



New Mexico Coalition to
End Homelessness



THE NATIONAL CENTER ON
Family Homelessness
for every child, a chance

PRESS RELEASE

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New Mexico Launches Campaign to End Child Homelessness at 2010 Summit Not One Child, Not One Night, Not New Mexico

Albuquerque, N.M. (March 26, 2010): On Friday, March 26, service providers for the homeless, children's advocates and officials from across New Mexico gathered to launch the New Mexico Campaign to End Child Homelessness. The goal of the New Mexico Campaign is to ensure that not one child is homeless for even one night. The Campaign will address child homelessness in New Mexico by increasing public awareness of the problem, strengthening state policies and plans to address the problem, and identifying and sharing solutions to the problem. Approximately 9,000 children in New Mexico are homeless each year. The constant barrage of stressful and traumatic experiences has profound effects on their development and ability to learn, ultimately affecting their success in life.

"The launch of the Campaign to End Child Homelessness is a critical step in New Mexico," said Dr. Jaime Tamez, Executive Director of Cuidando los Niños. "If we truly believe that children are our hope for the future, and if we are truly sincere when we say that children are a priority in New Mexico, then we must end child homelessness in our state. I am extremely inspired by the commitment of Summit participants from throughout our state to the goals of ending child homelessness. I witnessed their energy, creativity and dedication, and I firmly believe that by working together we can end child homelessness in New Mexico."

Dr. Tamez unveiled the official New Mexico Campaign Declaration of Commitment, signed by many individuals and organizations that are committed to ending child homelessness in New Mexico. The Declaration will be displayed in the New Mexico State Capitol following the Summit.

"Homelessness exists because of choices we make as a community – whether with intent or by default," said Jennifer Metzler, Executive Director of Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless. "Of course no child should experience homelessness. However, we create that reality through our collective choices. We know how to end child homelessness. We can end it, and that is why this Campaign is so crucial. It establishes the commitment and brings us together to make it happen."

The New Mexico Campaign to End Child Homelessness launched during the 2010 Summit to End Child Homelessness on March 25 and 26 and was the result of several months of planning and organizing by a partnership of local and national organizations. The Summit marked the first time

community leaders and advocates statewide have gathered to specifically address the issues facing New Mexico's most vulnerable population—homeless children.

"When children are homeless, even for a short while, it disrupts their lives in ways that they may never fully recover from," said Hank Hughes, Executive Director of the New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness. "Consider all the suffering that could be prevented by ending child homelessness. Consider all the opportunities that homeless children could gain with housing. The benefits to society far outweigh the costs of giving all children stable housing."

Secretary Dorian Dodson of the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department delivered the keynote speech on March 26. The New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department was the title sponsor for the Summit. The Summit featured speakers from the national and state level, as well as panel discussions with families who are formerly or currently experiencing homelessness.

"The National Center on Family Homelessness is pleased to join with our partners and friends launch the New Mexico Campaign to End Child Homelessness," said Christina Jordan, Director of the national Campaign to End Child Homelessness, an initiative of The National Center on Family Homelessness. "Together we can make a difference in the lives of children and families who are homeless and at-risk of homelessness here in New Mexico and ensure that not one child is homeless for even one night."

In a recent show of support for the New Mexico Campaign, the New Mexico House of Representatives unanimously passed House Memorial 7 sponsored by Representative William O'Neill. The bill directs the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department to report on child homelessness in New Mexico and make legislative recommendations to the Interim Health and Human Services Committee by November 2010. Moving forward, the New Mexico Campaign will work with the Children, Youth and Families Department and will continue to collaborate with partners across the state to end child homelessness.

Homeless Children in New Mexico

According to *America's Youngest Outcasts: State Report Card on Child Homelessness*, there are almost 9,000 homeless children each year in New Mexico. When homeless, children experience high rates of acute and chronic health problems. Children experiencing homelessness are sick four times more often than other children. They go hungry at twice the rate of other children and have three times the rate of emotional and behavioral problems. Children who are homeless struggle in school, with an average 16% lower proficiency in math and reading. For more information, please visit www.familyhomelessness.org and www.HomelessChildrenAmerica.org.

New Mexico Campaign to End Child Homelessness: Not One Child, Not One Night

The New Mexico Campaign to End Child Homelessness is an initiative of the national Campaign to End Child Homelessness which seeks to increase public awareness, inform state and federal policies, and improve services to prevent and end child homelessness. The New Mexico Campaign is composed of a coalition of organizations that includes Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless, Center for Social Innovation, Cuidando Los Niños, The National Center on Family Homelessness, New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness, [New Mexico Voices for Children](http://www.NewMexicoVoicesforChildren.org), St. Martin's Hospitality Center, and many others. For more information, visit www.homelesschildrenamerica.org/states.php?state=NM and www.familyhomelessness.org/NewMexico.