



INMED
Partnerships for Children
Healthy Children, Bright Futures



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Harvesting Hope From a Garden in Brazil

DECEMBER 13

Ashburn, Virginia, December 13, 2008—Through INMED Brasil's Healthy Children, Healthy Futures program, Solange Pires learned the skills to not only keep her family of 11 children from going hungry, but also to help hundreds of other children.

A single mother with children ages 4 to 28, and only a fifth-grade education, Solange, 44, could only piece together odd jobs – selling used clothing or cleaning houses – but it was never enough to feed her children and infant granddaughter every night.

In her hometown in the state of Bahia, one of the poorest areas in Brazil where fresh food is considered a luxury and where the only meal for many children is at school. Nearly 350 children in her town live in poverty.

It was at school in 2006 that her children learned about the Healthy Children, Healthy Futures' gardening and nutrition training program and urged their mother to get involved.

At first reluctant because of the time the program would take from supporting her family, Solange would ultimately realize the benefits of the program. Not only would her own garden be enough to feed her family, she was able to sell the surplus for a steady income that would eventually lift her family to a new standard of living. She also volunteered at the school to maintain its garden.

"With intensive work and dedication, Solange has shown that it is possible to find solutions to overcoming hardship and improving her family's quality of life," said INMED Brasil Executive Director Joyce Capelli. "Her goal now is to share her knowledge to help her community enjoy the same gains she has."

The Healthy Children, Healthy Futures program, implemented in partnership with INMED Brasil and the Monsanto Fund, provides a platform for mobilizing communities to address a wide range of concerns, including family health and hygiene, nutrition, food security, environmental health, reproductive health and education about HIV/AIDS.


To date, the program has reached more than 1 million children, trained more than 15,000 teachers, cafeteria workers and community health workers, and led a process of positive change that has

Embassy of Brazil Polo Cup



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THE LATEST BUZZ

At the Embassy of Brazil Polo Cup in Poolesville, MD. It's a beautiful afternoon to be raising money for the children!

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engaged more than 2.5 million family and community members across Brazil.

Through people such as Solange, the program aims to train people in need who then can teach others similar skills to sustain a way of life so that new generations of children do not have to endure social ills such as hunger.

Solange did not stop with just her own garden. The following year, in 2007, she learned that another Healthy Children, Healthy Futures project school needed a gardener, and she immediately applied for and was offered the position.

This job would be her first formal employment, and each month she receives a package of staple foods such as rice and beans from INMED Brasil.

Soon after, Solange began to work with others in her neighborhood to build more gardens; many other families have started their own as well.

By this time, Solange's reputation as a gardening expert was well known. With the help of her eldest children, she ventured out to expand her professional services.

First, a local family hired her to build a garden for them and now pay her a monthly fee to maintain it. Next, a teacher from her children's school recruited Solange to revitalize an abandoned garden at her home, and she and the teacher split the profits from the produce they harvest.

Solange's tireless work has caught the attention of the municipal government, which plans to hire her to develop gardens in schools that do not yet have one.

"Solange epitomizes exactly what we try to achieve at INMED Partnerships for Children," the international arm of INMED Brasil, Capelli said. "That is, to empower children, their families and their communities with the knowledge and tools needed to sustain a healthy, thriving and safe community for all generations.

About INMED Partnerships for Children - INMED Partnerships for Children (www.inmed.org) is an international non-profit humanitarian development organization dedicated to strengthening the ability of families and communities to support the development of healthy, educated children who have increased opportunities for the future. Since 1986, INMED has built partnerships locally and in more than 100 countries to carry out a wide range of health, nutrition, education, violence prevention and community development projects that create a continuum of care from the prenatal period through adulthood. Its Loudoun County programs have educated and strengthened local families since 1994.

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