

CBS REPORTS



Gauging Recession's Impact On Kids

CBS News Initiative, "Children Of The Recession," Kicks Off On Early Show



Dr. Irwin Redlener and Maggie Rodriguez on
The Early Show Wednesday (CBS)

April 22, 2009

(CBS) CBS News has launched a nationwide effort to show the effect the recession is having on the nation's young, called "Children of the Recession."

It began on *The Early Show* plaza Wednesday, with co-anchor Maggie Rodriguez speaking with Dr. Irwin Redlener, founder of the **Children's Health Fund**. As part of the effort, the organization provided five mobile medical units that left right after the show for Detroit, one of the areas of the nation hardest-hit by the down economy. And that, Redlener said, is "just the beginning of a national program we're launching today."

"The recession is so severe," he observed to Rodriguez, "people have been talking about the banking crisis and mortgage foreclosures and all that appropriately, but what has not yet been understood is the impact this recession is having on children all across the United States. And, in some places, like Detroit, it is extraordinarily severe, and the impact is terrible for children."

In June, he added, "We'll be rolling out in six other cities around the United States for similar opportunities, but we want to keep underscoring how important it is to understand and deal with the problems this recession is causing for America's children. It's almost like we're dealing with a new recession generation that we're starting to notice right now."

Redlener told The New York Times a "quiet disaster" is unfolding.

"It's actually quite frightening," he said. "We're seeing very unsettling reports of increased numbers of children in poverty. Those numbers may rise from about 12.5 million before the recession to nearly 17 million by the end of this year."

Redlener, who is also a pediatrician and a professor at Columbia University, founded the Children's Health Fund with singer Paul Simon in 1987, in response to the homeless crisis the city was seeing at the time, the foundation's Web site explains. The two raised money and bought a van that they turned into a mobile medical clinic that went around New York providing medical care to homeless and uninsured children. There are now 37 mobile clinics, and Redlener plans to deploy them to areas where they are most needed during these tough times.