

Change comes from the Center



St. Mary's Center
for Women and Children

FAMILY-FOCUSED INVESTMENT

Research is the foundation of the work of St. Mary's Center for Women and Children. Years of study confirm what we have long known: a targeted investment in evidence-based programs addressing the critical needs of parents, youth, and children living in homelessness and poverty can lead to the emotional, educational, and economic stability of families. Each year, with our seven life-changing programs, St. Mary's Center supports more than 600 children, adolescents, and their families through residential, emergency shelter, job and employment training, as well as educational, clinical, and preventive services. We work intensively with young adults and children—both within the Center's community and the community at large—to ensure that those who might otherwise remain trapped in intergenerational poverty have the support needed to help them reach their full potential, through three educational and employment programs and four residential programs.

The Center's mission and programs, which have expanded greatly since our beginning in 1993, reflect a long tradition of service to Boston's most disadvantaged populations. Today, St. Mary's Center is recognized as a pioneer in creating programs that help young parents in crisis begin to create their pathway out of poverty.

"I have a special place in my heart and a special place on the City's agenda for the people St. Mary's serves. At the top of that agenda is putting people back to work. A job is still the greatest equalizer in life...jobs give families stability. Jobs give neighborhoods vitality. Jobs give cities strength."

-Thomas M. Menino, Former Mayor of Boston

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A LEGACY OF CHANGE: HISTORY



St. Mary's Center's outcome-focused services produce results.



Students learn essential academic and business skills at Women@Work Plus and Women's Learning Center's on-site classrooms and technology labs.

The Center's rich history dates back to 1874, when the plight of an abandoned baby left on the doorstep of a Boston church led to the creation of St. Mary's Infant Asylum by the Daughters of Charity. By 1902, St. Mary's Center was providing care to infants and unwed mothers who, at that time, were likely to have been evicted from their homes with nowhere to turn. For a century, St. Mary's Center shared our Dorchester campus with St. Margaret's Hospital for Women. When the hospital closed in 1993, the current St. Mary's Center was established.

Located in Dorchester, one of Boston's most economically deprived and ethnically diverse neighborhoods, St. Mary's Center is rooted in more than 100 years of service to the city.

While Dorchester is a vibrant and growing neighborhood, for many residents the challenges facing the community may seem insurmountable. The highest concentration of homeless families in the City of Boston (47%) is in Dorchester. Ninety percent of these homeless families are headed by women, with 35% who are 24 years of age or younger. And 21% of all Boston residents live below the federal poverty level. Equally troubling, 24% of Dorchester residents 25 years of age or older do not have a high school diploma.

St. Mary's Center for Women and Children successfully serves those impacted by poverty, homelessness, educational deficits, unemployment, abuse, neglect, and community violence. We are dedicated to providing positive learning environments, developmental experiences, and training that build skills and confidence. Through the Center's results-oriented programs, women, teens, and children—hindered by emotional and educational obstacles or at great risk of repeating generational cycles of poverty—take monumental steps to transcend barriers and work toward stable, self-sufficient lives.

During the course of 20 years, the dedicated staff at St. Mary's Center has led the way in serving at-risk populations and responding to their needs. The Center's staff is among the state's most qualified and experienced in the field. Well versed in both the theoretical and clinical aspects of their work, our staff has an unwavering dedication to the Center's vision and mission. Many of our employees are from the communities we serve, creating a diverse and rich culture founded on mutual respect and compassion.

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Our Programs

EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, AND PREVENTION

WOMEN@WORK PLUS is a transitional employment program designed especially for women, mostly single, head-of-household mothers facing multiple barriers to employment and self-sufficiency. The program integrates contextualized classroom instruction and college-level coursework with paid work experiences through Bunker Hill Community College and employer partners in several high-growth industries. At the program's conclusion, participants have increased their workplace skills, earned income, gained vital references, created a network of support, and decreased their reliance on public assistance.

The **WOMEN'S LEARNING CENTER** meets the educational needs and real-life demands of women with low literacy levels and learning disabilities who are or have been homeless, and have had difficulty succeeding in traditional educational programs. The Center provides intensive, multi-level classroom and one-on-one instruction to more than 100 women each year. This program is designed to expand on each student's basic educational skills, help them earn their high school equivalency, prepare them for higher education, and gain the competencies needed to obtain employment. The student-driven program emphasizes individual goals for learning, with each participant developing a personalized education and career plan. The instructional methodologies represent a combination of contextualized learning, direct instruction, interest-based classes, and technology-based learning.

Broadcasting daily on the Web from its studios at St. Mary's Center, **GRLZradio.org** is a first-of-its-kind violence prevention and youth leadership development program. GRLZradio.org provides a nurturing, supportive environment that encourages academic achievement and cultivates essential critical thinking, communication, social, and employment skills by offering a safe forum and a paid position. Training nearly 75 adolescent girls annually in all

aspects of radio production and programming, GRLZradio.org teaches and promotes the importance of a positive self-image, which is vital to all aspects of their lives.

RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS

Each year, **ST. MARY'S HOME** provides a comprehensive array of services to 17 pregnant and parenting teens and their children. These young women, between the ages of 13 and 19, are on their own, struggling to care for themselves and their children. Most are burdened by a history of trauma, domestic violence, homelessness, substance abuse, or neglect. Our staff guides teen mothers through pregnancy and prepares them to raise a healthy child. A skilled and nurturing team of case managers and clinicians works with the teens to help them overcome past experiences and discover their potential for a better life. The teens are encouraged and supported to play a central role in their treatment and are provided with clinical and health care services, group and family therapy, independent living, and parenting education. Additional support helps teens finish high school and explore academic, vocational, and housing options. St. Mary's Home actively engages the teen's family and her child's father in services to ensure that healthy attachment and strong, safe family supports are established.

MARGARET'S HOUSE provides family shelter, a welcoming environment, and the resources needed to create pathways out of poverty for more than 85 homeless women and their children annually. Many of these families, which together may include more than 150 children, have a history of trauma, domestic violence, and substance abuse. Assessing each family individually, in terms of its strengths and needs, Margaret's House offers access to a comprehensive array of services, including maternal-child health and nutrition education as well as parenting, child development, financial literacy, and employment skills training. Housing advocates prepare and support each

family's move to permanent housing and continue to support more than 70 formerly homeless families during a 12-month stabilization period.

BRIDGE HOME is a family-centered emergency diagnostic and residential program for children from birth through 12 years of age, referred as the result of an acute family crisis. This program provides a thorough assessment, medical services, and support, combining specialized diagnostic, behavioral, and crisis stabilization services with compassionate, personalized care. Bridge Home was founded on the belief that children and families in crisis must be actively engaged in the development of a safe family-care plan. While Bridge Home offers families time to heal, parents and children simultaneously begin to develop family routines to ensure a successful transition when their children return to the community. Bridge Home offers access to social, educational, psychological, and medical services that help families cope with trauma and increase their ability to manage the stresses of daily life.

A subsidiary of St. Mary's Center located in East Boston, **CROSSROADS FAMILY CENTER** provides family shelter, case management, housing search, stabilization services, and a food pantry to more than 70 families each year. Crossroads was established in 1985 in response to the well-documented housing crisis that led low-income families into homelessness. For many, personal, social, and economic factors prevent them from moving from poverty to self-reliance. Crossroads' housing advocates prepare each family's move from shelter to permanent housing and support more than 50 formerly homeless families during a 12-month stabilization period.

"I never realized that I could do this. I thought I was 'just a mom,' but St. Mary's helped me realize I was much more than that."

-Elissa Nieves, M@W+ Graduate

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CENTER OF COLLABORATION



St. Mary's Center changes lives one person at a time.



The young women and children who come through our doors have access to life-changing programs and services.

ST. MARY'S CENTER'S 120,000-SQUARE-FOOT CAMPUS is the focal point of expert services, committed partners, and supportive collaborators, all working together to create opportunities for women and children to transform every aspect of their lives. In addition to the Center's seven programs, we have strategically convened a collaborative network of service providers on and outside our campus, to ensure that families living in poverty have easy access to the quality services needed as they create pathways out of poverty.

"St. Mary's Center has helped me in many ways while letting me be myself, including helping me get back on track with my life, becoming more social, to be more open-minded all while learning new skills."

—Martena Woodliff, M@W+ Graduate

KEY COLLABORATORS AND PARTNERS

BOSTON HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS provides on-site clinical and preventive health care to St. Mary's Center families through the services of a nurse practitioner. Health Care for the Homeless is committed to ensuring the highest quality of health care to Boston's homeless adults and families.

BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS has launched St. Mary's Alternative School for pregnant teens, an on-site initiative. Within this secure and supportive environment, students are encouraged to maintain their current grade-level studies and return to schools in their communities after childbirth. A wide range of services is available to these adolescent mothers, including prenatal, life skills, health and HIV/AIDS education, parenting classes, academic and vocational programs, violence prevention training, job placement, peer leadership programs, and career counseling.

BUNKER HILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE provides Women@Work Plus trainees and graduates access to its "Bridge to Community College" program through 16-credit classes that take place on the St. Mary's Center campus. The classes are designed to create academic and employment opportunities for low-skilled adult students by offering career guidance and information technology courses.

HEALTHWORKS COMMUNITY FITNESS manages an on-site, community-based fitness center for residents, students, employees, and neighbors who qualify. It offers free access to cardiovascular and strength training equipment, group exercise classes, and wellness coaching.

HORIZONS FOR HOMELESS CHILDREN operates a Community Children's Center at St. Mary's Center, providing comprehensive, full-time early care and education for homeless children, and support services to their families.

ITALIAN HOME FOR CHILDREN/COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS provides families with on-site access to a full array of therapeutic, stabilization, and mental health services.

PHOENIX FAMILIES provides women overcoming substance abuse, and their children, with a warm and welcoming haven at St. Mary's Center as they transition to safe, sustainable housing and achieve economic independence.

PROJECT HOPE, a multiservice, Dorchester-based agency, collaborates with St. Mary's Center and Small Can Be Big on an innovative pilot program to support vulnerable families and young people through education, training, and employment services.

UPHAMS CORNER RESIDENTIAL and St. Mary's Center have partnered and created 47 units of affordable housing in the Uphams Corner neighborhood of Dorchester for families that are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

EMPLOYER PARTNERS

Critical to the success of St. Mary's Center and our Women@Work Plus program is our collaboration with employer partners. In addition to providing jobs and on-site job coaching, employer partners meet regularly with Women@Work Plus staff to refine job duties, inform the classroom curriculum based on each participant's on-the-job experiences, and discuss individual job performance and skill development goals.

Employer partners are also committed to offering available unsubsidized jobs to qualified Women@Work Plus graduates.

Our current employer partners are:

- ARCHDIOCESE OF BOSTON PASTORAL CENTER
- BETH ISRAEL DEACONESS MEDICAL CENTER
- CARNEY HOSPITAL
- CORCORAN MANAGEMENT COMPANY
- THE DIMOCK CENTER—AFFILIATED WITH BETH ISRAEL DEACONESS MEDICAL CENTER
- STATE STREET CORPORATION
- UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS—BOSTON
- WINNRESIDENTIAL

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

- **Homes for Families "Inspiring Leadership" Award—2011/2012**—Staff and Families of St. Mary's Center *"For outstanding commitment to ending homelessness in Massachusetts."*
- **Root Cause/Social Impact Research endorsement of Women@Work Plus Program—Autumn 2011**
For our unique and innovative program design, our network of employer partners, and the outcomes of Women@Work Plus graduates.
- **Sylvia Simmons Best Practice Award—2011**—GRLZradio.org *For innovation and excellence in addressing the needs of women and girls in the Greater Boston area.*
- **"Be the Change" Award from the MA Conference for Women—2011** *For a nonprofit organization that has had a powerful impact on the community and individual lives by helping women and girls achieve their full potential, and exemplifies compassion and commitment to improving the lives of the people in their communities.*
- **Young Parent Champion Award—2014**—**St. Mary's Home** *Community Health and Health Equity at Brigham and Women's Hospital through the Stronger Generations initiative recognizes an organization advocating for or providing services to pregnant and parenting teens.*



ONE FAMILY
AT A TIME



YES, I WANT TO INVEST IN THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF ST. MARY'S CENTER. PLEASE ACCEPT MY DONATION OF:

\$1,000 \$500 \$200 \$100 other \$ _____

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"At St. Mary's Center the need is great, the results are inspiring, and we are most grateful to all that have been so extraordinarily generous. We believe we have demonstrated that we can make a difference and that the prudent investment of time, talent, money, and love can turn lives around."

-John M. Corcoran, Founding Member of the Board of Trustees

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