

## First Lady Michelle Obama Visits Mary's Center



On February 10th, Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care hosted First Lady Michelle Obama for her first official visit to a nonprofit organization in the District. While there, clients shared their powerful stories with Mrs. Obama. These clients' lives have been transformed by the unique combination of services provided by this federally qualified health center that embraces diverse communities. Mary's Center provides the most vulnerable families in the Washington, DC Metropolitan area with comprehensive health care, family literacy, and a range of social services including home visitation for pregnant women, counseling and mental health services, and early intervention for children with special needs.

"At Mary's Center, we are on the front lines of the most critical issues facing our country today—providing health services to those who otherwise could not get medical care as well as helping those at the bottom of the economic ladder improve their futures and those of their children. It is a privilege to be able to show the First Lady a first-hand view of the transformative work that is possible and happens daily at Mary's Center," said Mary's Center President and CEO Maria Gomez.

The visit began with an overview of Mary's Center and its work. Board members and clients shared their experiences and how the complement of services and caring staff helped them change and improve their lives. A group of toddlers in the Center's family literacy program listened as Mrs. Obama read *Brown Bear Brown Bear what do you see?* Several Mary's Center teen participants spoke with the First Lady and shared their stories and the challenges they face, including escalating gang violence, weak educational and support systems in their schools, growing anti-immigration sentiments, and adjusting to a new language and culture in the United States.

"Community health centers play an important role in providing for the health and well-being of millions of kids and families across the country and Mary's Center has played a particularly important role for Washington's Hispanic community. At a time when so many families are struggling financially, places like Mary's Center end up doing even more, and I'm honored to be here today to learn about this incredible organization that cares for so many of our new neighbors in the DC community," said First Lady Michelle Obama.