



Bright ENDEAVORS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Organization Announces New
Residential Construction Project:

MOVING TOGETHER, NEW MOMS AND BRIGHT ENDEAVORS HELP YOUNG WOMEN SHINE

(April 29, 2010) Chicago, IL – At this evening’s Greenlight Gathering fundraising event, **Bright Endeavors** announces the **merging** of their “green” social enterprise operation with **New Moms, Inc.**, a supportive housing program for youth since 1983. **Both organizations work diligently to break the cycle of poverty for young women and their children.** As Bright Endeavors and New Moms, Inc. join forces, more young women and their children will have a positive, safe environment to grow and prosper. Through their “New Moms Transformation Project,” the newly expanded **organization will construct a new building on city-donated land located at 5327 W. Chicago Avenue within Austin’s 37th Ward community area, and slated for completion in August 2011.**

Construction of the \$10.7 million, 50,230 sq. ft. building, which stands on nine city lots, will mark the opening of the Chicago’s largest supportive housing center for young homeless women and their children. The building will be comprised of 30 studios, 10 one-bedroom units, program offices and a day care center. The facility will also include a community room, supportive service programs, administrative offices and a training space. This new development will be seeking LEED Silver certification, which focuses on increasing the efficiency of resource use.

NEW MOMS AND BRIGHT ENDEAVORS/Add One

The “New Moms Transformation Project” meets an urgent community need for permanent supportive housing for homeless teenage mothers with children, a critical component in Mayor Daley's 10-year plan to end homelessness. According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, there are between 1,200 and 1,700 births per year in New Moms targeted communities — Humboldt Park, Austin, Logan Square and West Town —with an overwhelming 84% of these births to unwed teens. According to 37th Ward Ald. Emma Mitts, “This project is a tremendous opportunity to serve those in the community. Homeless teenagers are a major societal problem, and with New Moms, Inc. and Bright Endeavors coming together as one voice to support teenage mothers, it is a truly momentous undertaking to meet the needs of this population.”

The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless reports that in 2004, there were nearly 16,500 homeless female youth in Illinois aged 12 to 21 — 68% of whom were pregnant. Yet in 2005, there were only 212 shelter beds in the entire state for homeless youth with children — meeting only 1.8% of the overall need. New Moms is the only Chicago agency exclusively serving pregnant and parenting teens, and one of only two homeless agencies serving this population, representing 70% of beds in the City of Chicago. “We are hopeful of doubling our housing capacity as well as doubling the number of participants we serve in our community outreach,” says President and CEO of New Moms, Inc. Audalee McLoughlin, in announcing the organization’s plans to construct the four-story building.

Through the coming together of New Moms and Bright Endeavors, Audalee emphasizes, “The social enterprise element is an important link to New Moms and has always been a part of our strategic plan and vision.” While New Moms focuses on a more holistic approach providing services and mentoring to at-risk young parents and their children, Bright Endeavors delivers the needed support to help young mothers become more successful in the workplace by providing practical work opportunities. “We plan to offer transitional jobs to 40 young women as well as provide on-the-job training in sales, manufacturing and customer service,” explains Bright Endeavors co-Founder Stephanie Wernet. She adds, “We particularly want to strengthen our relationships with employment partners that offer quality jobs with benefits.” Currently, Bright Endeavors has an extensive line of eco-friendly candles manufactured locally and available at select retail locations throughout the country as well as via the Internet.

NEW MOMS AND BRIGHT ENDEAVORS/Add Two

“Often, the voids present in the lives of our young women that prevent them from breaking out of the cycle of poverty are housing, education and healthy support systems,” says Stephanie. Together, New Moms, Inc. and Bright Endeavors will help fill all of those voids, making each young woman's chance of leaving poverty more achievable.

This year alone, both organizations look to serve 350 homeless young women and children, providing 27,375 nights of supportive housing, creating 114,600 hours of comprehensive on the job training and internships and celebrating 186 participants that successfully complete a High School education. “We look to the day when we live in a world where there is not a group of marginalized and poverty-stricken women,” says Audalee.

Future plans call for them, collectively, to replicate their programs nationally and expand service to teenage fathers as well. There are also preliminary plans to launch a “green” initiative to their line of products to include an eco-friendly soap line as well as recycled glass as a new enterprise created to target young men.

Both New Moms, Inc. and Bright Endeavors take tremendous pride in the ambition and willpower these young mothers have for their children and for themselves. “Seeing how these teenage mothers, who have come from abused and exploited backgrounds, can show immense hope and to watch them take the little steps to change their lives and their children’s lives is truly rewarding,” expresses Audalee. And Stephanie adds, “Watching a young mom grow, begin to gain confidence and become proud of her accomplishments is the greatest life experience. It is when these women ask for more out of life and do the real work to get there that exemplifies all the work we’ve accomplished as an organization.”

The hard work and determination that both organizations carry is remarkable, and their compassion undeniably shines through the young women they serve.

About New Moms, Inc.

Founded in 1983 on the northwest side of Chicago, New Moms is a non-profit organization with a mission and purpose to: enable, empower, and equip homeless and near-homeless teenage mothers and their children. New Moms annually serves more than 300 teenage parents and children. Programs include: individualized case management and mentoring; advocacy for mainstream resources; and crisis intervention, transitional shelter for teen moms (18-21) and their children, parent support groups, intensive home-based parent education and developmental screening for children.

About Bright Endeavors

Bright Endeavors is a nonprofit social enterprise committed to helping inner city, homeless and at-risk young women, between the ages of 16 - 25, gain the necessary skills to become self-sufficient, successful adults. Utilizing innovative business enterprise principles, Bright Endeavors assists young women to make positive life changes.

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*For more information on New Moms and/or Bright Endeavors,
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