

## **MARY'S CENTER, A RENOWNED DC COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION SERVING THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION ADDRESSES CONCERNS OF HYATT HOTEL WORKERS**

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Washington, DC -In response to the work concerns at Hyatt Hotels, Mary's Center pledged not to hold its 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala at the Grand Hyatt hotel in Washington, DC. Mary's Center was scheduled to hold its signature fundraising event at the Grand Hyatt in Washington, DC on October 18, 2013. The event will now take place at the Washington Marriot Wardman Park hotel on the same date.

Mary's Center determined that it would be a direct conflict to hold its most high profile fundraising event at a company under boycott. This is especially problematic given that the Gala's primary purpose is to raise funds to provide health care services to a patient population that overlaps significantly with the worker population at Hyatt hotels.

Mary's Center also noted the negative financial impact that would result if its primary fundraiser took place at a company under a boycott. Many of its invitees and sponsors have already indicated that they will not give funds or participate in an event that takes place at a company under boycott. In addition, there remains a possibility that a labor action could take place at the venue during the event, such as the actions taken by workers during the 2013 Presidential Inauguration in DC. That weekend, Hyatt workers and their supporters distributed over ten thousand flyers in front of several Hyatt hotels in District of Columbia that, like the Grand Hyatt, do not have a contract with workers. The fliers informed people about the boycott, and encouraged them to honor it. Were a similar labor action to occur during Mary's Center fundraiser many, of its guests might refuse to enter the hotel, with disastrous financial results for the organization's bottom line.

"Mary's Center serves many of the "invisible" workers who keep the business of the District and our nation running smoothly, especially workers in the hospitality industry," said Dr. Julie Martínez Ortega, Chair of the Mary's Center Board of Directors and a dental patient of the Center. "By moving the gala, Mary's Center sends a clear message that we care for workers when they are ill and will also support them when they are securing safe working conditions, for themselves and their family. We look forward to patronizing Hyatt once it has worked out the dispute with its employees."

"We salute Mary's Center for taking a stand on this important human rights issue affecting the Latino community," stated Janet Murguía, President and CEO of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR). "This strong statement by Mary's Center, a leading Hispanic-serving nonprofit organization and an NCLR Affiliate, should make Hyatt reconsider its refusal to cease its pattern of abuse and instead take this opportunity to become an industry leader by respecting workers' health and safety."

Over 5,000 individuals and organizations, including NCLR, the NFL Players Association, the National Organization of Women (NOW), Feminist Majority, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Netroots Nation, Interfaith Worker Justice, and the Funders for LGBTQ Issues have joined the boycott.

For more information regarding the boycott, visit [www.HyattHurts.org](http://www.HyattHurts.org). For information on NCLR's position, visit <http://tinyurl.com/c78mcsu>. For media inquiries, please contact Lyda Vanegas, Director of Advocacy and Communications, Mary's Center, at [Ivanegas@maryscenter.org](mailto:Ivanegas@maryscenter.org) or (202) 420-7051.

MARY'S CENTER—founded in 1988, is a Federally Qualified Health Center that provides primary care, family literacy and social services to individuals whose needs too often go unmet by the public and private healthcare systems. The Center offers high-quality, professional care in a safe and trusting environment to residents from the entire DC metropolitan region, including individuals from over 110 countries. With over 400 employees, Mary's Center projects to serve over 70,000 individuals in 2013. The organization has received numerous recognitions and awards, including most recently the U.S. Presidential Citizens Medal Award to its Founder and President, Maria Gomez. For more information, please visit [www.maryscenter.org](http://www.maryscenter.org) or follow along on Facebook and Twitter.

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**CONTACT:**

Lyda Vanegas,  
Director Adv. and Communications  
Maryâ€™s Center  
202-420-7051  
lvnegas@maryscenter.org  
Amy Bruno  
Communications Associate  
Maryâ€™s Center  
202-420-7049  
abruno@maryscenter.org

Julian Teixeira  
Director of Communications  
NCLR  
(202) 776-1812  
jteixeira@nclr.org