

CELEBRATING
100
YEARS

WESTCHESTER
CHILDREN'S
ASSOCIATION
Children's Champions Since 1914

ChildWATCH

Working to ensure that all children are healthy, safe and prepared for life's challenges.

OCTOBER 2015



WCA was joined by 160+ youth and adults, including Campaign for Kids members, the James Robinson Drum Corps, Cobra Performing Arts, H.I.P.H.O.P, Walter's Hot Dogs, and Deputy County Executive Kevin Plunkett, bottom right, with WCA Executive Director Cora Greenberg.

Summer Rally Celebrates Youth!

On July 22, 2015, over 160 youth and their allies gathered in downtown White Plains to celebrate youth and the programs that help them thrive. With a backdrop of music and dance performances from the James Robinson Drum Corps, Cobra Performing Arts and H.I.P.H.O.P., and food from Walter's Hot Dog Truck, youth had opportunities to share their thoughts and opinions.

First, they used colored dots to vote for the aspects they appreciate most about their youth programs. Then using photobooth signs,

To view more photos and videos, visit our Storify page at <https://storify.com/wca4kids/celebrate-youth-rally>.

they shared the many reasons why youth are worth celebrating.

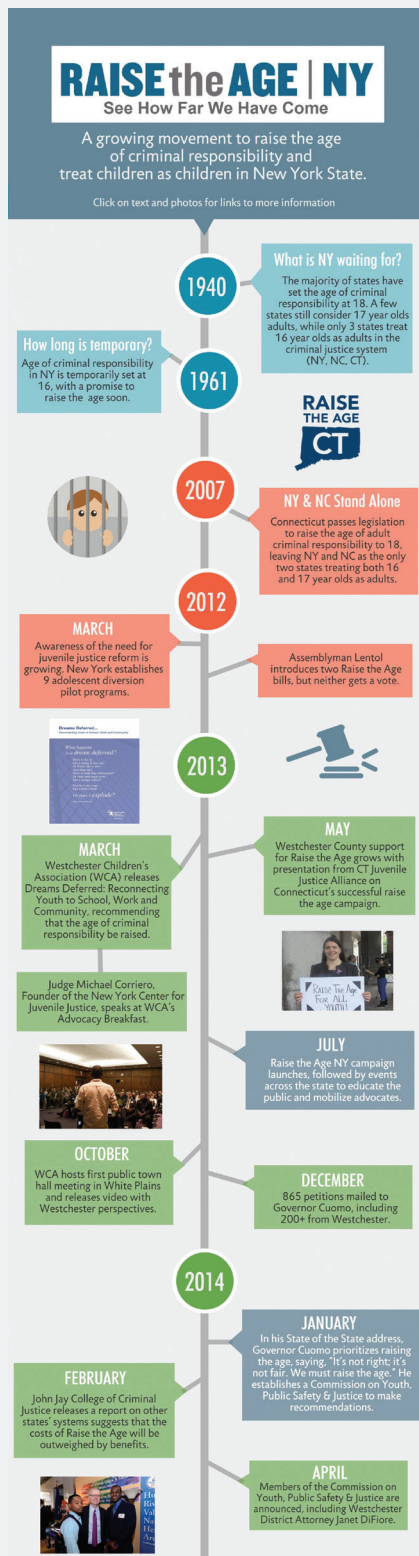
At the event, Westchester County, Westchester Children's Association, and the Campaign for Kids coalition announced an exciting step forward for youth. In response to advocacy by WCA and the Campaign for Kids, the county has created a new task force to improve the way youth programs are funded. The group, which will begin meeting this fall, will review, evaluate and make recommendations to improve the process of assessing the needs of youth, awarding contracts and setting funding priorities. Stay tuned for more updates as we work to ensure that youth programs are funded effectively and responsibly.



Don't miss an exciting update about GPS4Kids - Look inside!

WCA's new infographic traces the Raise the Age campaign from its early roots to the present day. We've come a long way together, but there is still work to do!

See the complete Raise the Age infographic at bit.ly/RTAtimeline.



Raise the Age Campaign Presses On After Legislative Letdown

While New York State's 2015-2016 budget included funding to Raise the Age, the Legislature and Governor were unable to reach an agreement on the necessary policy. As a result, New York failed to pass comprehensive legislation to raise the age of adult criminal responsibility from 16 to 18 years of age. The Governor has stated that he will issue an Executive Order to remove youth from adult prisons. A change in housing, however is insufficient because it keeps youth in the adult system and does not provide them with the services and supports they need to turn their lives around.

Despite this setback, WCA and others throughout the state are gearing up to get it done this year. We've made significant progress already, and momentum is building. We have the advocates, concerned citizens, Commission members, science and research on our side. Now is the time.

Send a letter expressing your support at www.wca4kids.org/act-now.



Our Second Year of Community Snapshots - New & Improved!



This summer, we published the 2015 edition of our Community Snapshots. This series features key demographic, socioeconomic, education and health data which together give people an idea of what it's like to raise a child in each of the featured communities.

This year, in addition to highlighting the five cities from the inaugural series (Yonkers, New Rochelle, Mount Vernon, White Plains, and Peekskill), we created two new snapshots for the Ossining and Port Chester school districts. We even included a bonus Westchester County Community Snapshot to serve as a benchmark.

Even after the success of the 2014 edition, we knew we could do better. We redesigned the layout for a more compact and streamlined design. We also added downloadable data packets to make it easier for users to view the raw numbers, data sources and methodology. It looks like the Community Snapshots are growing in popularity – there was a 70% increase in online views of the snapshots compared to last year!

We encourage you to share the Community Snapshots with friends and coworkers who live in these communities. Becoming aware of the existing conditions is the first step in advocating for our county's children. WCA staff may be available to speak about the Community Snapshots at local events; contact us for more information.

View the 2015 Community Snapshots at www.wca4kids.org/communitysnapshots.

Westchester Partnership Tackles Key Challenges for Children

Since our launch in April, the Gathering Policy Solutions for Kids (GPS4Kids) community partners have been building momentum and solidifying our goals for this collective impact initiative. More than forty organizations and numerous individuals have joined the movement to align our efforts around improving the lives of Westchester's children, youth and young adults.

In June, Westchester Children's Association convened over thirty GPS4Kids community partners for a lively brainstorming session. Together, we worked to identify the root causes and unique local conditions that lie behind the most persistent challenges facing Westchester's children.

The Forum for Youth Investment's Director of Field Services, Larry Pasti, facilitated an interactive "sticky wall" activity focused on four critical issues facing our children: Youth Development, Youth Employment, Child Care and Substance Abuse. Mr. Pasti asked the participants to reflect intentionally on why these issues exist and persist in Westchester. The community partners



Breakout groups and a "sticky wall" facilitated dynamic discussion among community partners at a June 20th meeting. Several dozen people gathered to identify potential targets for system-wide change.

produced a combined list of 65 factors that have produced and perpetuated these challenges for our young people.

Since then, WCA and GPS4Kids Community Partners have been working to identify and gather relevant data in order to make data-driven decisions and measure our progress in the future.

We're saving a seat for you...

GPS4Kids is expanding our outreach efforts to gather people from all parts of the Westchester community, including youth, businesses, Hispanic and African-American communities, and faith-based organizations.

On Wednesday, November 11th, over 150 community partners will gather at the GPS4Kids Forum to prioritize the goals we will focus on. Together, we'll create a common vision and action steps to achieve real change for Westchester's young people.



Don't miss this opportunity to create a brighter future for all our kids.

PLUS, there will be food, camaraderie, and entertainment. AND IT'S FREE!

WHEN: November 11, 2015, Registration 8-9am, Program 9am-5pm, Reception 5-6pm

WHERE: Westchester Marriott Hotel
670 White Plains Road (Rt 119), Tarrytown, NY 10591

WHO: Community members, including youth, families, nonprofits, business, faith and civic groups, and government

REGISTER: Go to www.wca4kids.org/gps4kidsforum, or contact Elizabeth Almonte at ealmonte@wca4kids.org

Community Partners

The GPS4Kids collective impact initiative is the result of dedicated collaboration among community based agencies, businesses, government and concerned citizens. Together, we are building a coordinated action plan that will produce lasting social changes for all children in Westchester.

Promotional support for GPS4Kids provided by the Elias Foundation.

To join GPS4Kids, contact Elizabeth Almonte at ealmonte@wca4kids.org.

ANDRUS
Boys & Girls Club of New Rochelle
Briarcliff Congregational Church
Child Care Council of Westchester
Children's Village
Community Resource Center
Community Voices Heard
Diamond Healthcare
El Centro Hispano
Family Services of Westchester
FTEN
Hudson River HealthCare
Legal Aid Society of Westchester
Lower Hudson Valley Perinatal
Network/Children's Health and
Research Foundation, Inc.
Mount Vernon Youth Bureau

Neighbors Link
Network for Teaching
Entrepreneurship
Lower Hudson Valley Chapter
of the New York Civil
Liberties Union
Open Door Family Medical Centers
Ossining Communities That Care
Pelham PACT Coalition
Thomas S. Slater Center
Student Advocacy
Student Assistance Services
Ujamaa Community Development
Corporation/Grace CDF
Freedom Schools
United Way of
Westchester and Putnam

Urban League of Westchester
Westchester Children's Association
Westchester Jewish
Community Services
WestCOP
Westhab, Inc.
White Plains Cares Coalition
White Plains Youth Bureau
Youth Shelter Program of
Westchester
YWCA of White Plains
and Central Westchester

List in formation.

Meet the Challenge! The Latest from our Centennial Campaign

As we approach the end of our Centennial Campaign, we're excited to see that we have already achieved a higher level of impact, positively affecting more young lives than ever before. Our advocacy depends on getting the word out about children in Westchester, and the campaign has dramatically expanded our ability to communicate the need through outreach, social media and a higher profile. All of us at WCA are very grateful for the generous support of our loyal donors like you.

And we're almost there...but not quite. So far, we've received over \$5.7M in gifts and pledges toward our \$6.5M goal. We need your help to reach it.

An exciting development: included in our current total is a very recent \$250,000 anonymous Challenge Gift from a prominent Westchester family. The donors are passionate about young people's well-being, and they hope to inspire Westchester residents like you to join them in getting WCA to the finish line.

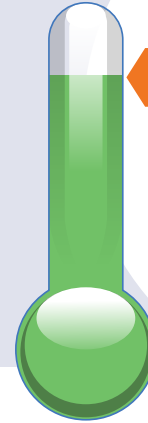
Respond to the challenge! Help us reach \$6.5M...

Thanks for supporting us as we strive to make things better for our children and our future. Together we can reach our goal.

**WE ARE
VERY CLOSE TO OUR
\$6.5M GOAL**

\$5.7M in gifts & pledges so far

**PLEASE MAKE
A DONATION ONLINE AT
www.wca4kids.org/donate**



new faces @ WCA

Elizabeth Almonte, GPS4Kids Project Manager

A White Plains resident and New York City native, Elizabeth has over 20 years of management, marketing and consulting experience. Elizabeth has led strategic initiatives to maximize the financial, social and environmental impact of the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, including Goldman Sachs, Kraft Foods, the William Clinton Foundation, and the New York City Department of Education. Her advisory experiences span seven countries and include public-private partnerships to help raise student achievement across the U.S.

Elizabeth graduated Magna Cum Laude with a BBA degree from Baruch College, is a Management Leadership for Tomorrow Fellow, and received her MBA degree from the New York University Stern School of Business.



Joanna Ezratty, Summer Intern

Joanna is a rising junior at Cornell University, where she studies human development in the College of Human Ecology. She is serving as a Human Ecology student ambassador and is actively involved in her sorority; freshman year she served as pledge class president and sophomore year she served as secretary. Last summer Joanna worked at the Child Mind Institute, working directly with children with Selective Mutism. She is interested in child development, psychology and education. Joanna grew up in Chappaqua, NY.

As part of her summer internship through Cornell University's Blumenthal Internship Program, Joanna played a key role in coordinating the July 22 youth rally. In a guest post on the WCA blog, she writes, "It was very rewarding to see my work and the hard work of the WCA staff come to fruition."

[Read her reflections on her experience at WCA at bit.ly/joannaezratty.](http://bit.ly/joannaezratty)



1 Finding Data that Matters

2 Avoiding Data Traps

3 Visualizing Data

WCA Launches Webinar Series

This summer, WCA debuted its first data webinar series: "Using Data to Build Credibility and Engage Your Audience."

In this three part series, we discussed topics such as finding data that matters, avoiding data traps, and building compelling data visualizations. Nearly ninety people registered for the free webinars, including many of our nonprofit partners, and listened in as Limarie Cabrera and Anna Wright talked about the ins and outs of using data effectively.

[View the webinar recordings at bit.ly/DataWebinarSeries.](http://bit.ly/DataWebinarSeries)

On Tuesday, November 3rd, 2015 all members of the County Board of Legislators, many city officials and some judges are up for election. When elected, these officials will make important decisions that affect children, youth and families. They influence the amount of funding and the policy priorities for child care, youth development, transportation and many other critical services provided by Westchester County.

In conjunction with Child Care Council of Westchester and Community Voices Heard, WCA has been educating voters and encouraging residents throughout the county to register to vote.

VOTE for KIDS on NOVEMBER 3rd

Now, we are taking our voter outreach digital and asking you to participate! Here's what you can do:

- 1 **Make a sign, take a photo, or simply share why you're voting using #WestchesterVotes on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.**
- 2 Before heading to the polls, learn about the candidates views on child care, youth employment and after school programs.
Read the annual WCA candidate survey results to be posted on Thursday, October 15th at www.wca4kids.org/voteforkids.
- 3 **On November 3rd, be sure to VOTE!**
Vote for candidates who are committed to prioritizing children and youth – our youngest and most vulnerable.

**REMEMBER,
kids can't vote
but YOU can.**



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