



Annual Report

2009

*Stabilizing Families*



Meyer Foundation

# ABOUT THE MEYER FOUNDATION

The Meyer Foundation is a private, independent foundation that supports organizations working to meet local community needs throughout the Washington, DC metropolitan region.

The Foundation identifies and invests in visionary nonprofit leaders working to improve the lives of low-income people, provide hope and opportunity for young people, build community through the arts, and strengthen the region's nonprofit sector.

*The Foundation was founded in 1944 by Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer.*

Photo front cover: Prince George's Child Resource Center.

## 2009 WAS TOUGH ON FAMILIES IN OUR REGION.

But none suffered more than those who have always had a difficult time: low-income families. Many parents in the service industry faced job losses; restaurant business in the DC region, for example, was down as much as 40 percent.

Some could no longer pay for child care. Many found it hard to feed their families. One catastrophe—the loss of a job, the sickness of a child—can topple the house of cards and take a family from “getting by” to a primal state of day-to-day survival.

What families needed was a hand. The ability to dream again. The exhilaration of feeling successful in their lives and confident that they are moving forward.

Community nonprofits provided all of that. Executive directors, their boards, staffs, and volunteers rose to the challenges with humanity and efficiency,

- customizing care for their clients
- meeting them where they were
- establishing clear expectations on both sides
- and treating the whole family with the utmost respect and integrity.

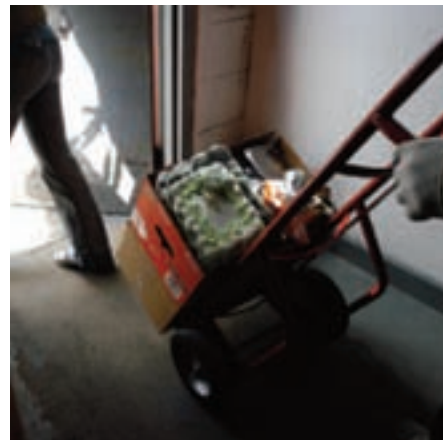
But how do you face mounting need while struggling with the uncertainty of funding and unprecedented state, city, and county budget shortfalls? This is the big question every day for effective organizations like the ones you’ll meet on the following pages: **CentroNía**, **Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services**, and **Prince George’s Child Resource Center**.

Economists estimate that child poverty costs the US

**\$500 billion**

a year in lost productivity in the labor force and spending on health care and the criminal justice system.\*

\*National Center for Children in Poverty







Whole families of children have grown up at CentroNía, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.  
Many children that started with them are now first-generation college students.  
(Pictured above: President and CEO BB Otero, far left, talks with one of CentroNía's families.)

## NONPROFITS RELY ON SUPPORT FROM SEVERAL SOURCES—INCLUDING FUNDERS—TO REMAIN BUOYED DURING ECONOMIC UPS AND DOWNS

For more than 65 years, the Meyer Foundation has been responsive to the needs of its grantees, and 2009 was no exception. We continued our practice of deep listening and remaining flexible to grantee needs. And we provided grantees with an array of services and tools—from our core grantmaking to our capacity-building and cash-flow loans—to stabilize them so they could focus on their mission-critical work. (Learn more about the breadth of the Meyer Foundation's services for grantees on pages 22-24.)

IN 2009, THE MEYER FOUNDATION AWARDED \$6.7 MILLION IN GRANTS TO MORE THAN 200 NONPROFITS. WE COMMUNICATED the impact of the economy on our grantmaking in open letters to the community and in site visits. WE RESPONDED TO THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF OUR GRANTEEES, adjusting our policies and streamlining our processes throughout the year, including expediting grants for organizations facing financial crisis.

WE PROVIDED OUR NEW CONFERENCE SPACE FOR BOARD MEETINGS, STAFF RETREATS, AND CONVENINGS AT NO COST to grantee partners and peer institutions.

WE FUNDED AND RELEASED TWO REPORTS IN HOT TOPIC AREAS OF INTEREST TO THE FIELD: outsourcing back office operations (with the Management Assistance Group) and operating reserves (with the Urban Institute). Both are available through our website.

And, in a year when many nonprofits were advised to think creatively about strategic alliances, it was also a moment for foundations to consider the same. THE MEYER FOUNDATION ENTERED INTO A GRANTMAKING ALLIANCE WITH THE CONSUMER HEALTH FOUNDATION, a trusted and respected regional partner.



CentroNía is a diverse community. Of the children served, approximately

- 60% are Latino
- 35% are African American
- 5% other
- 86% are low-income






The Meyer Foundation has invested nearly \$500,000 in CentroNía since 1992, including grants for general operating support, facilities, program expansion, and management assistance. CentroNía has also received a Meyer cash flow loan to help fund operations while awaiting the receipt of other committed funds.

# CENTRONÍA

It was 1986 when CentroNía began providing child care to 15 young children in a church in DC. There was a huge influx of Central Americans into the Columbia Heights neighborhood at the time.

“I saw an opportunity for moms to come together for their children,” says Beatriz “BB” Otero, President and CEO of CentroNía. That was the beginning of what Otero calls “a community development organization with strong social justice underpinnings.”





According to a 2008 study,

13,196

children were on DC  
child care providers' waiting lists,  
most of them children  
under age three.\*

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Since then, the organization has broadened and deepened the services it offers to include before- and afterschool programs for children ages 5 to 12, youth development programs for teens, counseling and other family support services, training and professional development for child care providers, and a charter school. Its 250 employees serve 1,500 children and families in all eight wards of the District of Columbia and now in Maryland. CentroNía stays open 11 hours a day so parents can continue their education to get higher-wage jobs to support their families.

\* 2008 District of Columbia Child Care Market Rates and Capacity Utilization





Students often come back to visit their preschool teachers. Ricky Green (pictured below) is a favorite. Neighborhoods that have been gentrified often lose their familiar places. “We want to be that place for children,” BB Otero says.

Last year, CentroNía expanded to Langley Park in Montgomery County, Maryland, which is home to thousands of low-income Latino families. The Meyer Foundation helped fund this expansion. CentroNía now provides early childhood education to 65 two-, three- and four-year-old children, afterschool programs for youth, and links for parents to a range of services and programs.

Otero has witnessed three economic downturns that have affected families, the worst being the aftershock of 9/11. “We make sure we stay strong and focused on the work, because this is where families go to get their support,” she says. Yet CentroNía has always remained flexible, “holding on to the core, yet nimble enough to shift to needs of the moment.”

She also keeps childcare affordable, because it is one of the most critical links in the chain that allows parents to be able to work. In this kind of environment, with this kind of philosophy, families thrive.

CENTRONÍA [www.centronia.org](http://www.centronia.org)







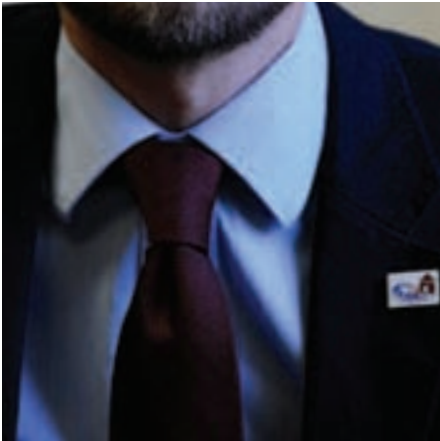
“Thanks to CentroNía, I don’t have to worry myself with looking for someone to take care of my children. They are with me all day and I know they are in good hands.”

CATALINA

CATALINA is a married mother of three children and a kitchen assistant at CentroNía, where she is currently working on attaining a professional early childhood credential. Her children are all part of the CentroNía family; all of them attended CentroNía’s programs and her older son comes back for afterschool tutoring. To earn her early childhood credential she is required to spend a certain number of hours volunteering in a classroom. This makes for a very long day,

but Catalina knows she is working towards a career path that will improve life for her family.

“In 2005, there was a situation with my daughter’s day care. I did not have anyone to take care of her so I was forced to leave my job. Fortunately, that same year, I got a job offer from CentroNía and six months later Kelys, my daughter, received a place in CentroNía’s infants program.”

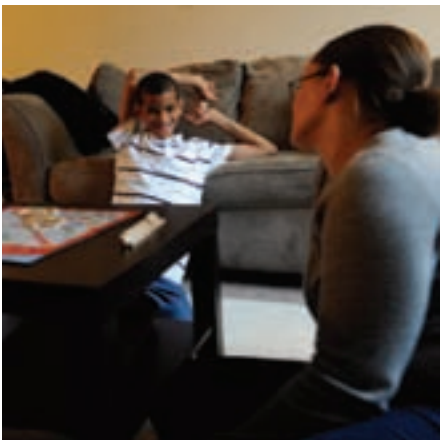


Shannon Steene, Executive Director  
Good Shepherd Housing and Family  
Services

## GOOD SHEPHERD HOUSING AND FAMILY SERVICES,

located in Northern Virginia, understands the plight of the working poor, and how difficult it can be for parents with limited income to make ends meet.

The families that come to Good Shepherd often have jobs, but they may have been evicted or had their utilities shut off. They don't have enough money for a deposit for a new rental and are desperate for infusions of cash to get by.





## “How can we be a catalyst for a brighter future, and then get out of the way?”

SHANNON STEENE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

According to the federal poverty guidelines, the poverty level is

**\$22,050**  
for a family of four.\*

\*National Center for Children in Poverty

“Life is really expensive if you’ve got bad credit,” says Shannon Steene, executive director of Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services. His goal is to help clients get to a place of self-sufficiency and personal responsibility.

The core of Good Shepherd’s work is its Apartments-Budgeting-Counseling (ABC) Program, through which it signs leases and rents apartments to approximately 85 families annually who are unable to rent on their own. The organization manages about 70 housing units and recently began purchasing condos to rent to the families it serves. Last year, 17 families graduated and moved into independent housing.

“When people come to us, they can’t get a mortgage,” Steene says. “When they leave us, they have more independence and choices.” The average length of stay for tenants is 23 months, but it depends on each family’s needs and goals. “We’re not a typical landlord.”

Every client gets a financial education that helps correct their prior bad decision-making. Steene and his staff work with them to improve their credit, gain educational certification, get driver’s licenses, and repay their debt. “We ask, ‘how can we be a catalyst for a brighter future—and then get out of the way?’”

During the past year, Good Shepherd has seen record numbers of requests for all three of its homeless prevention programs. The organization has provided aid to more than 440 households during the first six months of its current budget cycle. It is taking clients longer to get their lives together and leave; there is a waiting list for housing. Good Shepherd’s staff has responded by creating efficiencies to get new people in faster. Steene has been careful about responsible stewardship in the downturn, “not biting off more than we can chew.”

**25%** of the households in the United States reported food hardships in 2009



Meyer first supported Good Shepherd Housing in 1992. A management assistance (MAP) grant in 2000 helped Good Shepherd expand into property ownership, and another MAP grant in 2004 supported the transition to a new executive director.







While the long-term picture is sometimes overwhelming, Steene has had risk management conversations with his board, and is proud of a “real board partnership.” Board retreats have included in-depth discussions on topics like real estate strategy, designed to make everyone understand the context of Good Shepherd’s work as well as the challenges.

In 2008, demand for emergency assistance at Good Shepherd jumped

20%

Federal stimulus dollars will enable Good Shepherd, in conjunction with four other housing nonprofits in Northern Virginia, to begin a Housing Locator Program, to move families from homeless shelters to permanent housing.

**On the following pages you’ll meet Washielar and her family, and will learn how an introduction to Geoffrey Tate, Good Shepherd’s budget and credit counselor, is changing her life.**

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Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services serves the Route 1 Corridor of Fairfax County, Virginia. Although Fairfax County has a relatively low poverty rate and the second highest median household income in the United States, some neighborhoods around Route 1 in southern Fairfax County have experienced economic distress and have a much higher poverty rate than the rest of the county.





WASHIELAR SMILES EASILY NOW, but that hasn't always been the case. A single mom with three children ages 5, 10, and 11, the dental assistant's world turned upside down in 2007 when her youngest child suffered liver failure. Washielar fell behind on bill payments while she was in Richmond caring for her youngest, for the three months that she was seriously ill. Her daughter fully recovered, but her life unravelled with the weight of hospital bills and housing payments. Her family life became a series of stops at short-term housing since she and her boyfriend couldn't apply for a mortgage on their own.

She turned to Good Shepherd Housing, which she knew was in her community. Through the organization she was finally able to provide longer-term housing for her family. The nonprofit helped to minimize stress, helping Washielar get connected to the additional services she needed. Now her children are much happier, and they are benefitting from a stable school environment. Washielar has more opportunity to participate in their classrooms. She takes pride in the changes she sees in herself, but also the changes that her kids see in her. "My kids say, 'Mom is really doing what she needs to do for us.' It really makes me feel good as a mom. Now we can have dinner together...it just feels good."



Washielar and her family no longer have the stress of moving from place to place. "Good Shepherd has given me stability for my kids," she says. "It's up to me to make it work."

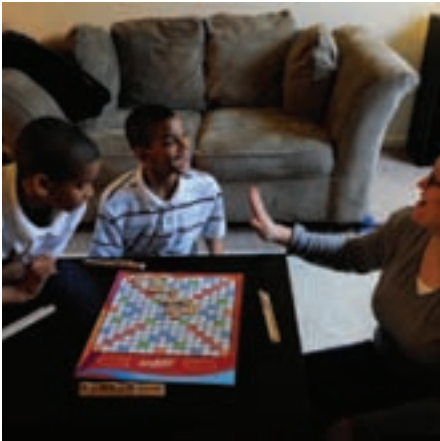






“Good Shepherd is a stepping stone for me. I can make a difference in how my life turns out.”

WASHIELAR



The moment Washielar's life began to turn around was when Good Shepherd connected her to a class on financial literacy and she was introduced to Geoffrey Tate. She smiles broadly when she mentions the name of her mentor, "Mr. Geoffrey Tate." Through the classes, Washielar learned how to read a credit report, discovered the rights she had as a consumer with her creditors, and developed short and long-term financial goals. She also made some friends in the small classes, where people learned to talk about their issues and came to understand that they were not alone.

After the class ended, Tate and Washielar began one-on-one classes to create a plan for improving her credit. She learned that she could plan for her future even as she was bringing down her debt. That realization was a light bulb moment, and brought her a sense of hope for a fresh start for her family. She could now finally begin to ask the question, "Where do I want to be?"

"I'm accepting my issues and not running away from them," Washielar says confidently. "It's up to me to make it work. Good Shepherd is a stepping stone for me. I can make a difference in how my life turns out."

GOOD SHEPHERD HOUSING AND FAMILY SERVICES

[www.goodhousing.org](http://www.goodhousing.org)





69%

of Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services clients have incomes under \$30,800 for a family of four.





“This fiscal year, we’re smaller than last year. We’ve had to shorten staff hours in some cases, we’ve had to lay off some people. We look around and say, ‘what can we give up?’”

MARTI WORSHTIL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PRINCE GEORGE’S CHILD RESOURCE CENTER





According to census data,  
in many low-income working families,  
child care absorbs nearly

**1/3** OF TOTAL  
HOUSEHOLD  
BUDGET

# PRINCE GEORGE'S CHILD RESOURCE CENTER

(PGCRC) in Prince George's County, Maryland, offers English language education programs and provides child care referrals and support programs for families who need help. Many clients are recent immigrants from Spanish-speaking households, but there is also a growing African community. In addition, PGCRC teaches caregivers in the county how to provide better care and extend a helping hand to families who want a healthy and nurturing environment for their children. "Every family has a strength, and it's up to us to build on the strength of that family," says Center executive director Marti Worshtil.

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At PGCRC's Adelphi/Langley Park Family Support Center, where many of the nonprofit's English language programs are held, programs range from home visits with pregnant teens to English language classes, to health and wellness workshops. On any given day, one might find a group of mothers and toddlers heading out for a field trip to a local library, learning English nursery rhymes, or taking a class on car seat safety.

The staff works to set goals with new participants, asking them why they are there and helping them set goals: one for the parent, one for the child, and one for the family. Then they create steps to achieve the goals. The goals are reviewed regularly to make sure families stay on track.

PGCRC has seen troubling signs that these families are struggling even more in this economy. More families are doubling up in already-crowded apartments; many renting just part of a living room and putting up blankets to mark off space. There are more foreclosure-related evictions of families living in rental housing. Most troubling is that more young girls—often as young as 13 or 14 years old—are becoming mothers by much older men. And they are seeing more drug-exposed babies born.

The biggest challenges are the year-to-year program funding and getting paid on time from public agencies. "This fiscal year, we're smaller than last year. We've had to shorten staff hours in some cases; we've had to lay off some people. We look around and say, 'what can we give up?'"



of parents who participate in the Family Literacy Program improve their language and literacy skills.

## PRINCE GEORGE'S CHILD RESOURCE CENTER

[www.childresource.org](http://www.childresource.org)



Meyer began supporting the Prince George's Child Resource Center's family literacy program in 2003, and has provided general operating support since 2007. Management assistance grants have supported fundraising planning in 2006 and a financial systems review in 2007 and 2008.





Angelica, a mother of three, has been involved with PGCRC for three years and her whole family has benefitted from the support. She's watched her shy three-year-old son Danny blossom into an animated child who requests to be read to nightly. She attends regular workshops on subjects like parenting teens and family nutrition and is now carefully reading food labels and has enforced a "no soda" rule in the house. Class field trips with Danny have opened up a new world of possibility to her; she often returns to visit places a second time with her older children.



## CASE STUDY: MEYER MAP GRANTS TAKE STRONG ORGANIZATIONS TO THE NEXT LEVEL

All three nonprofits featured in our 2009 report have benefited from the Meyer Foundation's Management Assistance Program. Prince George's Child Resource Center's Marti Worshtil has been one of the strongest supporters of MAP. She credits her MAP funding for making transformational change in her organization.

Meyer's Management Assistance Program gives nonprofit leaders the tools to increase their successes and take their organizations to the next level. MAP grants of up to \$25,000 help grantees strengthen their management and leadership so they can serve the community more effectively.

Pictured from top: Beatriz (BB) Otero, President and CEO, CentroNía; Shannon Steene, Executive Director, Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services; Marti Worshtil, Executive Director, Prince George's Child Resource Center.

**“This MAP award may be the most valuable grant the Resource Center has ever received.”**

MARTI WORSHTIL



## MARTI WORSHTIL TAKES PGCRC TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITH MEYER MAP GRANT

The Prince George's Child Resource Center (PGCRC) looked like a strong organization in early 2006, and in many ways, it was. The group had twice received a coveted Standards for Excellence accreditation by the Maryland Association of Nonprofits and provided childcare, education, job training, health education, and other services to more than 18,000 people a year.

Yet the group's success belied some struggles with finances and program stability. With almost no individual donations and no fundraising professional on staff, PGCRC relied heavily on one-year grants. Executive director Marti Worshtil knew that the lack of diversity of funding sources was holding her organization back from even greater success.

What she needed was an expert consultant who could train the center's staff and board in how to become effective fundraisers. So Worshtil turned to the Meyer Foundation's Management Assistance Program (MAP), one of the only programs of its kind in the Washington region. Created in 1994, MAP grants are designed to fund hiring a consultant to help a nonprofit in one of three areas:

- Strengthening executive and board leadership
- Undertaking planning and assessment
- Improving financial management and planning

Applying for a MAP grant requires planning even before writing a detailed proposal. Board and staff must agree that assistance is needed and should be able to clearly articulate specific ways in which a consultant would strengthen the organization. It is also up to the grantee, not Meyer, to choose a consultant they feel comfortable working with. Worshtil interviewed several candidates before hiring a

fundraising expert who, for 10 months, coached Worshtil and her staff, training them on fundraising software, and suggesting new ways of doing things.

At one point, the consultant suggested that Worshtil call every large donor to thank them over the phone. Worshtil, who had never considered that possibility and worried that it would take too much time, tried it. The connection to donors and the feedback she received made it one of the favorite parts of her job.

An executive director who applies for a MAP grant has to be willing to accept such suggestions, and the staff must be prepared for hard work. At PGCRC, two staff members accepted new fundraising positions, the staff redesigned the website and retooled messages, board members made financial pledges and became actively involved in fundraising, and staff members identified new sources of donations and grants and recruited over 120 new donors. The grant even helped Worshtil identify the need for a financial management system overhaul, which paved the way for another MAP grant.

Worshtil says that the MAP grant “may be the most valuable grant they have ever received” and that the organization is now “light years ahead” of where it was four years ago.

“If you truly know your organization, you know where you need to improve, and where you think you might have the greatest potential for success but just don't know how to get there,” Worshtil says. “If the only thing holding an executive director back is the lack of expertise, then that is where the Meyer MAP grants will help.”

Since 1995, Meyer has made

**483** MAP GRANTS

totalling more than \$5.3 million.



# HOW WE WORK

Grantmaking is the core of the Meyer Foundation's work. Yet Meyer engages in significant work beyond grantmaking, to support nonprofit leaders, to serve as a catalyst for them to secure other funding, to identify and illuminate important community issues, and to improve the quality of life for the Greater Washington, DC community.

## COLLABORATING

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Meyer staff **PARTICIPATE IN THE LARGER COMMUNITY** by serving on many boards, committees, and working groups.

## CONNECTING

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**WE CONNECT DONORS WITH GRANTEES** that meet their interests. We serve as matchmakers for grantees that share common interests and goals.

## SUPPORTING

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**THE EXPONENT AWARDS SUSTAIN** and raise the visibility of visionary nonprofit leaders.

## ANALYZING

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**OUR RESEARCH REPORTS** have garnered national attention and have **SPARKED DIALOGUE** on nonprofit leadership issues.

## LISTENING

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**OUR PROGRAM OFFICERS LISTEN DEEPLY** to community needs and **DEVELOP STRONG RELATIONSHIPS** with grantees.

## ADVOCATING

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We are committed to **RAISING THE VOICE AND VISIBILITY OF THE NONPROFIT SECTOR.**

## COMMUNICATING

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We provide timely information and resources through our website and e-newsletters. We **RAISE THE VISIBILITY** of some of our most effective grantees.

## LEVERAGING

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**WE LEVERAGE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS** of local and national funding for our grantees.

## ADVISING

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**PROGRAM OFFICERS SERVE AS SOUNDING BOARDS** for ideas, offer program strategy, management, and leadership tips.

The Meyer Foundation received a rare "triple crown" from the Center for Effective Philanthropy's Grantee Perception Report®, which provides comparative candid feedback on grantee perceptions. Meyer scored very high rankings in the most important measures of foundation effectiveness: **IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY, IMPACT ON GRANTEES' FIELDS, and CREATING SOCIAL IMPACT.**

## MEYER FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS



TOP ROW:

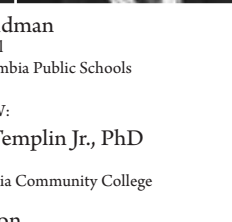
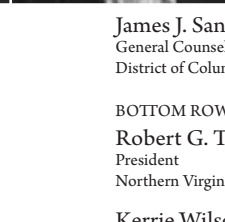
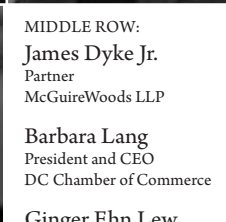
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THANK YOU

We are deeply grateful to **Dr. Ed Bersoff** for his wise and strategic leadership as Meyer Board Chairman (2006 – February 2010) and his exemplary service as Investment Committee Chair (2002 – 2006) and Meyer director for 12 years.

## MEYER FOUNDATION STAFF



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We know that experts say that poverty will be even worse in 2010,  
which will continue to have a significant impact on families.  
Giving generously to the nonprofits that support low-income people  
will go a long way toward ensuring the stability of our communities.

To learn more about or to support the three organizations  
featured in this report and the other carefully vetted grantees we fund,  
visit [www.meyerfoundation.org](http://www.meyerfoundation.org)

## CENTRONÍA

[www.centronia.org](http://www.centronia.org)



## GOOD SHEPHERD HOUSING AND FAMILY SERVICES

[www.goodhousing.org](http://www.goodhousing.org)



## PRINCE GEORGE'S CHILD RESOURCE CENTER

[www.childresource.org](http://www.childresource.org)



Photo facing page: Prince George's Child Resource Center.



To learn about the carefully vetted grantees that we fund, use our searchable database at

[www.meyerfoundation.org](http://www.meyerfoundation.org)



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