

GIVING

STRUCTURE

AND

HOPE

Since its inception in 1985, BHCHP has been guided by a simple but compelling mission – *to assure access to quality health care for all homeless individuals and families in the greater Boston area.*

11,000 homeless children, women and men will be cared for in **2009**. **1,800** admissions each year to Barbara McInnis House, our medical respite care unit. **80+** shelter clinics. **2** hospital based clinics on the campuses of Massachusetts General Hospital and Boston Medical Center. **All** street corners, alleys and bridges of the city.

23 years in the black, developing and implementing practices for Boston's most vulnerable that make BHCHP a national model for compassionate and cost-effective health care... offering healing where it is needed...eliminating thousands of expensive visits to overcrowded emergency rooms...delivering compassionate, professional care from full-time staff that reduces expensive hospital stays...bringing immeasurable savings in both dignity and dollars...**24/7/365**.



BOSTON HEALTH CARE FOR THE HOMELESS PROGRAM

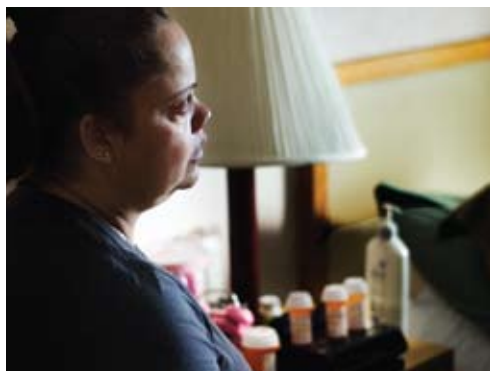
Maria worked 50 hours a week managing a small restaurant. She owned her own home and was “pretty healthy”...until her left arm went numb one morning when she was getting ready for work...then her left leg. When she woke up in the hospital Maria learned she had a stroke that most likely was caused by undiagnosed high blood pressure, complicated by diabetes. She was unable to work. In less than 4 months her house was gone and she and her 13 year old daughter, Alyssa, were living on friends’ couches, well on their way to being homeless.

Since late last summer Maria has lived in a motel room in Cambridge with Alyssa...no oven, no holiday decorations, very little privacy. Maria accompanies Alyssa to and from school every day. There is no quiet place to study.

With determination and therapy Maria is recovering well from the stroke. She walks with a cane and a slight limp.

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In early February, when Toya, a nurse with Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program, makes her weekly rounds at the motel, she finds that Maria’s blood pressure and sugar are up...a serious medical issue when you’ve already had a stroke. A tiny refrigerator and no stove have led to “prepared food” with too much salt and sugar.



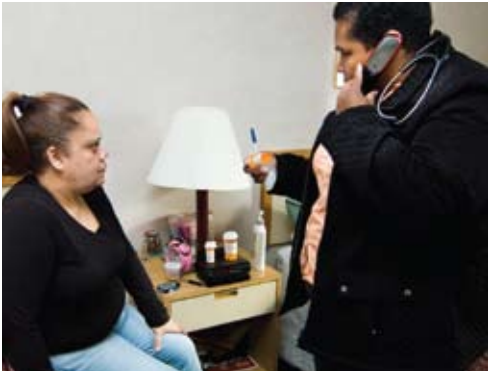
Toya has been a Family Team nurse for a long time. She is clear. She is gentle and disarmingly reassuring when she is being direct. "I don't want you to have another stroke, Maria. I may send you to the hospital to get your blood pressure regulated. We need to get you healthy for this beautiful one," she says, reaching out toward Alyssa who is taking it all in, silently.

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There are tears of fear as Toya calls Maria's primary care physician. A visit is scheduled for later that day when a blood pressure medication is prescribed. The doctor will monitor Maria's condition more closely...under Toya's watchful eye. If the blood pressure stays high, the hospital will follow. It's a hard message to hear but Toya's firm and caring determination give structure and hope to this mother and daughter who have been thrown mercilessly into the chaotic world of homelessness.

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Crisis intervention is one of the many things that Family Team nurses and case managers from Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program are prepared to do well. They establish trust intuitively, identify medical needs quickly and make necessary medical and mental health connections immediately, knowing that they are often a homeless mother's only source of stability. The overreaching goal of BHCHP's Family Team is to help stabilize homeless families, providing mothers and children with the medical and behavioral health support they need to cope with traumatic experiences and to develop as healthy people.



BHCHP needs financial support to continue this work. We need it more than ever in these very difficult months of 2009 as more families go homeless each week...

• **YOUR GIFT OF \$50:**

will supply Charlie Cards for public transportation and taxi vouchers for pediatrician's appointments.

• **YOUR GIFT OF \$100:**

will supply grocery store gift cards to parents in need of food and other essentials to support the wellbeing of their families.

• **YOUR GIFT OF \$500:**

will extend a nurse's hours in the motels helping to care for men, women and children like Maria and Alyssa.

YOUR GIFT, IN ANY AMOUNT, IS IMPORTANT AND VERY MUCH NEEDED. PLEASE HELP.

FACTS ABOUT FAMILY HOMELESSNESS IN BOSTON IN THE EARLY MONTHS OF 2009

- Boston's Annual Homeless Census, taken in December 2008, indicates that families, with young children, are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population.
- The Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) has run out of family-shelter beds and is forced to use motel rooms to house almost 700 families.
- Familiar schools, doctors and hospitals are often left far behind because motel/shelter assignments are dictated by availability.
- Motels are often far removed from basic resources such as grocery stores and public transportation to doctors appointments.
- The impact of homelessness on parents and children can be devastating:
 - » Depression
 - » Anxiety disorders
 - » Physical and emotional abuse
 - » Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
 - » Substance abuse



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