

Washingtonian Magazine recognizes Maria Gomez, President and CEO of Mary's Center, as a local hero at the 40th anniversary of the Washingtonian of the Year Awards

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Washington, DC – Maria Gomez, President and CEO of Mary's Center, was recognized today by the Washingtonian magazine as a local hero who continues to do excellent work to make Washington a great place to live and work.

"It is truly an honor to stand among all of the distinguished leaders that have been acknowledged by the Washingtonian over the last 40 years," said Maria Gomez. "I'm committed to continue to serve our community as long as there is need."

Ms. Gomez, having received the *Washingtonian of the Year* award in 1994 for her commitment to supporting the most vulnerable families in the District of Columbia, has grown Mary's Center, the non-profit organization that she founded in 1988, from an initial budget of \$250,000 serving 200 participants a year to an annual budget of \$20 million with more than 24,000 participants. The center has three sites in DC, one in Montgomery County, and will open a new site in Prince George's County on January 31, 2012.

In 2010, the Washingtonian also recognized Ms. Gomez as one of the 45 individuals who have shaped Washington, DC between 1965 and 2010, acknowledging Mary's Center for its role as a "critical piece of the region's healthcare system."

Since Ms. Gomez founded Mary's Center, she has been the recipient of several other awards including the Washington Post's *Excellence in Nonprofit Management Award*, the Washington Business Journal's *Minority Business Leader Award*, the *Washington Area Women's Foundation Leadership Award*, the Washington Examiner's *Amazing Change Award*, the DC Primary Care Association's *Salmon Award*, the National White Ribbon Alliance's *Champion of Safe Motherhood Award*, the Hispanic Democratic Club's *Poder con Ganas* (Latino Political Empowerment) *Award*, the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Families Count Award*, the District of Columbia Courts's *Achievement Recognition Award*, the March of Dimes's *You're Our Star Recognition Award* and *Lifetime Achievement Awards*, the DC Department of Health's *Individual Impact Award*, the DC Action for Children's *Inaugural Diane Bernstein Children's Champion Award*, the National Minority Organ Tissue Transplant Education's *Health Champion Award*, among others.

Mary's Center founded in 1988, is a federally qualified health center that provides health care, family literacy and social services to 24,000 individuals whose needs too often go unmet by the public and private systems. Mary's Center uses a holistic, multipronged approach to help each participant access individualized services that set them on the path toward good health, stable families, and economic independence. 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 90 countries. www.maryscenter.org.

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