



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Wider Circle Serves 50,000th Client

Silver Spring, Md. – Born out of a desire to end poverty, Dr. Mark Bergel founded A Wider Circle in 2001 with a small group of dedicated volunteers working out of his living room. Over the past nine years, A Wider Circle has grown into a primary source of support for people in need throughout the DC region. This week A Wider Circle provided that support to its 50,000th client!

The growth and impact of A Wider Circle have been made possible by individuals and groups across the region. Brownie troops, alumni groups, neighborhoods, schools, religious groups, and businesses of all sizes have been part of the more than 10,000 volunteers who have served at A Wider Circle. They are children and adults of all ages who are now answering the call to service and making their lives about more than themselves. In the toughest of economic times, A Wider Circle has been able to respond to the staggering number of calls for help because of the dedication and inspiration of these community volunteers.

A Wider Circle serves those in need seven days a week and says “no” to nobody. Through its many collaborative efforts, 24,453 adults and children now sleep in a warm bed instead of on the floor. More than 20,000 individuals can put to use the healthy living skills and information they learned through A Wider Circle’s educational programs. And when it comes to the holidays, through A Wider Circle’s holiday giving program, 5,445 people have received gifts and experienced the joy they deserve.

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The community has brought its energy and passion to join with A Wider Circle to help family after family get out of poverty. Sam Barr is a prime example of this energy. A senior at Bethesda Chevy Chase High School in Bethesda, he began as an intern with A Wider Circle in September of 2009. While the internship is only intended to be ten hours per week, he has been known to volunteer as much as 35 hours per week, when his schedule allows, and has started A Wider Circle club at BCC. “I love the atmosphere and the hard-working nature of the staff,” Barr explains when asked about his dedication.

“It is really amazing that an organization with such a small staff can do so much. This could not work so well without so many volunteers and interns,” shared Liezl Rivadelo, a Northwestern University junior who served as the site leader for their group’s Alternative Spring Break at A Wider Circle. A Wider Circle has hosted college groups from around the country, including Syracuse University, Depaul University, Ithaca College, Auburn University, Madison College, and Northeastern University. These students come for Alternative Spring Breaks, and they work with clients, move furniture – whatever volunteer tasks are required.

To continue to raise community involvement and awareness, A Wider Circle will host the first Student Conference on Ending Poverty on April 24 at American University’s School of International Service. The conference runs from 12:00 – 4:00 p.m., and students (and adults) of all ages will hear from grassroots practitioners and those challenged by poverty. The focus will be on how we can end poverty and make a difference in the lives of those in need all around us.

One by one, A Wider Circle has and continues to leave its mark on the lives of thousands of children and adults. They have made us all 50,000 people closer to ending poverty.

About A Wider Circle: A Wider Circle, www.awidercircle.org, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to helping individuals and families lift themselves out of poverty. Each day A Wider Circle provides basic need items to families transitioning out of shelters or simply living without life’s necessities. They also go into low-income schools and shelters to lead educational workshops on topics ranging from healthy self-esteem and stress management to resume writing and financial planning. A Wider Circle has been named “one of Greater Washington’s finest small charities” by the Catalogue for Philanthropy.

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