



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

« [Focusing on Best Babies: INMED LA Case Manager Helps Teen Moms Exceed Expectations](#) | [Main](#) | [Transformations: Clients Overcome Difficult Times; a Void Filled for a Case Manager](#) »

OCTOBER 19

Maternity Waiting Homes - Houses of Hope

INMED helps to open first of six maternity houses for expectant mothers in Peru

Ashburn, Virginia (October 19, 2009) — Although when translated literally, Casa de Espera means “waiting house,” for many pregnant women of Amazon jungle communities the phrase takes on far larger meaning.

Many times between life and death.

“House of hope,” an alternate translation, is perhaps the more appropriate of the two, noted Linda Pfeiffer, president and chief executive officer of INMED Partnerships for Children.

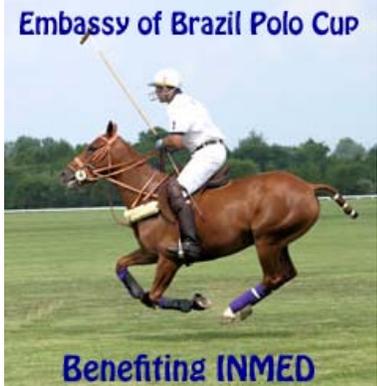
Too many expectant mothers have little to no access to health care. Where health care facilities do exist in the rugged country, they are often too far for women whose only mode of transportation is a boat with a small portable 2-cycle engine on the river, sometimes taking up to 12 hours to reach the closest health care facility.

As part of its Healthy Babies program in Peru, INMED has been working with local municipalities and health ministries to build maternity waiting houses near health facilities throughout the country’s Ucayali Region.

The maternity waiting houses will allow expectant mothers and their families to reside there in the last stages of their pregnancies or during a high-risk pregnancy to ensure they are close to obstetrical care. Residents will also be encouraged to attend education sessions on basic infant care and nutrition.

Although most maternal deaths are preventable, a woman dies in pregnancy or childbirth every minute of every day, resulting in more than 500,000 lives unnecessarily lost every year. The overwhelming majority of these deaths occur in rural regions of low-income countries, including Peru.

“In labor and childbirth, minutes can mean the difference between a bright, healthy future and a future clouded by disability and health complications, or even no future at all,” Pfeiffer said.



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

"Increased access to emergency obstetrical care is a key component of our Healthy Babies program, and the Casas de Espera are instrumental to that goal."

There is no cost to the families to stay in the houses; however, residents will be expected to help with cooking and cleaning. Overall maintenance of the houses will be provided voluntarily by members of the community. Many of these volunteers have previously opened their homes to pregnant women who arrive as strangers but are welcomed as neighbors in need.

The first waiting house is nearing completion at the Monte de los Olivos Health Post/Delivery Center in the Aguaytia district of Ucayali. With contributions from the community, including land and labor, the shell of the outpost has been completed. A recent donation of \$2,000 from the Dominion Woman's Club (see accompanying article) will help finish the building, which Pfeiffer said she hopes will be done by the end of the year.

Ultimately, with INMED's help, the local Ministry of Health plans to construct six houses in the region. Each house can serve between two to six women depending on how many family members are staying with each of them. It is anticipated that each woman would stay an average of one week at the house. Each house costs roughly \$10,000 to build, including donations of land, materials and labor.

Healthy Babies, funded since 2006 by the U.S. Agency for International Development, works with families, community members, government agencies and health care providers to better care for women during pregnancies, including developing birth plans, improving record keeping, and recognizing dangers that might threaten expectant moms and their unborn children.

Other efforts to improve access to health care facilities are ongoing, noted Fernando Perez, INMED's country director for Peru. Plans include establishing an emergency transportation system on the Amazon River, but those discussions are in their infancy.

"There has always been a tremendous sense of community here," Perez said. "We had our own people giving up space in their homes to help these mothers. However, people will now know that this house is a place that indeed does provide hope to women and their families."

Without Hesitation, Virginia Women's Club Fills \$2,000 Need for Maternity House
Initially, the main article that accompanies this one reported that \$2,000 was still needed to complete the first of six maternity waiting houses being built in an Amazon region of Peru.

Nearly as soon as a draft of that article was shared with INMED partner, the Dominion Woman's Club in northern Virginia, the article as it was written became outdated.

Within days of reading the story but not without careful review, club members swiftly approved a gift for the entire amount that will go toward completing the interior of the building, including the installation of a floor, beds and a kitchen area. The entire house is expected to be complete before year's end.

The DWC is a chapter of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, one of the world's largest and oldest nonpartisan, nondenominational, women's volunteer service organizations, founded in 1890 and chartered by the 56th United States Congress in 1901.

"I have to say that reading the article and looking at photos depicting the many challenges that many families endure who will benefit from the houses really caused my eyes to well up," said Nanette McKeel Petrella, DWC's founder and chair of the club's international committee. "Our members are moved to know how special it will be to be a part of these future new babies and their families."

In addition to the construction money, the club will also be donating handmade sweaters and blankets for the newborns.

"Imagine the difference these women are making in these babies' lives—some 3,500 miles away, no



about a day ago



Follow @INMEDChildren

less," INMED President and CEO Linda Pfeiffer said. "Now that truly is moving considering the lives that will be saved as a result."

CONTACT INFO:

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

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



1

0

↓ **MORE INFORMATION**

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

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

↓ **FOLLOW INMED**

