

# A WIDER CIRCLE

A unique, holistic approach to ending poverty

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## Dr. Mark Bergel

Dr. Mark Bergel is the Founder and Executive Director of A Wider Circle, a nonprofit organization founded in 2001. The mission of A Wider Circle is simple: to end poverty for one individual and one family after another. Dr. Bergel has led the organization's growth from its early years operating out of his living room to its current 25,000 square-foot facility and its status as a primary source of support for more than 20,000 individuals per year and hundreds of government, social service and nonprofit agencies in the greater Washington, DC region. The organization provides basic need items, educational and job training, and long-term support.



### *Biography*

In 2001, Dr. Mark Bergel, then teaching at American University, volunteered along with his students to deliver food to families living in need in our nation's capital region. He found himself in apartment after apartment where there were no beds, no dressers, and no living room or dining room furniture at all. He saw that the families living in these apartments had no access to the information and resources readily available to others throughout our communities.

As a result, Dr. Bergel's entire life changed profoundly – and so did the lives of thousands and thousands of children and adults living in need. With no seed money, but a strong conviction that we could do better for those living in poverty, he converted his living room into a nonprofit office and founded A Wider Circle. To date, the organization has served more than 150,000 children and adults, with more than 15,000 volunteers coming to A Wider Circle **each year** to support the effort.

The mission of A Wider Circle is to end poverty. The organization provides basic need items to families transitioning out of shelters or simply living without life's necessities, furnishing the homes of more than 1,000 children and adults *every single month*, all free of charge. A Wider Circle also delivers intensive job preparedness training and educational workshops for people of all ages. Through all of its services, A Wider Circle works to build channels of long-term support for those seeking to rise out of poverty.

Dr. Bergel's efforts to end poverty have led to his selection as a Washingtonian of the Year by Washingtonian Magazine and as a 2014 CNN Hero. He has also been named one of PEOPLE Magazine and Major League Baseball's "All-Stars Among Us," recognizing individuals who have made incredible contributions in their communities. He has received the Dr. Augustus White III Award for Civic Engagement and Service, the Greater DC Cares' Essence of Leadership Award, the Community Foundation for the National Capital Area's Linowes Leadership Award, and the Andrea Jolly President's Award. Dr. Bergel is a nationally acclaimed speaker and has been a featured guest on local and national television and radio programs. He earned a Bachelor's degree from Northwestern University and went on to receive both Masters and Doctoral degrees from American University.