



Maria S. Gomez, R.N., M.P.H.
President and CEO

Maria S. Gomez, President and CEO of Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care, founded the organization to build better futures through health care, education, and social services that embrace our culturally diverse community. Established in 1988 as a clinic to provide prenatal and postpartum care primarily for the Latino women of Ward One, Mary's Center has grown from having an initial budget of \$250,000 to an annual budget of \$14 million. Mary's Center serves individuals and families from across the D.C. metropolitan area, establishing a full complement of programs that focus on holistic family needs. Mary's Center remains undeterred in its efforts to advocate for the area's most resilient, yet vulnerable, families. The Center, under Maria's leadership, continues to expand its efforts by listening to the voices of the community and building services to support our families and their needs. Many of our families are moving to new areas and as a result, additional sites continue to open in areas such as Ward 4 and, most recently, in Montgomery County, Maryland.



Mary's Center saves lives by strengthening communities, one family at a time. Outcomes that reflect the impact of the Center's work include:

- Of infants born to expectant mothers, 97% are born at a healthy birth weight.
- Of girls ages 13-18 in the Teen Program, 96% prevented a first pregnancy.
- Of families receiving home visitation services, 99% did not have a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect.

Ms. Gomez is the recipient of many awards, including the **Jessie Bernard Wise Woman Award** from the *Center for Women Policy Studies*, the **Hispanic Community Leadership Award** from the *Hispanic Employees Association*, and **Washingtonian of the Year** as named by *Washingtonian Magazine*.

On April 2nd, 2009, Maria received the Washington Business Journal **Minority Business Leader Award** for her outstanding performance within the last 18 months.

In 2008, the DC Primary Care Association presented Maria with the **Salmon Award** to recognize her "life spent swimming upstream," and her success in expanding Mary's Center to serve more than 10,000 individuals and families. Also, the Hispanic Democratic Club recognized Maria with the **Poder con Ganas** (Latino Political Empowerment) **Award** for her outstanding health services, initiatives, leadership and long-term support and service to the Latino community, and EOFULA Spanish Senior Center granted Maria the **Abuelitos' Community Service Award** in recognition of 20 years of extraordinary community service to the Hispanic community and her commitment to care for DC Latino Seniors. In 2007, Maria won **The Washington Examiner's Amazing Change** contest for making an amazing change in the community she serves at Mary's Center, and she also received the



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Achievement Recognition Award from the District of Columbia Courts for her vision in the establishment of Mary's Center and her dedication to the immigrant and underserved communities in DC. For her dedication to helping save babies, the *March of Dimes* granted Maria the **You're Our Star Recognition Award** and the **Lifetime Achievement Award** in 2006 for her lifetime commitment and service to the Latino community. In 2005, she received the **Champion of Safe Motherhood Award** from the *White Ribbon Alliance National Workgroup on Safe Motherhood* for her dedication and valuable contributions to ensuring safe motherhood for all women. Also in 2005, Maria was awarded the **Individual Impact Award** for her exceptional leadership, management skills and accomplishments in the improvement of oral health outcomes by the *DC Department of Health* and received the **Honoris Causa Monseñor Romero Award** at the *Annual National Salvadoran Community Awards* for her support and hard work for the Salvadoran community living in the Washington Metropolitan area. In 2002, Maria received the **Champions of Choice Award** from *Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington*. In 2001, Maria received the *DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy's Conversation Changers Award* and was recognized by the *Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)* for her leadership in providing access to care for Latina women and their children. In recognition of her outstanding leadership and team management in 1999, Mary's Center received the **Washington Post Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management**.

Prior to establishing Mary's Center, Maria worked for the DC Department of Health as a public health nurse. She worked with organizations such the Red Cross where she directed community education programming and disaster services, as well as the Visiting Nurses Association. Originally from Colombia, Maria immigrated with her mother at age 13 and attended the DC Public Schools. She and her mother were sponsored to come to the US and came specifically to ensure that Maria had better educational opportunities. During Maria's nursing program and hands-on clinical experience, she was inspired to seek innovative ways to deliver culturally appropriate primary care services and to give back to her community.

Ms. Gomez obtained her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Georgetown University and a Master's in Public Health from the University of California at Berkeley. She currently serves as a board member to the [National Council of la Raza](#), the [Meyer Foundation](#) and the [Nonprofit Roundtable of Greater Washington](#). She and Miachel Rexrode have been married for 19 years and have a 13 year old daughter, Amalia.