



INMED
Partnerships for Children
Healthy Children, Bright Futures



[WHO WE ARE](#) | [WHAT WE DO](#) | [WHERE WE WORK](#) | [PARTNERS](#) | [NEWS & EVENTS](#) | [GET INVOLVED](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

SEARCH THE SITE



TAKE ACTION

[Donate Now](#)

[Get Email Updates](#)

[« INMED Brings Healthy Futures to Children of South Africa | Main | An Open Letter to the President and Congressional Leaders on the Importance of Global Development and Foreign Assistance Reform »](#)

JUNE 15

Opening Doors for Loudoun County's Homeless

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

Ashburn, Virginia (June 15, 2009) — 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.

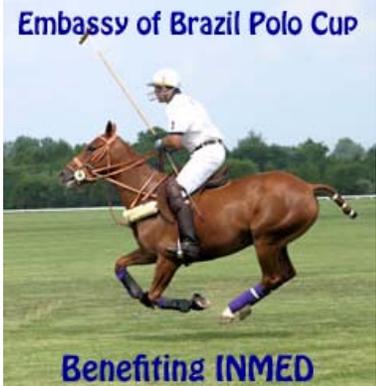
"It is difficult to put a face on the homeless here. With the economic downturn, the traditional homeless are no longer the only group that needs help. Many times, you don't know who they are, and if you do, you can't find them. But they are here and they need help," said Vasquez-Alvarez.

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.



Learn more about ways to make an impact.

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!

@INMEDChildren

"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 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.

CONTACT INFO:

INMED Partnerships for Children
Mary-Lynne Lasco, Director of Development
281-465-4693, or contact@inmed.org

[SHARE ARTICLE](#) | [EMAIL ARTICLE](#)



Confirm 1 0



about a day ago



Follow @INMEDChildren

↓ MORE INFORMATION

↓ FOLLOW INMED



[PRIVACY POLICY](#) | [CONTACT](#)

Copyright © 2011, INMED Partnerships for Children.
All Rights Reserved.

