

ATTENTION: PHOTOGRAPHERS/ REPORTERS



Bright Beginnings' Annual 5K Race brings much-needed visibility to homeless families with young children in Washington, DC

WASHINGTON, DC, (May 10, 2011): Bright Beginnings, Inc., a child and family development center for homeless families with young children, will raise awareness about the needs and challenges facing homeless children and their families through our Annual 5K Race, sponsored by long-time, foundation partner, the Junior League of Washington. Nearly 300 supporters, teachers, parents and staff are already registered for the race, which has become an annual spring time tradition during the last 15 years.

All proceeds from the race will provide key education, therapeutic and family services that prepare homeless infants, toddlers and preschoolers for kindergarten and provide supportive family services that help their parents secure housing, gain employment, complete their education and regain independence.

"Homeless families and their young children are the most vulnerable to the economic downturn," said Dr. Betty Jo Gaines, Executive Director of Bright Beginnings. "The Junior League of Washington had a great vision 20 years ago when they started Bright Beginnings and still have that vision today as they go above and beyond to meet the needs of our special children and their families."

In the District of Columbia, approximately 16,000 people are homeless each year*, over 23% are people in families, and of that number a staggering 42% are children under five years old.** Bright Beginnings helps to address the needs of homeless families with young children with a holistic program that incorporates educational and therapeutic support for young children that prepares them for kindergarten and intensive parent services that stabilize their families.

*Source: *The Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless and the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness* (November 10, 2010)

**Source: *The National Coalition for the Homeless* (July 2009)

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