

For 91 years, the Westchester Children's Association has achieved important victories for children.

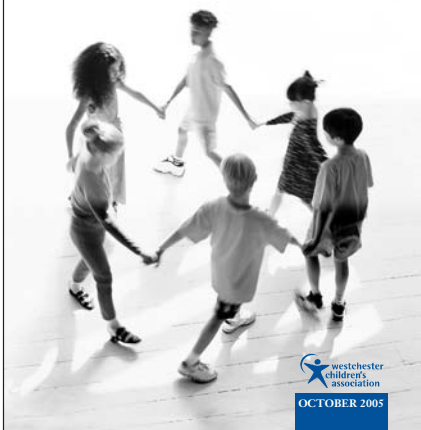
We identify children's needs, educate the public and policy leaders about those needs, propose innovative approaches to meet them and mobilize advocates to push for needed changes.

Here is how we turned awareness into action for children this year:

Children's Mental Health

Children's emotional, social and behavioral health was a major focus for WCA in 2005. We brought public attention to this important issue at our Annual Meeting with keynote speaker Dr. Peter Jensen, Director of the National Center for the Advancement of Children's Mental Health at Columbia University. Our report *No Time to Lose: Rethinking Mental Health Services for Westchester's Children*, was published in October, representing the culmination of more than two years of work.

No Time to Lose *Rethinking Mental Health Services for Westchester's Children*



WCA has made progress on advancing the report's key recommendations:

- WCA secured \$250,000 for the first-ever county-funded pilot program in early childhood mental health. WCA was a leader in advocating for the funding, developing the criteria for funding and helping to choose the agency to implement this innovative initiative.
- WCA developed an educational brochure to help low-literacy parents understand their young children's emotional development needs. This resource will be published in English and Spanish and made available through our network of community partner agencies.
- WCA began building bridges between primary care physicians, such as pediatricians, and local mental health care providers, thus increasing the likelihood that children's emotional problems will be effectively addressed.
- WCA has joined with advocates across New York State to fight regulations unfairly restricting insurance coverage for children's mental health treatment.

Teens in Foster Care

This year, WCA continued its commitment to secure better futures for hundreds of Westchester's teenagers living in foster care. We highlighted the plight of these young people at our March 2005 fundraising event by showing *Ageing Out*, a documentary film by director Roger Weisberg. Weisberg spoke at the event along with Daniella Rin Hover, the young woman who was the subject of the film.

During 2005, WCA advocacy set the stage for a new Westchester County initiative to help foster teens better prepare for adulthood. The project incorporates many of the recommendations long advocated by WCA. WCA has been a key participant in setting the parameters for the initiative, helping to select the agency to implement it, and co-chairing the work group overseeing the project.

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A Message from the President of WCA

WCA's accomplishments this past year remind us once again of what a unique and truly remarkable organization this is. Our successes reflect the hard work of our talented staff, joined by many dedicated volunteers from the Board and community, and supported by the large group of donors who believe in the work we do. This is a powerful combination and a guarantee of effective advocacy. It is our special strength that, unlike single issue groups, we advocate for children on a broad range of issues, and that we have (and continue to seek) sufficient financial backing to maintain our independence and ability to speak out without fear or favor.

We remain committed to our mission: that every one of Westchester's children should be healthy, safe and prepared for life's challenges. Everything we do—preparing reports, organizing conferences, building coalitions, informing the media—is meant to educate the public and our elected officials about the problems children face and the way forward to overcome them. Our special emphasis this year on children's mental health needs is the beginning of a multiyear effort, as is the development of the Westchester Children's Databook, which is nearing the end of its planning phase.

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The efforts of several of our Board members have been especially valuable in connection with our major initiatives. **Mildred Kibrick** and **Margo Elkin** spearheaded the mental health report *No Time to Lose: Rethinking Mental Health Services for Westchester's*

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Children's Data Book

Key to understanding children's needs is accurate and timely data on their well-being. When available, information is often hard to find, presented only for the County as a whole and difficult to understand. With a major grant from the Wallace Westchester Fund at the Westchester Community Foundation, additional funding from the Gimprich Family Foundation, and assistance from a broad-based Advisory Committee, WCA has begun development of the Westchester Children's Data Book.

WCA will compile information about children's health, education, economic security and other life domains, and present this data by municipality and school district. We will publish the Data Book in hard copy as well as on the WCA Web site and will update it every two years. It will be a vital resource for policy makers, elected officials, service providers and advocates.

Mobilizing Communities, Budget Advocacy and Electoral Engagement

With its community partners, WCA achieved significant victories for children in the 2006 County Budget by leading coalitions of community partners in coordinated advocacy. Early in 2005 we developed three specific budgetary goals: lowering the amount low-income parents pay for child care, increasing community services for young children and their families, and bringing preventive mental health services to young

children in day care centers. All three goals were achieved in Westchester's 2006 final budget through a concerted and coordinated campaign:

- Over the summer, WCA asked candidates for the County Board of Legislators to tell us their views on our three priority agenda items. Candidate responses were distributed through our partner agencies and posted on our Web site.
- Also during the summer, we taught non-profit agencies how to legally and effectively encourage their clients and staff members to register, vote and become educated participants in the electoral process.
- In October, we held a Child Watch Speak-Out at which parents, teens and service providers spoke to legislators and policy makers about why our budget agenda was vital for kids.
- Finally, we rallied child advocates to send postcards, speak with their legislators and testify at County Budget Hearings about children's needs.

The results were outstanding: the 2006 County Budget included more than \$3 million in new funding for children and youth.

Children. **Ann Spindel** oversaw the initial survey to conceptualize the content of the databook, and continues as co-chair of its advisory committee. **Jackie Hilly** has been indefatigable in her role as chair of the Board's Membership Development Committee. We are fortunate to have the talents of these people and others like them on our Board of Directors.

The Board's decision to inform itself about children's health issues and available health resources was greatly assisted by briefings provided by representatives of **White Plains Hospital Pediatrics** and the **Westchester Department of Health.** **Maria Fareri Children's Hospital** graciously hosted several of our meetings and offered a tour of the facility. We are grateful to all of them.

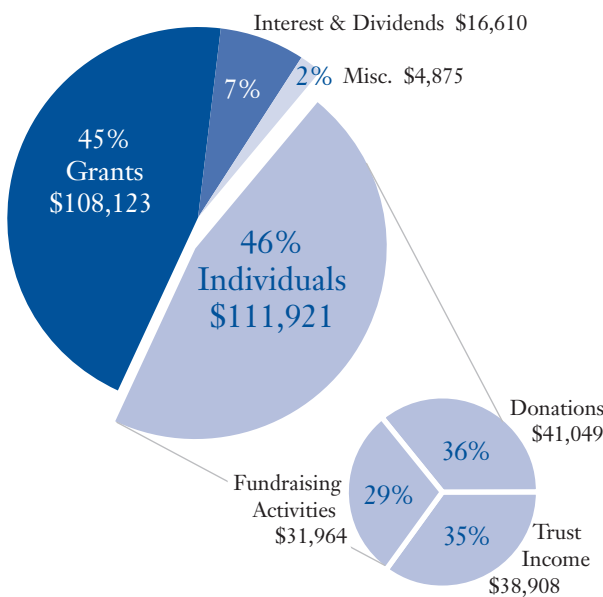
We look to the future with the certain knowledge that the advocate's work is never done. In the year ahead we will revisit and renew our attention to the plight of children in foster care, especially those who are about to enter adulthood. We will also be considering whether the expansion of our WCA circle by the addition of an advisory council will strengthen our organization and enhance our advocacy. And as we go forward, undoubtedly other challenges will appear. With the help of all of you we will continue to respond to them and hopefully score more victories for children.



Katherine S. Lobach, M.D., *WCA President*

REVENUE

Total Revenue \$241,529



EXPENSES

Program services

Personnel	\$132,462
Non Personnel	67,833
Total Expenses for Program services	200,295

Administration and fundraising

Personnel	72,429
Non Personnel	21,151
Total Expenses for Administration and Fundraising	93,580

Total Expenditures \$293,875

Financial Profile for 2005

A copy of the complete audited financial statement is available from WCA on request, or from the New York State Attorney General, Office of Charities Registration, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271

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The Westchester Children's Association gratefully acknowledges all our supporters.

We especially wish to recognize the following foundations that provided major support for our work in 2005:

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