

Child Poverty is Focus of WCA Breakfast

Despite snow and icy roads, many of Westchester Children's Association's (WCA) intrepid Board and Advisory Council members showed their support at the annual Advisory Council Breakfast. Held at the Westchester Marriot in Tarrytown on January 28th, the event focused on child poverty with suggestions for effective solutions provided by WCA's guest speaker Elizabeth Burke-Bryant, J.D., Executive Director of Rhode Island Kids Count.

With delicious pastries, fresh fruit and coffee to jumpstart the chilly morning, the group was warmly welcomed to the event by WCA President Maris H. Krasnow, Ed.D. Allison Lake, Deputy Director, provided an update about WCA's upcoming projects and events, outlining what will no doubt be another busy and exciting year of advocacy work at WCA.

Cora Greenberg, Executive Director, presented an overview of child poverty in Westchester. This overview highlighted: the wide ranging effects of child poverty, the demographics of poor children and their families, and the underestimate of the number of children living in poverty in Westchester. Guest speaker Elizabeth Burke-Bryant's described the practical strategies undertaken by the *Poverty, Work and Opportunity Task Force* in Providence, Rhode Island.



Guest Speaker Elizabeth Burke-Bryant,
Executive Director of Rhode Island Kids Count.

LOCAL SOLUTIONS HIGHLIGHTED

In January 2007, Providence Mayor David Cicilline signed an executive order creating this diverse Task Force made up of passionate community leaders, youth and parents, and charged them with creating practical recommendations for local action aimed at ameliorating the worst effects of poverty in Providence. The Task Force agreed that any recommended strategies had to be meaningful, measurable, effective and feasible. Burke-Bryant reported that Rhode Island Kids Count, a children's policy and advocacy organization, agreed to take the lead in facilitating the efforts of the Task Force as they collectively identified five strategies for achieving their mission to "grow, retain and reclaim the middle class" in an effort to reduce poverty. These included: helping low wage workers to improve skills and obtain quality jobs; connecting youth to jobs and college; increasing access to jobs with adequate wages, benefits and work supports; reducing the high cost of being poor; and preventing poverty in future generations.

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Child Poverty *(Continued from page one)*

Elizabeth Burke-Bryant explained that data to assess the impact of the Task Force's work is not yet available and that such evaluation will have to wait until data from the 2010 census. However, the work already accomplished serves as a useful example of collaborative strategies to combat poverty that can be employed by local government and child advocates. Cora Greenberg closed her presentation of poverty in Westchester by asking the crowd "what can we do?" and responded with the suggestion that we must make ending child poverty a priority and then learn what works. This Advisory Council Breakfast successfully led us in a positive direction toward addressing what we can do to affect child poverty in Westchester.

You can access the "WCA's Presentation on Child Poverty in Westchester" and video footage of Elizabeth Burke-Bryant's presentation on the Rhode Island *Poverty, Work and Opportunity Task Force* by visiting our website at www.wca4kids.org. Simply click on the link under the Advisory Council Breakfast heading in the News and Updates column on the homepage. ■

The Bailout Offers You Another Way to Help WCA

Did you know that the bailout recently passed by Congress (the one that infused over \$700 billion into the credit markets) also included tax breaks that take effect immediately? The tax-free direct IRA distribution to charities is back for 2009!

The bill provides a special opportunity to support WCA for anyone at least 70 ½ years old. Charities like WCA are created and sustained by people who want to give their resources to solve problems and enrich their communities. If you're 70 ½ or older, the Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, allows you to make an income tax-free direct rollover totaling up to \$100,000 to charitable organizations like WCA. Not only is your rollover income tax free, but it also satisfies your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) requirement AND also qualifies as a charitable contribution income tax deduction! ■

Tough economy preventing you from dining out?

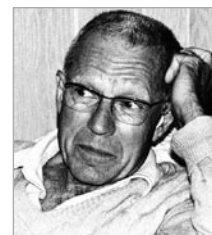
Get a better bang for your buck! Dine out AND support WCA's efforts on behalf of Westchester's children!

WCA's 2009 ADVOCACY DINNER will be held on Tuesday April 28 from 6-9:30 p.m. at Tappan Hill. The event will feature:

- Richard Kind, star of Broadway, film, and TV as guest MC
- delectable dining, catered by the famous and talented Abigail Kirsch
- a tempting silent auction, with a wide range of prices (including several options to give to foster children)
- a presentation of the Edith C. Macy Distinguished Service Award to The African American Men of Westchester

Mark your calendars! Please don't miss this exciting opportunity to support our efforts on behalf of children. We hope to see you there!

Stuart Baker Fondly Remembered



Westchester Children's Association was sad to learn of the death of Stuart Baker, a member of the WCA Honorary Board, last November. He was 102 years old at the time of his death, and had had a long and distinguished career on Wall Street. Following his stint as an economics student at Hamilton College, Stuart started his career in the securities industry in 1929, when he worked as a chartist, eventually becoming a stock broker in the early 1950's. He retired from Prudential Securities as a Vice President in 1998. Stuart was recognized for his distinguished accomplishments in the securities business on National Public Radio Market Place program with an interview about the crash of 1929, and by ringing the closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange at the invitation of Rudy Giuliani on December 10, 2004, with his family at his side. Stuart's wife Edith, affectionately known as Bunny, was a member of WCA's Board of Directors for many years, and it was she who encouraged Stuart to serve as WCA Treasurer. Bunny passed away several years ago. WCA is very grateful for the Bakers' generous contributions of time, effort, and financial support, and both Bakers are remembered fondly by those who knew them. ■

WCA is delighted to announce the appointment of four new members to our Advisory Council.

The Council's 33 dedicated volunteers provide valuable counsel and support to WCA's work. Our new members include:

Cheryl Hunter-Grant, LMSW, is Executive Director of the Lower Hudson Valley Perinatal Network. She is a member of the Westchester County Youth Board and co-chairs the New York State Sickle Cell Advisory Consortium. She was recently a member of the Walter Panas High School Site Council. She is a Certified Lactation Counselor.

Penny Liberatos, PhD, serves as Assistant Professor in the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Community Health at the New York Medical College School of Public Health. She is also a member of WCA's Data Advisory Committee.

Lynn Sobel is currently the Chair of the Board of The Masters School, and serves on the Board of The Thursday Club. She is the principal of Lynn Annique Pilzer Sobel Event Consulting.

Saul M. Yanofsky, EdD, is currently Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs at Westchester Community College. Previously, he served for many years as the Superintendent of Schools for the White Plains City School District.

WCA also welcomes intern **Ashley Gephart**, who is a first year student in the Masters of Health Advocacy program at Sarah Lawrence College. Her areas of interest include public policy, community health and youth program development and evaluation. Ashley is a Northern California native and prior to attending Sarah Lawrence, she lived and worked in Berkeley, CA where she received her undergraduate degree in Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley. After graduating from UC Berkeley, Ashley spent three years working for the Berkeley Unified School District as a kindergarten/1st grade after school teacher, physical education teacher and a trainer/mentor for after school employees in the district. Ashley will be working on various projects with WCA through May 2009. ■

WCA Study Recommends Improved Parenting Programs

WCA has released *The Toughest Job: Improving Parenting Programs for Westchester Families in Need*. WCA's previous work on early childhood mental health led the Research and Advocacy Committee to focus on parents of young children most in need, namely families involved in the child welfare system in Westchester.

The report describes existing services and service gaps for parenting programs, examines best practices in the field and recommends ways to strengthen and improve the services available to vulnerable families in the County.

Through service provider surveys, interviews with key County departments and Family Court representatives, community stakeholders, and review of best practices and evidenced-based programs findings identified include: evidenced-based programs are not generally available in Westchester; evaluations of existing programs do not measure progress toward preventing further child abuse and neglect; the family court does not routinely receive reports from service providers nor is there a mental health professional available to the Court; and there are insufficient services for certain populations.

WCA's Research and Advocacy committee will work on implementing the following recommendations:

- increase use of evidenced-based models by providers of parenting programs
- develop an effective evaluation tool to identify preferred outcomes for parenting programs
- regular service provider reports provided directly to the Family Court
- assign and budget for a Mental Health Coordinator to the Family Court
- expand capacity of parenting programs to serve special populations
- include support funding for child care and transportation in program budgets.

The report will be distributed to local and State elected officials, County departments, Family Court personnel and service providers. The report can be viewed in its entirety at www.wca4kids.org. ■





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SAVE THE DATE

African American Men of Westchester Education Forum
Breaking the Pipeline from School to Prison
Co-Sponsored by Westchester Children's Association
Thursday, March 26th, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.
Iona College, New Rochelle

Free and open to the public. For more information, visit www.aamw.com

WCA Advocacy Breakfast
Nurse-Family Partnership: Helping Families Thrive
Friday, March 27th, 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.
Hilton Rye Town, Rye Brook

Join us for a panel presentation about this highly effective home-visiting program for at-risk first-time parents. To register, visit www.wca4kids.org

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works to ensure
that all children are
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prepared for
life's challenges.



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