

WCA Receives \$500,000 from Kathryn Davis

Kathryn Wasserman Davis, international philanthropist and long-time WCA Board member and supporter, has chosen to celebrate her upcoming centennial by making an extraordinary gift of \$500,000 to Westchester Children's Association. The funds will be invested in the WCA endowment where they will insure that future generations of children will have a strong and independent advocate to speak for their needs. "This unprecedented gift will be used to underwrite some of WCA's key activities, such as our annual Advocacy Breakfast and other public education events," said Cora Greenberg, Executive Director of WCA.

Mrs. Davis, a resident of Tarrytown, served on the WCA Board during the 1940s and 50s, and was President 1955-1961. Since retiring

from Board service, she has remained active with WCA as an Honorary Board Member and supporter. Even as she reaches the wonderful personal milestone of her 100th birthday, Mrs. Davis is thinking about the future, investing in the well-being of children she will never know.

First Recipient of Edith C. Macy Award

In recognition and celebration of Mrs. Davis' lifelong commitment to children and youth, WCA has chosen her as the first recipient of the Edith C. Macy Distinguished Service Award, honoring a Westchester resident who has an outstanding record of advocacy and accomplishments for advancing the well-being of children. This award was established in memory of Edith Carpenter Macy, a founder of WCA, whose concern for children led her to be active in the



Kathryn Wasserman Davis, 1959

nascent Girl Scout movement as well as involved in helping poor children in the slums of New York City.

"Kathryn Davis exemplifies so many of the ideals espoused by Edith Macy, such as a hand-on approach to philanthropy and a deep concern for young people," said Ms. Greenberg. "We are thrilled to recognize and honor her with this award." The Award will be presented at WCA's Advocacy Dinner on May 15, 2007 at Tappan Hill. For more details about the event, please check our web site at www.wca4kids.org. ■

SAVE THE DATE

WCA Advocacy Dinner

Tuesday, May 15

Tappan Hill

Honoring: Kathryn Wasserman Davis

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Advocates Win New County Investments for Children

Along with our advocacy partners in the Campaign for Kids, Child Health Task Force, and Westchester Women's Agenda, WCA achieved important victories for children in the 2007 County Budget. Through our post-card campaign, visits to County administrators and Legislators, and testimony at County Budget hearings, we were able to achieve most of our budget objectives.

- The County Executive's budget included more than \$1 million for child care scholarships for those families just above the income eligibility for public subsidies.
- The County Board added \$500,000 to expand innovative early childhood mental health programs begun in 2006. These programs seek to prevent later emotional and behavioral problems by helping young children in settings such as day care centers, health clinics, and neighborhood play groups.
- The County Board added \$100,000 for grants to older foster youth leaving care. These funds will help young people leaving care to set up their own apartments, acquire work-appropriate wardrobes and otherwise get a boost toward independence.
- The County Executive increased funding for Invest in Kids by 5% (about \$63,000) and decreased the cash match required of contract agencies from 50% to 40%. The Invest-in-Kids was created in 1994 in response to WCA-led advocacy and supports dozens of community-based youth programs throughout the County.

Advocates were not successful in securing targeted funding for childhood obesity, nor for expanding community recreation and activity programs for young children. WCA will be working closely with relevant County departments to insure that the funds are spent as intended by the County Board and result in the greatest impact on children. ■

\$1,000,000+

FOR CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS

\$500,000

TO EXPAND EARLY CHILDHOOD
MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

\$100,000

TO HELP OLDER FOSTER YOUTH
LEAVING CARE

7.5% increase

FOR LOCAL AGENCIES SERVING
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

New York State Passes Timothy's Law

Guarantees Insurance Parity for Mental Health Treatment

After many years of dogged effort, mental health advocates celebrated passage of Timothy's Law at the end of 2006. The law, named in memory of a 12 year old who committed suicide after his family could no longer pay for his psychiatric treatment, requires health insurers to cover treatment for most mental ill-

ness on the same basis as physical illness. Importantly, many mental health diagnoses that pertain to children and not adults—such as attention deficit disorder and oppositional-defiant disorder—are specifically mentioned in the legislation as requiring equitable coverage for treatment. ■

Children's Health Insurance: Thousands Enrolled from 1998-2006

An Effective Partnership for Children's Health

In Fall 1998 Westchester Children's Association in partnership with the County Department of Health formed the Child Health Task Force, a broad coalition with a mission to examine the health status of Westchester's children, identify barriers to positive health outcomes and develop strategies to address those barriers.

An initial focus of the group was to plan for implementation of the state sponsored facilitated enrollment project (FE) to enroll children in the federally funded State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). Through the Task Force, Westchester County Department of Health (WCDH) successfully applied to be the lead agency for facilitated enrollment in Westchester. WCDH sub-contracted with Child Care Council

of Westchester, CLUSTER, West-COP, and Westchester Hispanic Coalition for enrollment, and with Westchester Children's Association for coordination, outreach and technical support services.

The partners have worked tirelessly to ensure that eligible children are enrolled in Medicaid or Child Health Plus. In 2001 FE was expanded to include the enrollment of low income adults into the Family Health Plus and Medicaid programs. Since its inception, community based FE has enrolled over 11,000 children and nearly 3,000 adults in State sponsored health insurance.

Over the years, WCA, with its partners, has successfully advocated for continuation of the FE program against devastating budget cuts, a range of enrollment and renewal simplifications, program enhancements and improvements, including streamlined applications, decreasing documentation requirements, eligibility and benefit expansions and mail-in renewal systems.

During this time WCA has received additional funding from March of Dimes, United Way of Westchester/Putnam, St. Faiths House Foundation

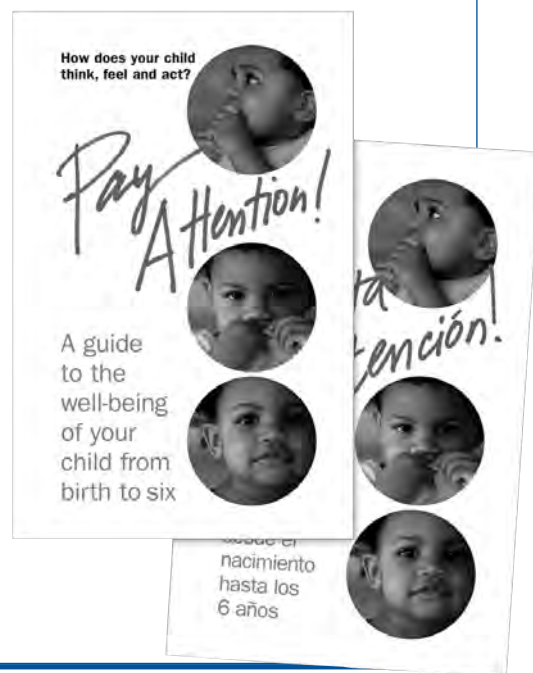
and the Junior Leagues of Northern Westchester and the Sound Shore for outreach and training activities not covered by the State grant. We have run outreach campaigns through schools, coordinating with school lunch programs, school nurses and PTAs. We have led targeted campaigns in Northern Westchester and with the West Indian/Caribbean population of Mt. Vernon. In addition we have investigated the barriers facing families when it is time for them to reenroll (see Focus Group article on page 4).

Because the County's FE project was severely cut for 2007, WCA will no longer receive funding for its technical assistance and coordination of the project. However, as part of our continuing work with the Child Health Task Force and in fulfillment of our overall mission, WCA will continue to monitor and advocate for improvements in children's health insurance coverage and the FE program. We are proud to have been part of this outstanding project that resulted in thousands of children getting the health coverage and the health care they need. ■

New Booklet on Children's Mental Health

In November 2005, WCA released *No Time to Lose: Rethinking Mental Health Services for Westchester's Children*. One of the key recommendations of the report was to create a brochure to educate parents about young children's mental health. With the help of dedicated volunteers and experts in mental health and early childhood, WCA has created *Pay Attention! How Your Child Thinks, Feels and Acts*, a new bi-lingual

booklet, with the goal of increasing parents' awareness of very young children's mental health needs and making it easier for parents to seek help. Support for publication and dissemination of *Pay Attention!* has been provided by State Senator Suzi Oppenheimer and the Junior League of the Sound Shore. In coming months WCA, will present the brochure at community forums on children's mental health. ■





Health insurance consumers discuss barriers to enrollment with WCA staff.

Helping Families Maintain Enrollment in State-Sponsored Health Insurance Programs

Through our work in Westchester's Facilitated Enrollment project, WCA and our partners were keenly aware that families faced particular barriers to maintaining insurance when it was time for them to re-certify their eligibility or re-enroll in State insurance programs. To understand more about these barriers and develop remedies, Westchester Children's Association (WCA) conducted focus groups in October 2006, with adults who have tried to re-enroll in one of New York's State sponsored health insurance programs (Child Health Plus, Family Health Plus and Medicaid).

The two focus groups, one in English and one in Spanish, included uninsured and insured participants from communities across the county.

"My pay-stubs vary so they disqualified me from the program. No one I contacted could explain what to do about it..."

Parent who tried to re-enroll their child in a State-Sponsored Health Insurance Program

Groups were comprised of African-American, Caucasian and Hispanic participants. We wanted to learn the experiences of clients in enrolling and re-enrolling in these programs. We explored participants' experience accessing insurance in detail, discussed specific obstacles or barriers they may have encountered while seeking health insurance, and attempted to assess whether the negative experiences were serious enough to discourage people's confidence in the process.

WCA will present its findings to the County's Recertification Workgroup, and develop recommendations for advocacy and action to improve families' access and utilization of State insurance programs ■

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

- Participants knew about availability of health insurance from a variety of sources, such as physicians, local community agencies, television and health plans.

- Health insurance is valued and it is regularly used to get health care. Participants use their health insurance at least once or twice each year.

- Help with the initial application for insurance is more available and effective than assistance with the re-enrollment process (families must re-enroll or re-certify eligibility every 12 months).

- It is often difficult for participants to understand documentation requirements or to produce required documents. This was especially true for participants who do not work regular hours or for those who are paid in cash.

- Renewing or re-enrolling in insurance is difficult and frustrating for most participants. The most common barriers cited were difficulty contacting the insurance plan or DSS with questions, difficulty completing the long renewal questionnaire, long waits and disorganized staff in County offices, difficulty obtaining/producing documents, documents lost in the mail resulting in gaps in coverage or duplication of effort by participant.

- Spanish speaking participants reported perceived discrimination and lack of Spanish speaking workers.

Advisory Council Expands WCA's Reach, Brings Expertise

An outstanding group of 28 men and women from all walks of life have agreed to join the new WCA Advisory Council. The Council will be an important vehicle by which WCA can broaden its inner circle and involve more interested people in the work of advocating for Westchester's children and youth. Members, who will serve two year renewable terms, were selected based on their commitment to the mission of WCA, their expertise on various children's issues, and their connection to various segments of the Westchester Community.

"We expect that Advisory Council members will help WCA reach a broader public audience while simul-

taneously gaining a greater understanding of children's issues for themselves," said Dr. Katherine Lobach, Chair of WCA and of the Advisory Council. "Individual members will be invited to participate in our work at whatever level feels most comfortable to them, which may include attending events, serving on WCA Committees or Task Forces, or participating in our advocacy campaigns," she added.

At the inaugural meeting of the Advisory Council on January 12th in White Plains, Executive Director Cora Greenberg updated members on WCA activities. They were then briefed by Dr. Joshua Lipsman, Westchester Commis-

sioner of Health, and Dr. Jennifer Schaffer, Commissioner of Community Mental Health, about County programs and services for children and youth. ■

THE INITIAL MEMBERS OF THE WCA ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Elizabeth Alderman, MD
- Margery Arsham
- Karen Blumenthal
- Anne Boyer
- Lyndall Boal
- Delores Brathwaite, JD
- Ted Buerger
- Doris Capello, DSW
- Georganne Chapin, JD
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- Andy Pelosi
- Roc Polera
- Charlotte Raynor
- Eileen Santiago, EdD
- Kenneth Schonberg, MD
- Evelyn Stock
- Zoila Tazi
- Lester Zimmerman, MD



Left to right: Lottie Harris, Michael Friedman, Dr. Jennifer Schaffer, Commissioner of Westchester County Dept. of Community Mental Health, and Georganne Chapin.



Left to right: Charlotte Raynor, WCA President Maris Krasnow, Margery Arsham



WCA Executive Director Cora Greenberg (second from left) with (from left to right) Mildred Kibrick, Zoila Tazi, Leah Murphy and Delores Brathwaite



Dr. Joshua Lipsman, Commissioner of Westchester County Dept. of Health



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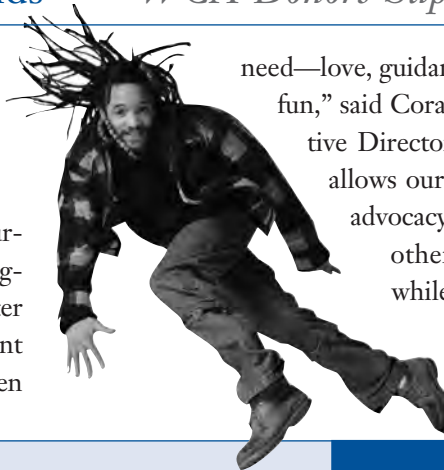
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Savion Glover Entertains Foster Kids

WCA Donors Support Outing

Through WCA's second annual **Take the Kids to a Show** fundraiser, donors have helped 200 youngsters living in foster care to attend a performance by Savion Glover, outstanding young tap dance artist.

The performance, at the Performing Arts Center at Purchase College on February 18, is a special treat for youngsters living apart from their families of origin in foster homes, community group homes or residential treatment settings. "Foster youth need the same things all our children



need—love, guidance, and the chance to have fun," said Cora Greenberg, WCA Executive Director. "This unique fundraiser allows our donors to support WCA's advocacy for foster children and other vulnerable youngsters while providing great cultural entertainment directly to young people." ■

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WESTCHESTER
 CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION
 works to ensure
 that all children are
*healthy, safe and
 prepared for life's challenges.*