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**THE PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA – NATIONAL CAPITAL CHAPTER SELECTS
MARY'S CENTER AS ITS NEW PRO BONO CLIENT**

PRSA-NCC Pro Bono Committee Offers PR Expertise to Local Nonprofit

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Public Relations Society of America – National Capital Chapter (PRSA-NCC) announced today that it has selected Mary's Center as its new pro bono client until December 2020. PRSA-NCC will offer free communication services, tools and resources, and create a self-sustaining communications strategy for years to come. The announcement was made at PRSA-NCC's "Key to PR Leadership: Hall of Famers Share Guidance on How Giving Back Shaped their Careers" event where past Hall of Fame inductees and PR practitioners shared insights about how success is attributed to the intersection of community service and PR.

Mary's Center was founded in 1988 by president and CEO, Maria Gomez, a former nurse at the District of Columbia's Department of Health, after witnessing a large increase in the number of Latin American immigrants migrating to the U.S., who were escaping war, poverty and death. She and a group of health activists formed the nonprofit with the intent to meet expectant mothers' prenatal needs. Mary's Center started as a small community clinic in a basement that served only 200 women, and it has expanded to a community health center serving more than 50,000 men, women and children. Since its founding, the Center's staff has grown from 10 to 650, with its annual operating budget increasing from \$250,000 to \$59 million.

Mary's Center has evolved into an organization that not only delivers the highest quality of health care, but it also educates and provides workforce development and social services for people who are culturally diverse, uninsured, and underserved, so that people are stable both at home and in the workplace. Mary's Center provides comprehensive services at eight locations in D.C. and Maryland, including two senior wellness centers. In addition, the Center works with academic researchers on examining effective practices to help prepare for future needs of the community.

"We are thrilled to support Mary's Center because its mission is focused on children and families," said Sabrina Kidwai, president of PRSA-NCC. "It is also a critical year for Mary's Center as the organization is celebrating its 30th anniversary, going through a rebranding campaign, expanding its efforts within the Maryland region, and increasing its offerings to the veteran, LGBTQ and HIV communities. We are excited to work with them, so we can increase their visibility within the community and enhance their success."

The D.C. metropolitan area has one of the lowest uninsured rates of 3.9 percent in the United States, but there is a huge disparity between minorities who are uninsured, particularly residents who are black and Latino, and their white counterparts who are uninsured. The number of children who are uninsured under the age of 18 in the District has increased by 2000 since 2016. Although the D.C. metropolitan area has the lowest unemployment of 2.2 percent, the District itself had an unemployment rate of 5.7 percent, the highest among the 22 counties that make up the metropolitan area.

Mary's Center addresses these challenges through services such as prenatal care, family planning, behavioral services, HIV and cancer navigation programs, English and computer literacy programs, social

services, and education programs for adults and children, so that participants are healthier and better equipped to move up the economic ladder.

“We are so honored and excited to be selected as PRSA-NCC’s pro bono client for the next two years,” said Maria Gomez, president and CEO of Mary’s Center. “It will be a privilege to work with many of the top leaders in the PR field in our region and benefit from their expertise. PRSA-NCC’s members excel in professional and ethical communication, and we look forward to learning best practices from them and emulating their high standard of work.”

About PRSA-NCC

The Public Relations Society of America – National Capital Chapter (PRSA-NCC) is the leading source of public relations (PR) events, education and networking in the Washington, D.C. area and represents many of the top PR leaders in the field. It is the essential network for PR practitioners in the Washington, D.C. area. PRSA is the world’s largest organization for public relations professionals with nearly 32,000 professional and student members. PRSA-NCC is the largest and most active PRSA chapter in the nation with more than 1,100 members and 40-plus events each year. For more information, visit www.prsa-ncc.org

About Mary’s Center

Mary’s Center is a Community Health Center that provides a model of care including healthcare, education and social services to nearly 50,000 individuals from 50 countries at eight locations in Washington, D.C. and Maryland. Using a holistic, multi-pronged approach, Mary’s Center helps each participant access individualized services and find the path toward wellness, stable families, educational success and economic opportunities.

Last year, Mary’s Center was awarded the Health Center Quality Leader Award from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The center was recognized as being one of the top health centers in the country by achieving the best overall clinical quality measures among the nearly 1,400 health centers across the entire United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

For more information about Mary’s Center, please contact www.maryscenter.org