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## Press Release

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### **Mary's Center, a Healthy Families America Site, Accredited for Quality Service by Prevent Child Abuse America**

Leading National Child Abuse Prevention Organization Accredits Healthy Families America site in  
Washington, DC, to Serve Families

**Washington, DC** – Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America) has just announced that Mary's Center, a Healthy Families America (HFA) affiliate, has been accredited as a provider of high quality home visiting services to families who want to improve their child's health, nutrition and developmental outcomes.

HFA is a signature program of PCA America that has been providing home visiting services for more than 20 years. Expectant and new parents have common questions about their child's development. HFA connects with families through community partners like hospitals, health centers, WIC and early childhood programs and helps them find answers to their questions, meeting within the familiarity and convenience of the family's own home. HFA is an accessible, voluntary and well received service.

"Parents want to be good parents; and as parents we all have had many questions when it comes to raising a child," said Jim Hmurovich, President and CEO of PCA America. "HFA's well-trained home visitors are trusted sources in their own communities. They help provide answers to those questions, individualized support when it is needed most, and linkages to other community services. HFA requires community agency involvement and the commitment of community leaders. As we congratulate Mary's Center, we also recognize the state and community leadership that has contributed to success in Washington, DC."

The accreditation process is based on a stringent set of 12 critical elements grounded in more than 30 years of research. The process involves an in-depth examination of the site's operation, as well as, the quality of the visits made by HFA home visitors.

"We commend Mary's Center for opening itself up to such an intensive review process," said Cydney Wessel, National Director of HFA. "We believe that all families and all communities deserve access to quality home visiting services."



The HFA site in Washington, DC is located at 508 Kennedy Street, NW.

“Home visitation has been part of Mary’s Center since our inception in 1988 and this baby has grown up to be a 27 year-old program that has succeeded because of the vision of organizations like Healthy Families America and the commitment of our amazing staff,” said Maria Gomez, Mary’s Center President and CEO. “In 2014, Mary’s Center served 594 families through our Home Visiting programs and I am so grateful to be able to partner with HFA, who understands the impact that home visits make in the life of a family.”

Jacqueline Rawls, a Mary’s Center Home Visiting participant, says the program was a lifeline for her. “The Home Visiting Program has given me the tools and resources I needed to be a better parent; If Mary’s Center was not here, I have no idea where I would be, probably in the street or in a shelter.”

Home visitors in each community receive extensive training in a wide range of areas that can cause stress and worry to just about every new parent: caring for a new baby, ensuring the baby is receiving the necessary nutrition, promoting healthy child development and coping with a myriad of other potential stresses, such as financial, housing, partner relationship, etc., that may become heightened with an addition to the family.

“When parental stress can be managed effectively, children enjoy safer, healthier and more loving experiences, regardless of the parent’s income or standing,” says Hmurovich.

PCA America was established in 1972 with the belief that child abuse and neglect is preventable. The not-for-profit, volunteer-based organization is committed to preventing child abuse in all forms through education, research, public awareness, and public policy development. Today, PCA America has 50 statewide chapters.

PCA America implemented the Healthy Families America (HFA) initiative in 1992 in partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities, building on two decades of research in the field of home visiting. HFA serves families of all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, meeting the needs of close to 600 communities in 40 states, DC, the U.S. Territories and Canada.

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[Healthy Families America](#) is an effective and proven evidence-based home visiting program according the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. PCA America is proud to support HFA and to be part of a national coalition of organizations dedicated to improving the home visiting field.

[Mary’s Center](#), founded in 1988, is a federally qualified health center that provides health care, educational and social services to more than 36,000 individuals from over 100 countries. Using a holistic, multipronged approach, Mary’s Center helps each participant access individualized services that set them on the path toward good health, stable families, and economic independence.