

Since 1914, the Westchester Children's Association has been the County's leading voice for children, speaking out for their needs and improving public policies and programs aimed at meeting those needs.

As a result, we have helped every child have the opportunities and supports they need to be healthy, safe and prepared for life's challenges.

WCA 2007 ANNUAL REPORT

2007 was a year which WCA strengthened and expanded previous efforts to improve children's lives. It was a year in which we were proud to see the results of our earlier victories.

County Budget Advocacy

WCA once again led a successful effort to strengthen services for children through the County budget. Throughout 2007, WCA worked with our partners to develop an advocacy agenda with input from members of the Campaign for Kids, the Child Health Advocacy Network (previously the Child Health Task Force) and others concerned with children's issues. With the unified voice of many advocates, and although FY2008 was a difficult budget year, we were able to maintain gains and prevent cuts to important County-funded programs. These included the pilot program bringing early-childhood mental health in child care centers, and Independent Living Accounts for Foster Youth.

Early Childhood Mental Health

Throughout the year, WCA worked to improve early childhood mental health, an issue of vital importance and a major area of WCA's focus in recent years.

- WCA secured additional funding in the 2007 County budget for a **200% expansion of Early Step Forward**, a pilot program originally created in 2006, that brings mental health professionals directly to children and families in day care centers. There, mental health specialists support positive emotional/social development of children, parents and staff members. Hundreds of children throughout the county have been helped by this program. We successfully advocated to maintain full funding for this innovative program in FY2008.
- *Pay Attention/Preste Atención*, WCA's well-regarded **bilingual parent education booklet** on early childhood emotional development, was reprinted due to overwhelming demand. Additional copies were distributed to early childhood programs and family service agencies.
- To help answer the question of what resources are actually available to address young children's mental health, **WCA created an inventory of services** called *Supporting Our Youngest Citizens*. Through an online and telephone survey and individual interviews, we amassed information on more than 100 programs and agencies. Our study confirmed that services are concentrated in the southern and central parts of the County while population is growing rapidly in northern Westchester. Moreover, many services are available primarily during parents' working hours, and there are not enough bilingual and bicultural providers to meet growing demand.



Advisory Council members Mildred Kibrick, and Zoila Tazi with WCA Executive Director Cora Greenberg (center).

A Message from the President of WCA



Maris H. Krasnow Ed.D., WCA President

As the leading voice for the children of Westchester, WCA continues to ensure that children's needs are kept in the forefront of the public agenda. As always we remain committed to our mission – ensuring that every child is healthy, safe and prepared for life's challenges. Your generous support enables us all to be children's champions. Through your donations we work to continue to improve children's lives in the following ways:

- **To guarantee children's needs are known, and that resources are funneled toward their most urgent needs, WCA collects, analyzes and publishes current data** about the County's children. In April, 2008, we unveiled our latest publication, *Westchester Children By the Numbers*, a comprehensive children's data book. Over two years in the making, the data book assembles and analyzes facts about Westchester's 230,797 children. Although the initial release was a hard copy, an online version – which will be kept up-to-date, monitored and managed by the WCA – will appear later in the year. This data stream will inform policy decisions across the county and direct resources more effectively.
- **To ensure that children are benefiting from the best possible strategies and approaches that meet their needs, we analyze and advocate for public policies** that show the greatest promise. We study selected issues in depth, review how other communities address similar issues, and evaluate proposed public policies and legislation. Our publication advocating for children's mental health issues, *No Time to Lose: Rethinking Mental Health Services for Westchester's Children*, has led to county funding to meet these needs. Our pamphlet, *Pay Attention/Preste Atención*) has led to our latest study-in -progress of parenting programs in Westchester.
- **To continue building a strong and united voice to keep children's needs at the top of the public agenda, we educate and mobilize the public.** We teach youth and adults to be better advocates and form coalitions to speak out for children's needs. Our educational events and publications bring the latest information and ideas to Westchester.

By advocating for policies and programs to benefit children, we are providing them a brighter future filled with greater opportunities. Our talented board, staff, interns, and advisory council work tirelessly to educate the public and our elected officials to this end. We are extremely grateful to all our supporters and know that you are our partners in this vital and important work. Together we will continue to take the steps we need to keep children's lives moving forward.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maris H. Krasnow". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Maris H. Krasnow Ed.D., WCA President

- Studying emotional health resources for young children led us to think about supports for parents. WCA's Research and Advocacy Committee decided to investigate **programs designed to help parents** of young children, especially those children who are involved in the child welfare system. Building on the survey undertaken to produce *Supporting Our Youngest Citizens*, the committee reviewed existing programs, met with professionals in the Department of Social Services, the Family Court and community agencies, and studied programs that have proven to be effective throughout the country. A final report is expected in early summer of 2008.
- Finally, we continued our tradition of presenting outstanding speakers on children's issues. At our 2007 Advocacy Breakfast in April, Dr. Jeanne Brooks-Gunn of Teachers College, Columbia University, spoke about how early childhood programs affect children's emotional development.

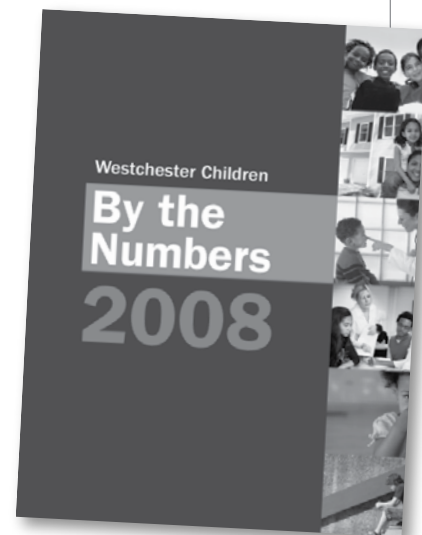
Foster Youth

Following our success in creating the **Independent Living Fund** for foster youth leaving care, WCA worked hard for much of the year to help develop protocols and procedures for putting the money to work. Although the funding was approved as of January 2007, it wasn't until September of 2007 that the first youngster received a grant. The funds are used for expenses that are not covered by other public sources. Some examples might be books for post-secondary education, a working wardrobe, or driving lessons. By the end of the year more than a dozen young people used the fund to start their independent lives on a more secure footing.

Another way we support youngsters in foster care is by sponsoring their attendance at **performing arts events**. With the help of generous donors, we sent a group of about 60 young people to Purchase Performing Arts Center in November to see the Shaolin Warrior Monks, a dazzling display of martial arts and spiritual discipline. These performances have become a wonderful annual tradition.

Westchester Children By the Numbers Data Book

Our long-awaited children's data book, *Westchester Children By the Numbers*, moved closer to publication throughout the year. (Actual publication date is April 24, 2008). With ongoing support from the Westchester Community Foundation, we have been able to sustain the difficult work of gathering and organizing data from a myriad of government and non-profit sources. We know it will be worth the wait! Later in 2008, we plan to unveil an online searchable version of this vital data resource.



Children's Health

WCA's efforts on children's health focused this year on several goals. First, we worked to make sure that Federal regulations and legislation did not undermine the gains that have been made in covering more children with comprehensive health insurance. To this end, we educated and mobilized local child advocates and joined with others across the country to reach out to elected officials. Unfortunately, the federal State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was never fully reauthorized and is still, as we write, being continued on a temporary basis. Similarly, proposed federal regulations that would severely limit income eligibility for this program are still under consideration and are still being opposed by child advocates.

Locally, with funding from the United Way of Westchester and Putnam, WCA has addressed barriers to health insurance coverage, specifically barriers to keeping eligible children continuously enrolled. Working closely with the Westchester County Departments of Health and Social Services, and with partner community agencies, WCA monitors problems and seeks solutions that make the required annual recertification process as simple as possible, thus giving more children access to uninterrupted health care.

REVENUE

Bequest	166,363
Trust Income	39,109
Contributions	61,113
Fundraising events/products	53,732
Total Amount from Individuals	320,347
Grants	158,220
Interest/Dividends	108,305
Other	800
Total Revenue	\$ 587,672

EXPENSES

Program Expense	\$ 314,375
Admin, Support, and Fundraising	\$ 132,988
Total Expenses:	\$ 447,363

Note

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.

Building for Our Second Century



Kathryn Wasserman Davis

Supporting WCA's Work

In 2007, WCA was thrilled to present the inaugural Edith C. Macy Award for Distinguished Service to Kathryn Wasserman Davis, past president and long-time supporter of WCA. The award was presented at our Annual Advocacy Dinner in recognition of Mrs. Davis' outstanding contributions to WCA and to the future of our county's children. Later in the year, Mrs. Davis was further honored as Outstanding Philanthropist of the year by the Westchester Association of Development Officers based on WCA's nomination.

WCA was honored to receive a bequest from long-time supporter Marilyn Conway of Somers, New York, who passed away in 2007. Marilyn had been active with WCA in the 1980s, and we gratefully acknowledge her thoughtful generosity.

WCA Family

WCA's first annual Advisory Council Breakfast was held in January. Dr. Joshua Lipsman, Commissioner of the Westchester County Department of Health and Jennifer Shaffer, Commissioner of the Department of Community Mental Health, spoke to our new Advisory Council and WCA Board members about how their departments serve children and youth. Toward the end of the year, WCA added several new members to the Advisory Council to help us work toward the common goal of improving children's lives: Amy Ansehl, Deborah Campbell, MD, Rachel Grob, Regina Kelly, Ursula Lamott, Mary Loeffler, Kate Weingarten, and Theodore Wilson.

WCA experienced a number of staff changes throughout the year. Betsy Steward joined us in the newly-created position of Development Officer. Pat Mackin, who had served as the administrative backbone of the organization for 11 years, handling everything from event planning to office management, retired in September. Limarie Cabrera joined WCA as Director of Data Analysis in October. She worked closely with Dan Lipka as he finished his tenure as Director of Special Projects, and has since taken on leadership of all aspects of our data project, *Westchester Children By the Numbers*.

Finally, WCA was ably assisted by the following student interns in 2007: Jean Anne Cipolla (Sarah Lawrence graduate program in Health Advocacy), Jodi Epstein (Binghamton University), Karen Mandel (Columbia University School of Social Work), Marissa Nardi (Barnard College), Sarah Thompson (Cornell University Blumenthal Intern), and Jackie Zaneri (Amherst College).



WCA Staff, left to right: Cora Greenberg, Pat Mackin, Betsy Steward, and Allison Lake.

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

We especially wish to recognize the following:

For her generous gift to our endowment: Kathryn Wasserman Davis

For major program support: The Frog Rock Foundation

The Wallace Westchester Fund in the Westchester Community Foundation

For her thoughtful bequest: Marilyn Conway

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