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INMED Helps Teen Moms Escape Abuse, Build a Brighter Future

February is National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month

With the stress of the current economic climate, INMED Partnerships for Children is seeing an increase in reports of domestic violence in Compton and south Los Angeles County. In many areas throughout the state, reports of domestic violence have nearly doubled, and teen relationships are not immune from abuse.

Teen dating statistics show that one in three teenagers has experienced violence in a dating relationship. The ramifications of teen dating violence are hard to ignore – the issue affects the teen's education, social life, self esteem, family environment, and community. National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month provides INMED with an opportunity to educate young people about healthy relationships.

Case manager Emily Flores has been a community leader, mentor and teacher to many teen moms and pregnant teens for nearly 11 years through INMED's [MotherNet L.A.](#) perinatal home visitation program. For the last five years, Emily and the MotherNet L.A. program have partnered with the South LA Best Babies Collaborative, a network of local medical and social service providers working to promote healthier pregnancies, birth outcomes and care for women in high-risk communities who previously experienced an adverse birth outcome.

[National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline](#) 1-866-331-9474



In her years with the MotherNet L.A. program, Emily has worked with more than 200 teen moms, nearly half of whom suffer domestic violence, sexual abuse or addiction. Getting calls in the middle of the night or during the weekends, attending court sessions or navigating the Department of Children and Family Services are not uncommon to Emily's life.

The work can take its emotional toll, but Emily says that watching the young mothers secure independence from dangerous relationships or even from public aid is enough incentive to persevere. Most of the teens she works with complete the two-year program, having earned their high school diploma or equivalent, enrolling in college, and avoiding a second pregnancy until they are more secure and ready.

"When I see the outcomes, when I see them doing things on their own without having to have their hands held, when I see them getting involved in college, when I know they are doing what they can to give their children the best life possible, that's my reward," Emily says.

Through her participation in the MotherNet L.A. program, this 19-year-old mom received the guidance and support she needed to graduate from high school after her baby was born.

Now pursuing certification as an ultrasound technician, she is on the path toward a brighter future for herself and her daughter.

Financial dependence is often the final tie that binds a domestic violence victim to her abuser. To help build self sufficiency, stability, and self esteem, INMED recently launched a new initiative: Economic Empowerment

"Our responsibility – as parents, teachers, mentors, and community leaders – is to

Opportunities through Job Skills Training: Creating Alternatives to Violence for At-Risk Women and Youth. Through this project, 20 MotherNet L.A. program participants will receive domestic violence case management services and learn to develop an action plan to resolve their domestic violence situation – including job skills training to help set them on a path to economic independence.

The 10-week job skills training program will focus on traditional job readiness skills such as resume development, interviewing skills, how to use the internet to find a job, and following up after submitting a resume, among many other topics.

Domestic violence is not just a crime, it is a public health crisis that leads to chronic physical and emotional health conditions, disability, lost work time and, all too often, serious injury or even death. With programs such as MotherNet L.A. and the help of generous funders, INMED is able to help stem the tide of domestic violence and help victims become victors.

To learn more about the MotherNet L.A. program, contact senior manager Laura Moller-Leon at lmoller-leon@inmed.org.

Mentors Needed!

An hour a week, a lifetime of strength

Thousands of children in the L.A. area have a parent in prison. Without a positive role model, these youth are more likely than their peers to drop out of school, get involved with gangs or drugs, suffer depression and low self-esteem, or end up in prison themselves.

Spend one hour a week to help a child or teen at risk beat the odds against them and build a brighter future. Visit us at www.inmed.org/mentoring.htm or on [Facebook](#), contact program coordinator Sedreana Saldaña at ssaldana@inmed.org, or download our [mentoring overview](#) to learn more.

guide our young people toward respectful relationships free from harassment and abuse; teach them that it's OK to walk away from a bad situation; and encourage them to speak out when they see a friend in trouble."

– Vice President Joe Biden, in a statement recognizing the observance of National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month



About INMED Partnerships for Children

INMED Partnerships for Children is an international humanitarian development organization. Since 1986, INMED has built alliances with public- and private-sector partners in more than 100 countries to rescue children from the immediate and irreversible harm of disease, hunger, abuse, neglect or violence, and to prepare them to shape a brighter future for themselves and the next generation.

Together with our partners, INMED is transforming the future for hundreds of thousands of children and their family and community members in the U.S., Latin America and the Caribbean, and southern Africa by:

- Securing children's health, development and safety
- Developing skills, knowledge and opportunities for children and youth
- Building family and community capacity to support and sustain positive change

For more information or to submit questions and comments, please contact Joey Shanahan, Senior Manager for Development at Joey.Shanahan@inmed.org.

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