

## WCA Focus: Children's Mental Health

### WCA secures day-care mental health pilot

Following WCA's publication last fall of *No Time to Lose: Rethinking Mental Health Services for Westchester's Children*, staff, Board and volunteers have been busy pushing for adoption of the report's key recommendations. The first milestone was achieved in the County's 2006 budget, when the Board of Legislators added \$250,000 to pilot a program that provides mental health supports to children and families in child care centers. The competitive contract award was made to The Guidance Center to work with four centers in Mt. Vernon and Yonkers.

### Parent education on early-childhood mental health

The report also recommended development of a parent education booklet to help families be more alert to emotional problems of young children. WCA staff and Board have taken the lead on creating this resource, calling on the expertise of mental health professionals, educators, parents and other community volunteers. A draft of the text has been completed and

WCA is currently seeking funding to design and print the bilingual booklet. Trained parent peer-educators will distribute the booklet to parents in Head Start programs, child care centers, health centers and elsewhere.

### Linking pediatricians with mental health resources

A third recommendation of the report was to encourage pediatricians and other primary health care providers to screen for and identify mental health problems in young children and to make more effective referrals for treatment. Earlier this spring, WCA staff participated in a forum that brought together local pediatricians and mental health care providers, allowing them to network and to develop joint plans on how to best serve youngsters in need. Over the coming year, WCA plans to sponsor a series of such meetings for physicians in several Westchester communities to familiarize them with their local mental health resources.

### Creating an inventory of early childhood resources

Seeking to more fully understand the breadth and availability of existing support services for young children, WCA has taken the lead to develop an inventory of early childhood resources in the County. Working with the members of the County's Early Childhood Planning Group (co-chaired by Kathy Halas of the Child Care Council and Basia Kinglake of the Department of

## CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH UPDATE

We are pleased to report...

- The county allocated \$250,000 to children's mental health program for 2006
- A parent education booklet is in the works
- WCA plans mental health resources forums for local physicians
- WCA is building a databank of early childhood resources throughout Westchester



Community Mental Health), WCA has created a survey instrument to gather pertinent information from many different programs—from child care to mental health clinics, primary care to playgroups. The resulting information will be collected and analyzed by WCA. By identifying areas where resources are adequate and where they are not, WCA and its advocacy partners will be better able to advocate for needed resources and services.

### Advocacy for 2007 County Budget

Finally, WCA and its partners in the Campaign for Kids and the Child Health Task Force will be seeking County funding to expand innovative, effective and collaborative approaches to young children's mental health. ■

### IN THIS ISSUE...

Children's Mental Health .....	1
WCA Interns .....	2
Lagercrantz Bequest .....	3
Tappan Hill Event .....	3
WCA Advocacy Breakfast .....	4

## Interns Help WCA Address Children's Needs

During the spring and summer months, WCA has been blessed with the help of several enthusiastic and dedicated interns. Although diverse in their interests and experiences, all share a passion for advocacy and a commitment to helping children in need. The interns have been invaluable to WCA and we wish to thank them all for their time and efforts. Many thanks to:



### Karen Mandel

Karen, a resident of Irvington, graduated in May 2005 from Lafayette College with her Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Women's Studies. Unsure of the exact path she wanted to take

after graduation, Karen spent some time exploring different options through volunteering and further coursework. These experiences have helped crystallize her desire to make a positive impact on the lives of people who struggle in our society. She subsequently applied to Master's of Social Work programs in New York, and was accepted at Columbia University, where she matriculates this September. In fact, interning at WCA was somewhat of a "homecoming" for Karen. In 2000, she received WCA's "Youth Leadership Award" for her part in initiating a volunteer tutoring and recreation program at Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry. Her most important assignment this spring was drafting WCA's upcoming parent brochure on the mental health of young children. The brochure was a major recommendation of WCA's report, "No Time to Lose; Rethinking Mental Health Services for Westchester's Children."



### Julianne Susman

Julianne is a senior at Cornell University, where she majors in Anthropology with an additional minor in American Indian Studies and a concentration in Inequality Studies. Julianne is especially interested in children's issues, specifically those regarding health and education. A full-time

intern whose presence was made possible by the Blumenthal Internship Program, she has taken a leading role in the development and coordination of the parent brochure on children's mental health and the Early Childhood Resources Inventory, as well as the collaboration with the Westchester Coalition for Better School

Foods. Upon graduating from Cornell she plans to obtain a Masters degree in Global Media and Communications, after which she is considering a career in international non-profit work.



### Jackie Douglas

Jackie is a junior at Boston University. At BU she has designed her own independent concentration, in lieu of a major, titled Children and Society, which consists of courses from several departments to study

everything that encompasses children from their development to the issues they face to the policies that shape them. She will be studying abroad this coming year in England, Tanzania, India, New Zealand and Mexico through the International Honors Program on their Rethinking Globalization program. In the future, she hopes to help others either through advocacy, marketing, teaching or other related fields.



### Jean Anne Cipolla

Jean Anne is a graduate student in the Health Advocacy program at Sarah Lawrence College with academic interests in mental health policy and mental health insurance parity. She recently published an opinion piece in The Journal News advocat-

ing for Timothy's Law, legislation that would bring parity to health insurance coverage for mental illness and substance abuse. She is pursuing health advocacy as a mid-life career change, planning to blend her skills as a technical writer and researcher with her desire to help those in need of mental health services get what they need from complicated and fragmented health care and insurance systems. At WCA, she is currently working on the children's mental health resources research project.

## Carmen Ramos, M.D.

Carmen is a Pediatric General Surgeon with an academic practice at Montefiore Medical Center. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Public Health, with concentration in Epidemiology, at New York Medical College. She has a special interest in children's health. Carmen graduated from University of Puerto Rico School of Medicine, and did her fellowship at the

University of Toronto. Her main objective is to perform outcome studies and work on issues such as health disparities, access to health care, and patterns of health care in minority populations. Despite her busy schedule, Carmen has found the time to help WCA with the Early Childhood Resources Project, as well as helping with the editing and Spanish translation of the parent brochure on children's mental health. ■



## Film Fete at Tappan Hill Benefits WCA

WCA supporters and their guests enjoyed an evening at Tappan Hill to raise funds for the organizations vital work for children. A gourmet buffet dinner, fabulous desserts, and tempting Silent Auction were combined with a thought provoking film on early childhood mental health for a stimulating and profitable event.

## The Mary Lagercrantz Legacy: A Gift to Children

This spring, Westchester Children's Association was the recipient of a generous bequest from the estate of Mary Lagercrantz, a resident of Dobbs Ferry who died in 1990. She and her husband Eric had no children, and following his recent death, the remainder of Mrs. Lagercrantz's estate was bequeathed to several worthy organizations in Westchester and in Vermont where the Lagercrantz's also had community ties.

What motivated Mrs. Lagercrantz to include WCA in her will? Was she a long-ago Board member or a mem-

ber of one of the local community Chapters of WCA that were so active earlier in the last century? Did a trusted spiritual or legal advisor acquaint her with WCA and its important work for children? Or was she a WCA volunteer, reading to school children, shopping for and distributing new school clothes, or organizing informational meetings about children's needs?

We may never know. Although we have been looking for information about Mrs. Lagercrantz, we don't know how her connection to WCA was forged and nurtured. What we

do know is that a woman with no children of her own cared enough about "other people's children" to share a legacy with them.

A bequest or other planned gift to the Westchester Children's Association can help assure that, however the needs of children change over time, there will always be a strong advocate to speak on their behalf. If you would like more information on how to make a planned gift to WCA, please contact Executive Director Cora Greenberg at 914-946-7676, extension 11. ■

### WCA BOARD & OFFICERS 2005-06

#### OFFICERS

Katherine S. Lobach, M.D.  
*Chair*

Maris Krasnow  
*President*

Carey E. Gross, M.D.  
Ann Umemoto  
*Vice Presidents*

Lisa Katz, LMSW  
*Secretary*

Jay Lerner, C.P.A.  
*Treasurer*

#### BOARD MEMBERS

Joanne Amorosi

Myrna Forney

Douglas Gould

Janet Gutterman, Esq.

Marion K. Israel, D.S.W.

Lori Greifer Kaufman

Mildred Kibrick

Thomas Kyle

Mary E. Loeffler

Elizabeth Mark

Louise De Vel Muller

Lenore Rosenbaum

Kenneth A. Schiffer, M.D.

Carol Sturtz, DSW

Kate Weingarten

Adrienne Weiss-Harrison, MD

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



Westchester Children's Association  
175 Main Street, Suite 702  
White Plains, NY 10601

Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 249  
White Plains, NY

## Inside: Progress on Children's Mental Health

Fold line

### No Time to Lose: Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do

#### WCA's Advocacy Breakfast

"If we really want to build a strong platform for healthy development and effective learning in the early childhood years, then we must pay as much attention to children's emotional well-being and social capacities as we do to their cognitive abilities and academic skills."

On the morning of March 24th, Dr. Jack P. Shonkoff addressed a crowd of almost one-hundred and forty guests attending WCA's annual Advocacy Breakfast. Dr. Shonkoff, who earned his degrees from Cornell University and New York University School of Medicine, currently chairs the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. The Council's

mission is to bring sound and accurate science to bear on public decision-making affecting the lives of young children.

Dr. Shonkoff emphasized the importance of sound mental health for young children, and gave a clear overview of the scientific evidence that supports such a stance. The early years of a child's mental development serve as a foundation for later in life. Positive relationships with adults early in a child's life can help buffer the lifelong consequences of early childhood adversity.

Dr. Shonkoff concluded his presentation calling for "new champions" to step up, use their voices, and become leaders on behalf of the mental health of young children. WCA has helped



Keynote speaker Dr. Jack Shonkoff with WCA Executive Director Cora Greenberg.

get the ball rolling in this arena by completing an extensive report in October 2005 on the mental health services of Westchester. The implications of this research are currently being used to develop a parent brochure on the importance of young children's mental health.

A copy of Dr. Shonkoff's presentation, along with an audio recording of his talk, are available on the WCA web site at [www.wca4kids.org](http://www.wca4kids.org). ■