



PERSPECTIVES



SPRING 2006

Staff Writer: Lyda Vanegas

From the President/CEO

On behalf of Mary's Center, please accept our gratitude for your contributions to our success in 2005. We wish every one of you the best in this New Year.

Thanks to you, our achievements in 2005 were many. The opening of our new Center at 508 Kennedy Street, N.W., expanded our services to the previously unserved Ward 4. Already, more than 600 new clients have enrolled at Kennedy Street since our opening, and many more are learning of our presence thanks to our strong partnership with DC Chartered Health Plan. We will continue to grow, and are committed to serving everyone in that community with a medical center within walking distance of their homes. Our future success in Ward 4 will be assisted by a planning grant from the DC Primary Care Association's Medical Homes DC project.

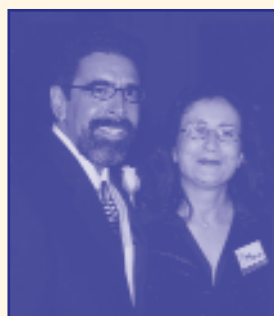
In 2005, Mary's Center began to implement our new growth plan, which was developed over the previous year and made possible through the vision and support of Venture Philanthropy Partners, who helped us make an in-depth examination at all facets of Mary's Center and help us determine where we want to be through 2008 and beyond.

We added a state-of-the-art communications system, so that Mary's Center participants can get in touch with us more efficiently. Our new Open Access scheduling system allows clinical patients to avoid long waits for appointments, and to be seen on the same day that they call, or later in the same week.

We also upgraded our computer system, to improve our ability to collect timely and relevant data, analyze it, and use it to effect and advocate for change. We strengthened our management staff to provide better support throughout the organization, and strengthened our finance office in order to improve recordkeeping, reporting, and billing functions. Most importantly, we increased our medical support staff so that we can expand our services and increase the quality of care.

This year we will continue to implement our growth plan, by building a partnership to bring comprehensive health services into Maryland's Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. The advance work that we have done with Washington Adventist Hospital gives me great hope that we will be able to succeed greatly in Maryland, where communities are in drastic need of our services.

Through this partnership, Mary's Center will bring our midwifery philosophy of care, which supports couples to plan for their families when they are physically, psychologically and financially ready to become parents. The partnership will also bring cultural competency and multilingual capability to Washington Adventist, which is located in the heart of Maryland's immigrant population.



*Guadalupe Pacheco, Chair,
Board of Directors and
Maria Gomez, President & CEO*

We hope to begin a similar partnership in Northern Virginia, and bring needed services to communities that are burdened with severe immigrant controversies – issues that we are hopeful will be ameliorated with the election of Governor Tim Kaine and his administration. We wish to partner with Northern Virginia Community College and the Virginia Department of Health to serve this burgeoning language-minority population.

We are still very optimistic that most Americans have not forgotten their immigrant ancestors and their sacrifices that have made it possible for their successes today. We are hopeful that their power will be used to bring along the next generation of immigrants that will continue to build on the strengths of this nation.

Finally, Mary's Center seeks to partner with three area schools to establish additional school-based health centers. Our model brings comprehensive health services into the community, helping to prevent illness and keep children in school; to identify learning disabilities early and treat them immediately; and to strengthen health promotion curricula aimed at controlling major epidemics such as obesity, malnutrition, and behavioral problems that are best treated by working with families rather than prescribing unnecessary medications. An economic benefit to these centers is that parents are then able to work while their children are treated for health problems at school, without missing classes. We are so grateful to councilmember David Catania, Chair of the Health Committee for his leadership in initiating the revamping of our city's school health program to reflect the services that must be provided to our children if they are truly not going to be left behind.

Made possible only through your stewardship, 2006 will be an exciting year of growth and opportunity. We invite you to continue your involvement with your talent and financial support. You are making a significant difference in your community while investing in the future of America. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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

Guadalupe Pacheco
Chair, Board of Directors

Our Clients *Inspiring Biographies*

Through the stories narrated here, about some of our most inspiring clients, you will see how your support goes a long way. Your contributions to our efforts have a tremendous and positive effect on the lives of others.

Ramatoulaye



Katrina survivor Ramatoulaye Dieng, with Mamadou Diallo, two weeks old.

This happy face belongs to Ramatoulaye Dieng. When this photograph was taken, her face seemed to have lost all the traces of tragedy that she brought with her when she first came to Mary's Center, in October 2005. She was seven months pregnant, but had not received any prenatal care.

"Ramatoulaye had all the

factors to be considered a high risk patient: poor weight, no prenatal care and depression," remembers midwife Niki George, who admitted Ramatoulaye as a late entry patient. Her gaunt face is what Niki remembers the most.

Ramatoulaye is originally from a poor town in Guinea, Africa where basic utilities like water were not accessible to the community. Those poor conditions made her take the decision to come to the United States to live with her brothers in New Orleans where at least she could give her a better life to her baby. But just a few months after their happy reunion, the arrival of Hurricane Katrina shadowed their plans.

Like many New Orleans residents, Ramatoulaye and her family heard the hurricane warnings, but didn't flee the city right away. Their home was destroyed.

Ramatoulaye was lost – in a disaster zone, in a strange country – for three weeks before she was able to evacuate. She was separated from her brothers and still doesn't know if they survived the hurricane.

A friend from her native country who lives in Washington, DC offered Ramatoulaye his home and support, and brought her to Mary's Center for care.

"The day she arrived, Ramatoulaye looked malnourished, confused and very depressed," recalls Astrid Casoni, the Family Support Worker who was the first staff member to help Ramatoulaye.

Although Ramatoulaye speaks only French – and Astrid, who speaks English and Spanish, does not – language was not a barrier to

Ramatoulaye's care. Her health condition required immediate attention and that urgent matter couldn't wait.

"Although we had language barriers, I felt so welcome and warm that day. With the help of an interpreter, Astrid took all the time I needed to talk and explain my condition," says Ramatoulaye.

At her initial visit, Ramatoulaye was checked by midwife Kate Curtis – a fluent French speaker - who spoke with Ramatoulaye in her native language. Kate referred her for a sonogram, while Astrid helped with emergency food and winter clothing.

Ramatoulaye's health, and her spirit, improved rapidly. She soon began gaining weight.

On the first week of December, midwife Niki George – also a fluent French speaker - was expecting Ramatoulaye for her eight-month prenatal checkup. Ramatoulaye arrived for her appointment with a tiny beautiful baby boy! Her son, Mamadou Diallo, was born prematurely on November 23, and weighed just five pounds

Today, Ramatoulaye and Mamadou are in excellent health. Ramatoulaye is still waiting to hear news from her brothers, but now plans to learn English and to start a new life with her baby.

"I am deeply thankful to Mary's Center for all the support, and especially for giving me back the hope that I had lost," expresses Ramatoulaye.

Summit Fund of Washington



On December 16, Joan Parris, Summit Fund of Washington Office Manager (left) and Chantel Shelton, Executive Assistant to the Chairman (right)

visited Mary's Center and presented two of our families with toys, clothes and food to celebrate the holidays. Ramatoulaye and her baby were one of the recipients. Family Support Worker, Astrid Casoni (in the middle with Ramatoulaye) helped make this happen.

Mary's Center acknowledges the generosity of Summit Fund of Washington. Thank you for giving our clients an emotional and happy moment that they certainly have not had for months. We also thank Summit Fund of Washington for its support throughout the year.

Our Staff

What makes Mary's Center Staff so unique?

On October 27, Mark Faloni was at work in his classroom at Bancroft Elementary School. An adult education teacher with Mary's Center's Even Start Program for more than 15 years, Mark has taught English literacy, civics, parenting skills, and employment skills to more than 1,600 adults.

He and his 12 students thought that that Friday was just another day. Mark's coworkers knew better. They knew that sometime that morning, Mark's classroom would be visited by Sharon Darling, the President of the National Center for Family Literacy, who would make an important announcement.

Mark was at the blackboard when his supervisor, Christie McKay, burst into the room. She was followed by Ms. Darling and Ms. Peggy Minnis, the Even Start State Coordinator for DC, along with a photographer and Mark's fellow teachers.



Mark Faloni, as Sharon Darling of the National Center for Family Literacy announces that he is the Teacher of the Year.

Surprised by the visitors, Mark's jaw dropped as Ms. Darling spoke. "Mark, we are proud to announce in front of your students that you are the winner of the Toyota Family Literacy Teacher of the Year Award."

Each year, the National Center for Family Literacy selects an educator who has made a significant impact on the lives of the families. The Toyota Family Literacy Teacher of the Year has demonstrated exemplary personal and program qualifications, including curriculum development, student accomplishments, student retention, special initiatives, teamwork, and collaboration. Mark Faloni has all of these attributes and was selected from hundreds of nominees from across the United States.

Mark began his tenure as an Even Start teacher in 1990, and has shown extreme dedication to his students and his career. His high quality teaching techniques are appreciated by his students.

"He explains in a way that it makes it very easy for us to understand and he makes sure to continue until he is sure that we did learn the lesson," says Martha Hernandez, Mark's student.

By improving their English language skills through Even Start, program participants raise their quality of life in a significant way by getting better jobs, earning their GEDs, and being able to help their children with homework.



Mary's Center English students are privileged to learn from two national Teachers of the Year – Mark Faloni and 2004 winner Lorie Preheim.

Since the inception of the Even Start program at Mary's Center, 3,350 families have successfully completed the program. Currently, the program serves more than 200 families per year and 100 are on a waiting list.



Alvaro Simmons, first COO at Mary's Center

Introducing the new Chief Operating Officer

In order to continue to grow and expand, Mary's Center is enhancing its organizational infrastructure by adding new technologies and new management positions. Much of this progress is made possible through our investor, Venture Philanthropy Partners. A significant step was reached in January when Mary's Center hired its first Chief Operating Officer, Alvaro Simmons.

Mr. Simmons started at Mary's Center on January 23. He will work closely with our President and CEO Maria Gomez to steer the future of the organization. With a Master's degree in Social Work and experience as the COO of a community health center in New Jersey, as a director of health promotion and clinical programs, and as a schoolteacher, Alvaro is a perfect fit for Mary's Center.

"As we look forward to a new year of possibilities, it is with great pride and excitement that I begin as your Chief Operating Officer. I feel very fortunate to have this opportunity to continue my commitment to serve as an advocate on behalf of our clients and communities," said Alvaro on his first day at work.

Program News In Brief

First Anniversary as Federally Qualified Health Center

Mary's Center is celebrating its first anniversary as a Federally Qualified Health Center. This important distinction has given Mary's Center the opportunity to accomplish goals that otherwise would have been nearly impossible to achieve.

One of these was the creation of our new Center, located in Ward 4. Since its opening in July, Mary's Center – Kennedy Street has provided nearly 350 adults, adolescents and children with affordable health care and services in their community, which had remained underserved for years.

The grant also provides funding for training and education, so that our medical providers can keep their skills up to date and focused on the needs of our community.

In the coming year, this status will allow Mary's Center to be covered under the Federal Torts Claims Act and realize a savings of more than \$200,000 per year, previously spent on malpractice insurance, which will be used to expand and improve other programs.

The prestige of being selected as a Federally Qualified Health Center has helped Mary's Center facilitate partnerships with important organizations that will help us to continue to grow and expand to wider areas.

Our commitment is to keep working hard to maintain the good reputation that has allowed Mary's Center to receive this designation, and to ensure the renewal of this status for many more years.

WIC Program DC's test site

Mary's Center's WIC Program was selected by the District WIC Agency as the test site for the voucher automation process.

The purpose of this process is to have nearly 20 WIC sites located across the District, to generate its own food vouchers for clients instead of waiting to receive them from a third-party data collection company.

After several weeks under observation the automation process received its approval from the Department of Agriculture. Once approved, WIC sites at Children's National Medical Center, Howard University and Unity Health Care started this new process, and the rest of the sites were automated by the end of January.

We would like to thank the outstanding work done by the WIC Program team at Mary's Center, who did their best to show excellent results.

PhoneFriend, the youth's line

Steven is eleven years old and lives with his parents in Northeast DC. Because both his mother and father work, most days Steven comes home from school to an empty apartment.

"Usually I would just watch TV after school," Steven says. "Sometimes I would have homework, but my mom and dad couldn't help me with it because they were too tired or didn't always understand it."

Then Steven found out about Mary's Center's PhoneFriend program.

PhoneFriend is a "warmline" available to children and teens on school days from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Our PhoneFriend counselors – volunteers who receive support and training – listen actively and talk with young people about things that concern them. Children call when they have a specific

problem to discuss, or when they simply want to share some news or talk about their day.

Rachel Andre has been volunteering with PhoneFriend since the program came to Mary's Center last year.

"I enjoy volunteering at PhoneFriend," Rachel says. "I get to help children in need and it has given me an opportunity to give back to my community. Also, it has helped me grow as an individual."

PhoneFriend counseling is non-directive, with a focus on helping young callers identify and understand their own feelings. The volunteer counselors are trained to talk with kids and teens about difficult issues such as peer pressure, death and grief, violence, school concerns, crisis situations, loneliness, child abuse, suicidal feelings, and more.

Calls made to PhoneFriend are confidential, except in extreme or emergency circumstances. Counselors strive to help young callers feel confident about taking care of themselves and to support the rules that parents or guardians have established for them.

"I like PhoneFriend," says Steven. "They help with homework and sometimes we talk about other things too."

If you are interested in volunteering, or learning more about PhoneFriend, please call our program manager, Kim Hammett, at 202-420-7142.

PhoneFriend hotline is: 202-232-5815

Thank you for your gifts

We are so grateful for the amazing love and generosity demonstrated by the many organizations and individuals throughout the area who made it possible for hundreds of our families to celebrate the holidays. Thanks to this expression of philanthropy, more than 1,000 children received gifts from Mary's Center during this special season.

Special thanks to the following organizations:

- Holy Trinity Catholic Church
- InterAmerican Development Bank
- Johnson, Basin & Shaw
- LatinVIP.com members
- M & T Bank
- NBC4
- St. Gregory Luxury Hotel and Suites
- St. Margaret's Church
- The Washington Post and its wonderful *Be an Angel* campaign

Our Volunteers

The unconditional support that Mary's Center receives every day from its volunteers is priceless. Without this support many of our good works would not be possible. We are thankful for all the help, the heart and the passion for the service of our clients.

Quilts for our babies

Last November, Prue Hoppin and Ginny Spevak delivered 55 colorful handmade baby quilts to Mary's Center. Each quilt was different, but all were colorful, with beautiful figures and the softness that any mother would want for her baby.

Prue and Ginny are devoted seamstresses who put their talents to use for Mary's Center Educational Baby Showers. These quarterly activities are for our moms-to-be who will deliver within the next three months, or who have recently given birth.

At the Educational Baby Showers the new mothers are guided on topics related to the baby's birth and following steps with important advices on labor, delivery, birth certificate, baby's immunization, baby's first days and future development, breastfeeding, nutrition, etc., and the participants have the opportunity to ask questions that concern them with experts on board to direct them.



Prue Hoppin (middle) and Ginny Spevak (left) give Ilumi Sanchez, Educational Baby Showers Coordinator, 55 colorful quilts which they along with other friends made for the new babies.

The quilts brought by Prue and Ginny, as well as other donations received are given to the mothers as an incentive to attend and a gesture of love and support – perhaps the only gifts they will receive for either themselves or their babies.

Prue and Ginny bring us the results of their weeks of cutting, basting, and sewing a few days before every Educational Baby

Shower. Recently, they recruited additional enthusiastic quilters through the “Quilting for Good” event held by G Street Fabrics in Rockville, and expect to continue to involve the group.

Thanks to Prue and Ginny, G Street and all the fantastic quilters who contributed to an exciting Educational Baby Shower, and thank you to all who help us make this event possible.

Virginia Apodaca: 100% loyal to our mission



Virginia Apodaca has supported Mary's Center since the first day she visited the Center in 1994.

“Love at first sight” is how Virginia Apodaca describes her first visit to Mary's Center in 1994. She had just arrived from San Francisco to work for the Federal Government in DC.

In a new city, with a new job, a new home, and feeling somewhat disoriented, the last thing that Virginia thought of was to join a non-profit Board of Directors. But, when she was invited, Virginia could not resist becoming an important part of Mary's Center.

That first visit marked the beginning of a long commitment from Virginia to Mary's Center and an endless debt of gratitude from Mary's Center to Virginia.

First, Virginia became a member of the Board. Then, she was elected Chair. Her wisdom and leadership was essential to our success as Mary's Center grew rapidly, added new programs, and purchased our Ontario and Kalorama buildings.

After her tenure on the Board came to a close, Virginia remained a constant supporter of Mary's Center. She has represented the real meaning of the words loyalty, dedication, and love for our community.

In January Virginia retired from her position at the Office of Federal Child Support Enforcement. After a two-week adjustment break, Virginia is now working at Mary's Center part-time, as a volunteer in the Development and Communications department.

“Virginia has been doing a terrific job making thank-you phone calls to donors, helping to give tours, and planning our fall workplace giving campaigns. She is a great asset to our Center and a ray of sunshine for us all,” expressed David Bender, Vice President for Development and Communications at Mary's Center.

We are very happy to have Virginia sharing in our day-to-day work, and we look forward to seeing her at Mary's Center for many years.



Mary's Center and Noche Tropical *Acknowledge Your Support*

Mary's Center thanks our Board of Directors, event sponsors, friends and supporters, media partners, sister agencies, and the community for their contributions to the great success of our annual gala, Noche Tropical.

The outstanding response by nearly 40 sponsors and more than 450 guests helped us to raise more than \$125,000, the highest amount ever raised from our fall gala.

These funds will help strengthen Mary's Center's programs, and add services such as our new dental offices that will open shortly at Mary's Center - Kennedy Street.

Save the Date for Noche Tropical

Let us have the pleasure to see you again, or for the first time, at our next Noche Tropical. Save the date for November 11, 2006 and be our special guest.

Noche Tropical is your invitation to a warm night in the fall with a noble cause: medical care for the uninsured; family literacy and job skills education; and social services support for the hardworking immigrant families of the metropolitan Washington area.

Noche Tropical features delicious tapas, fabulous displays of high energy salsa, tango, and flamenco dancing, and an irresistible silent auction. Put it on your calendar and see you in November.

Noche Tropical Sponsors

- DC Chartered Health Plan
- Argy, Wiltse and Robinson, P.C.
- Telemundo
- Adventist HealthCare
- American Institutes for Research
- GEICO
- Kaiser Permanente
- M&T Bank
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- Institute for Latino Studies, University of Notre Dame
- March of Dimes of the National Capital Area
- MedImmune
- National Association of Community Health Centers
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- Akridge
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DC Council Member David Catania received Mary's Center's Commitment to Community Award for his dedication to accountability and better health outcomes in the District. With him, from left to right, are Guadalupe Pacheco, Chair of Mary's Center Board of Directors; Maria Gomez, President and CEO; and Jennifer Femino, Nurse Practitioner at Mary's Center's school-based health center at Brightwood Elementary.



DC Council member Linda Cropp attended our Noche Tropical gala with an interesting message to the attendees.



Emmy-winning ABC News Legal Correspondent Manny Medrano honored Mary's Center by serving as our Master of Ceremonies.



The beautiful Homer Building atrium was thronged with happy people dancing and making new friends.



Three stalwart supporters of Mary's Center. Board Chair Guadalupe Pacheco, through his leadership, guidance, support, and presence at all of our events, shows a firm commitment to our work. Cesar Martinez, the former DC Chartered Health Plan executive who now lives in Florida, couldn't miss the opportunity to show his loyalty and to contribute to our cause. DC Council Member Adrian Fenty supports Mary's Center's mission through his work to strengthen and build the District and the community that we serve.



Our special thanks go out to the Noche Tropical Committee for the significant commitment, time and energy they put into the planning of this wonderful event. The night's success belongs to them. Left to right: Leyda Molina, Robert de León, Elizabeth Almeida, David Bender, Betty Paugh Ortiz, Lyda Vanegas, Priscilla Vasquez, Gabriela Mossi and Guadalupe Pacheco.

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Join the Team of Volunteers at Mary's Center *Help Us Help Parents, Teenagers and Children!*

Do you have the time and commitment to work in conjunction with Mary's Center staff — yet independently — to develop projects that will improve the health and well being of our community? If so, the volunteer possibilities are endless... call our Center Services Coordinator Sonia Umanzor at 202-420-7001.

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Our Mission

The mission of Mary's Center is to build better futures through the delivery of health care, education and social services. We embrace our culturally diverse community and provide the highest quality care regardless of ability to pay.

Established in 1988. A Federally Qualified Health Center since 2005.



Mary's Center for Maternal & Child Care

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