children and ensure access to healthy foods for their students.



Parents of INMED's Food for Thought program listen to a presentation on how to be involved in school board meetings.

"What we learned from the students," said Joey Shanahan, the Food for Thought program manager, "is that they want to see fresh and delicious fruits and vegetables in their schools. Students want to be healthy." The program is funded by a two-year, \$400,000 grant from The California Endowment.

Food for thought, consider:

- All students participating in the focus groups said they enjoy fruits and vegetables and that they want a variety of foods offered to them. They are willing to try new foods.
- At one school, when asked what schools should serve at snack bars, the overwhelming majority said fruit, trail mix and water. Only a handful pointed to chips or other junk foods.
- At another school, about half the students said they bring their own fruit to school with them.

Furthermore, a majority of the students said they either

teachers rarely saw in them. And just as suddenly, for many communities, they understood: Their children weren't under-achievers. They were sick.

This revelation, and the determination to prevent these devastating infections from happening again, opens the door for critical health, education and sanitation measures to combat the spread of intestinal worms and improve the overall health and well-being of the community.

In poor communities throughout Brazil with a high prevalence of intestinal parasites, INMED administers mebendazole, the deworming drug donated by Johnson & Johnson twice annually to children for a period of at least three years. In some communities, more than 80 percent of children are infected when INMED first arrives. That number generally drops to below 30 percent after two years.

The medicine's effectiveness has also helped overcome widespread misinformation about and indifference toward the parasites. Seeing that something could be done about the worms, entire communities have stepped forward to combat what once seemed like a lost cause, from learning how the worms are contracted to developing community programs and school curricula centered on prevention.

"That's when you can really address the underlying causes of a problem," said INMED Brasil's president, Joyce Capelli, "starting with the school children and working outward to involve the entire community to a point where eventually the medicine is no longer needed."

"It really is a transformation." she added.

And one not limited to worms. The success of the deworming program has laid the foundation for INMED to partner with communities to address other issues affecting their children's well-being and long-term opportunities, such as literacy and basic education, violence prevention, hunger and nutrition, and HIV/AIDS prevention.

Working to both treat the problem and address the underlying causes with entire communities, such as Francisco Morato on the outskirts of São Paulo, the intestinal worms that were once a horrific problem are now under control. INMED has since been able to address broader health, hygiene and education issues in the community, with remarkably positive outcomes on all fronts.

"That, of course, is our ultimate goal," INMED President and CEO Linda Pfeiffer affirmed. "We are working ourselves out of a job in Francisco Morato, and that's a good thing. Our goal is to introduce programs that address health, education and safe communities for children and help communities become self-reliant to achieve the lasting change that will benefit today's children and those of the future."

While continuing the work in Brazil, INMED is also focusing on a major deworming campaign in the Amazon region of Peru, where Johnson & Johnson has donated more than 800,000 doses of mebendazole over the last two years.

"The medicine has been such an incredible entry point to introduce other types of long-term change," Pfeiffer said. "It really is working."

always eat food served at their schools for breakfast and lunch or they do so most of the time. Many of those who never eat at school, either breakfast or lunch, reported eating fast foods or nothing at all, although some did say they have vegetables and fruits at home.

The news is encouraging, Shanahan said, as her program and others like it across the country seek to increase the access families have to healthier foods, especially in poorer communities like Compton. For many, school meals are the best option to provide that access because of a lack of merchants offering healthy foods, limited transportation to reach those stores that do and limited income.

Compton is one of the poorer communities in the nation, and advocates such as Shanahan maintain that the obesity problem there (29 percent of kids in the city are obese or overweight) is not a coincidence.

The problem of obesity, she added, is not always a matter of individual choices people make when selecting their diets but rather limited access to healthy options along with other external factors such as access to parks or crime rates that limit children's activity levels.

"We know that many children and their families need greater access to healthy food choices whether at school or elsewhere in the community, and working with school district officials is a significant step forward to achieve that goal," she said.

Although laws at the state and federal level have been passed to address healthy food access, Shanahan said she would like to see more resources provided to local communities to curtail what continues to be a growing national problem.

The federal Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act is one such opportunity to increase healthy food access. Set to expire on Sept. 30, the Act, which established the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program to provide low-income children free or reduced-priced nutritious foods, the aim among advocates now is to seek improvements in the Act, such as investing more dollars in poorer schools unable to currently provide breakfast or by improving the nutrition standards for foods served at school.

The issue becomes all the more acute when considering that more children will become eligible for the program based on income due to the sour economy, and the rising cost of food.

Additionally, although the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch program under the Act are permanently authorized, many other programs such as the Summer Food Service Program and the Special Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children require reauthorization every five years.

Parents, noted Food for Thought Community Organizer Taniesha Roby, see first hand the difference nutritious foods make in their children.

"They know what their children eat corresponds with their behavior at school and at home. They know eating healthier foods means their children will perform better in school," she said. "Healthier kids mean healthier communities. How's that for food for thought?"

Opening Doors for Loudoun County's Homeless

INMED Brings Healthy Futures

Freddie Mac Foundation award to INMED addresses urgent, but often hidden need

They are, in many cases invisible to the greater community. And therein lays the problem when talking about the homeless in Loudoun County, one of the richest communities in the nation, says Maria Elena Vasquez-Alvarez, director of Loudoun Programs with INMED Partnerships for Children.

"It is difficult to put a face on the homeless here. With the economic downturn, the traditional homeless are no longer the only group that needs help. Many times, you don't know who they are, and if you do, you can't find them. But they are here and they need help," said Vasquez-Alvarez.

Who are they: Professionals who lost their jobs, abused women and their children, families bouncing from one relative's home to another, or renting space in homes where they don't know their neighbor in the next room, or sleeping in their cars, or the nearby woods. And, there are of course, families residing in shelters or transitional housing, but the limited number of beds at those facilities hardly reflect the magnitude of the problem.

"The waiting list for those beds is very long," Vasquez-Alvarez said.

However, Vasquez-Alvarez and her Opening Doors team, working closely with the Loudoun County Department of Family Services, Volunteers of America and the Good Shepherd Alliance, hope a new \$100,000 grant from the Freddie Mac Foundation will prove families can achieve independence – with help. Current grants for this program also include funds from the TD Charitable Foundation and the Gannett Foundation.

The grant doubles the amount the foundation awarded to INMED last year to launch Opening Doors, designed to move families from the most severe of circumstances to stability in 2.5 years by focusing one-on-one case management on employment, health, education, childcare, parenting skills, and other factors that contribute to a family's well-being. In all, 120 people will be served under the grant either through case management or assessment and referrals to services that can help them.

"The economic downturn has made it tougher than ever for families, and particularly for homeless families, to achieve financial stability," said Ralph F. Boyd Jr., president and CEO of the Freddie Mac Foundation. "That's why the Freddie Mac Foundation is proud to support programs like Opening Doors that provide transitional housing services to help homeless families in our community achieve financial independence and get back on their feet."

Though early in the program, Vasquez-Alvarez notes that it is already making a difference by helping families stay in transitional housing. The longer families stay in transitional housing, the greater the chances of achieving stability. Many families, however, do not make it that far because of limited funds for case management. The stability of transitional housing, through intensive case management, has helped families achieve major goals such as securing permanent jobs, returning to school and earning a teaching certificate, but most importantly, keeping their children from going into foster care.

"With greater awareness and resources invested in intensive case management, we can be more successful and prove to the Loudoun community that with the right attention and

to Children of South Africa

Monsanto Fund grant to expand nutrition program to all primary schools in Johannesburg township

Although preparing to turn over its nutrition program to nearly a dozen schools in this impoverished township just outside of Johannesburg, where malnutrition plagues thousands of children, INMED's work here is far from done.

In fact, for some schools, thanks to a renewed commitment from the Monsanto Fund, which will extend its support of INMED's programs in South Africa over five years, the work is just beginning.

Since 2006, INMED Partnerships for Children has worked with 11 schools to reduce hunger among 10,600 children by increasing the availability of nutritious produce through school gardens and delivering nutrition education for teachers, school food workers and families of school-age children. Funding for this first phase of the program was \$600,000.



INMED's Healthy Futures program helps ensure children of impoverished communities have access to nutritious foods by establishing school gardens.

While those schools and their community members and local governments are preparing to take ownership of INMED's Healthy Futures South Africa program, a new, two-year \$406,000 grant from the Monsanto Fund will allow INMED to branch out the program to 15 more schools in Orange Farm – these in even more depressed areas of the township – and bring the total number of those reached either directly or indirectly through the entire program to roughly 150,000 people, or 40 percent of the Orange Farm population, including students, their families, teachers and community leaders, businesses and residents. With the expansion, the program will now be in all primary schools in the township.

"The new Monsanto Fund support is critical to our goal of bringing the community together for the sake of their children's future," said Linda Pfeiffer, INMED's president and CEO. "The program is really a system that the community can adopt and even improve upon as needed to make sure their children are healthy and educated so that they, one day, will build upon that system."

"It's happening right before our eyes and it's incredible to witness."

She added that by establishing strong links with local partners through the program, a foundation has been set to maintain the school gardens and nutrition curriculum over the long term. Local governments are among those committed partners, critical for the program's sustainability. The program has also engaged parents to be more active in their schools to ensure healthy foods for their children, such as volunteering to maintain the gardens.

"The Monsanto Fund is pleased to continue supporting the INMED led Healthy Futures program after witnessing the great accomplishments so far amongst school children in

help families can move from a place of hopelessness to one of self-reliance," Vasquez-Alvarez said. "The chance to provide better services to the homeless depends on funding and how many beds there are in the county."

The need for more beds and increased access to services is in direct response to the rise of homelessness in the area.

According to the 2008 Point in Time count in the Washington Metropolitan Region, the number of homeless in Loudoun increased 83 percent between 2005 and 2008. Locally, 71 percent of the homeless are families, and more than half of these families have at least one employed adult, highlighting the lack of affordable housing as a key contributor to homelessness.

More recently, the Loudoun County 2009 PIT count, required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for federal funding, found 152 people were homeless as defined by HUD. That number included 30 families and 61 children. Although that number is down from 170 in the previous year, the county still had the highest increase in the metro D.C. area since 2005.

However, Vasquez-Alvarez maintains the Loudoun County number is low because HUD does not count families "doubling up" in a relative's or friend's home or who are staying in a hotel or motel. The difficulty of locating those who are not staying in shelters or transitional housing also distorts the count's accuracy.

She also noted that numbers are expected to increase as more and more families, through job loss and mortgage foreclosures, find themselves "on the edge," a phrase used by the DFS for those on the brink of homelessness, including those who live paycheck-to-paycheck and have recently missed rent or mortgage payments, had utilities turned off for delinquent accounts, or who face other, similar situations.

"Many more families must surely now find their housing status in the balance. The problem is going to get worse before it gets better. All the more reason an accurate count, and the funding that comes with it, is crucial," Vasquez-Alvarez said, adding that she and others are also working on a program that will help families on the edge avoid becoming homeless.

[Also read related article in The Washington Post...](#)

participating schools at Orange Farm," said Kobus Lindeque, managing director for the Monsanto Fund's South Africa region. "At the Monsanto Fund, our goal is to support communities to improve their health and nutrition, and whenever possible improve their incomes, through productive farming. When communities know more and can grow more, and especially when the major beneficiaries are children, it is a real blessing. This project falls directly in line with Monsanto's commitment to sustainability that is anchored on helping people grow more, conserve more and improve their lives. Monsanto is pleased to continue collaborating with INMED and other local collaborators to spread the benefits of this exciting project to other schools in the Orange Farm community."

Many students, most of them coming from homes mired in poverty, arrive at school hungry. On most days, their only substantial meal is what they receive through a government sponsored school food program that often failed to meet its own nutrition mandates.

As part of the Healthy Futures program, INMED took height and weight measurements late last year of 153 six- and seven-year-olds to determine whether they were at healthy weights, based on Body Mass Index. The results, said Ethel Zulu, director of INMED's South Africa programs, found 14 percent of the children measured were underweight.

Malnutrition, even in mild cases, she added, weakens children's defenses against such preventable and treatable diseases as diarrhea, measles and pneumonia continue to claim one out of every four children under the age of five in South Africa.

There are other ramifications of poor health among children, such as absenteeism and poor school performance. It's little wonder, Zulu said, that unemployment in the region is an "alarming" 70 percent while more than one-third of households survive on no income whatsoever.

"Without health in their lives, children are not going to perform well in school and many won't even finish school. Obviously, the outlook for them to find work is bleak. Our goal is to make sure children are healthy and have a good education so that when they become adults they can contribute to making their communities stronger for their own children," Zulu said.

Healthy Futures, Pfeiffer said, addresses hunger and nutrition by providing fresh fruits and vegetables from school gardens to supplement and increase the nutritional value of school meals. In addition, the schools adopted the program's nutrition curriculum, educators and food workers were trained to maintain the gardens, and community support, such as a local nursery that donates seedlings and worms to the gardens, has enabled the program to flourish.

Pfeiffer observed that many parents sought to become involved in the program, leading to a new component with the second round of funding to train 3,000 families on establishing and maintaining their own household gardens.

By providing fresh fruits and vegetables to supplement and increase the nutritional value of the school meal and by introducing home gardens as a means to improve nutrition and reduce food insecurity while also generating household income, Healthy Futures addresses factors that have a critical impact on the long-term health, nutritional status

and self-sufficiency of local children and families, she added.

"Most importantly, families now see that there are possibilities to transform Orange Farm into greener pastures of hope for their children so that the next generation of children might never know that same poverty except through history," Pfeiffer said.

About The Monsanto Fund:

The Monsanto Fund is the philanthropic arm of the Monsanto Company. Incorporated in 1964, the Fund's primary objective is to improve the lives of people by bridging the gap between their needs and their resources. The Monsanto Fund is focused on grant-making in four main areas: nutritional improvement through agriculture; science education, primarily on professional development for teachers; healthy environment, which includes conservation, protection of biodiversity, clean water and restoration of wildlife habitat; and improving the quality of life in communities where Monsanto employees live and work. Visit the Monsanto Fund at <http://www.monsantofund.org/asp/welcome.asp>.



About INMED Partnerships for Children

Since 1986, INMED Partnerships for Children has worked around the world to prevent irreversible harm to children, whether through disease, neglect or lack of education or opportunity, helping them develop the skills they need to succeed and empowering them and their communities to create hope and opportunity for themselves and generations to come.

For more information or to submit questions and comments, please contact Director of Development Mary-Lynne Lasco at contact@inmed.org.

[Unsubscribe from Mailing List](#)

Copyright © 2009 INMED Partnerships for Children | All Rights Reserved

20110 Ashbrook Place, Suite 260 Ashburn, Virginia 20147

Phone: 703-729-4951 Fax: 703-858-7253 E-mail: contact@inmed.org