

## GPS4Kids Forum: Collective Impact in Action



On November 11, 2015, more than 150 community partners met at the Westchester Marriott Hotel to identify a common vision and shared goals for Westchester's children and youth. The Forum was the culminating event of more than a year of study, planning and collaborative work by WCA and dozens of partners to lay the foundation for this ambitious initiative.

GPS4Kids Forum attendees, representing various ages, roles, ethnicities, and sectors – including 30% youth under age 24 – harnessed shared passion, active listening skills and open minds to plan how we could work differently to improve outcomes for Westchester's kids.

*"It was my pleasure to be there and have been a part of something so amazing. I'm glad I had the opportunity to have shared my ideas and be in partnership with the professionals. I can't wait for the next!"*

– Michelle Perez, Bravehearts youth participant

Throughout the day, community partners including caregivers, service providers, policy makers, community leaders, educators, and administrators discussed the list of issues, challenges, and concerns facing Westchester's young people, and responded to questions and feedback prompts from American Focus facilitator, Chris Bui, using hand-held polling devices. All voting results were tallied and displayed instantly on large screens, allowing community partners to reach consensus on three shared goals with the greatest short-term collective impact opportunity:

- Strengthen youth-adult relationships and family supports
- Create opportunities for children to thrive regardless of race and zip code
- Foster social and emotional well-being through healthy peer-to-peer engagement, and prevention and treatment of drug and alcohol abuse

These goals express GPS4Kids' aspiration for Westchester's young people, and will form the basis for our action plan in 2016.



### Next Steps

WCA will build on GPS4Kids Forum momentum to invite community partners to weigh in on 50+ actions, solutions and responses submitted for our three shared goals via an online digital platform.

GPS4Kids Community Partners will work together in 2016 to:

- Gather baseline data indicators on shared goals
- Select starting point(s) and align interventions to identify existing policy gaps/barriers
- Launch accountability structure to organize work and decision making via Action Team(s)

Please visit [www.wca4kids.org/gps4kids](http://www.wca4kids.org/gps4kids) or contact Elizabeth Almonte at [ealmonte@wca4kids.org](mailto:ealmonte@wca4kids.org) to join us.

## 2016 COUNTY BUDGET

### Funding for Non-profits Restored Through New Coordinated Advocacy Effort

On December 14th, the County Board of Legislators voted 10-7 to approve the 2016 County Budget, which the County Executive signed on December 18th. With the support of a new "super coalition" representing more than 500 non-profit organizations, the final budget was a compromise that preserved many important services for children and youth that the County Executive proposed to cut or eliminate. *(Continued on page 2)*



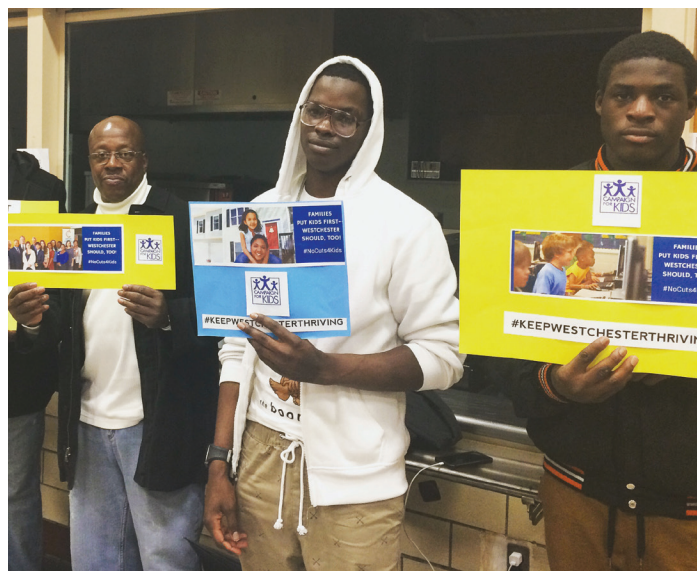
## 2016 COUNTY BUDGET *(Continued from front page)*

The County Executive's proposed budget, released on November 13th, included level funding for child care subsidies and Invest in Kids community youth programs, but would have cut or eliminated a number of programs serving children and youth, as well cut county personnel in parks, planning and other departments. The funding restorations were accomplished without a hike in the county tax levy, but did require some one-time revenue items and some borrowing to cover expenses.

**Nine coalitions representing 500+ organizations successfully combined their advocacy efforts to share a common message and supported one another in a way that hasn't been seen before.**

This is not a perfect budget. Some contracts for non-profits serving children and youth through the Department of Social Services were eliminated altogether, others were only partially restored. And the ground is shaky for 2017 due to serious revenue concerns and the need to negotiate new contracts with much of the county's unionized workforce.

But there is a real success story here for the nonprofit sector. Nine coalitions representing 500+ organizations successfully combined their advocacy efforts to share a common message and supported one another in a way that hasn't been seen before. With the slogan "Keep Westchester Thriving", members of these coalitions



used consistent language when discussing the need for funding restoration. Several coalitions mounted electronic advocacy campaigns, yielding hundreds of messages to elected officials. For example, WCA's on-line advocacy effort generated more than 200 messages using the hashtag #NoCuts4Kids.

Addressing the structural problems with Westchester's budget will be paramount in 2016. The new network of non-profit coalitions intends to begin discussing these issues with elected officials and the public in early 2016. Without additional revenue, it will not be possible to adequately address priority needs such as lowering the family share for subsidized child care or expanding the number of youth served by after school programs.

Go to <http://bit.ly/WCAEmailUpdates> to sign up for our action alerts so you can stay informed and take action on children's issues.

## Children BY THE Numbers 2016

**The New, Data-packed Bulletin is Coming Soon!**

**POOR** \$24,250

**LOW-INCOME** \$48,500

**NEEDED FOR A 2-BEDROOM APT.** \$63,640

In 2014, more than one-quarter of Westchester's children (27%) live in low-income families.

We never could have anticipated the enthusiastic response to our Data Bulletin when we first launched it in 2014. Now in our third year, we hope to make the 2016 Children by the Numbers Data Bulletin better than ever. We are increasing the number of pages in our annual publication from six to eight, but more importantly, we'll be taking the opportunity to examine some of the data in greater detail.

Subscribe to our data blog ([wca4kids.org/blog](http://wca4kids.org/blog)) and follow us on Facebook/Twitter so you can be the first to know when it's ready to launch!

## SAVE THESE DATES!

THE NEXT GENERATION

**Legislative Breakfast on Children and Youth**

**WHEN** Friday, February 19, 2016, 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.

**WHERE** Woman's Club of White Plains, 305 Ridgeway White Plains, NY 10605

**WHAT** Westchester representatives to New York State Senate and Assembly take questions

Join the Child Care Council of Westchester and Westchester Children's Association for our annual legislative breakfast on children and youth. Westchester's New York State elected officials will respond to questions about pressing issues faced by our community - such as child care, after school opportunities and raising the age of criminal responsibility - as well as questions posed by the audience.

Free, but registration required: <http://bit.ly/LegBreakfast2016>

**FEBRUARY**

**19**

## Centennial Campaign Update: We're almost there!

Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Thanks to you and all of our donors, we've done so much already!

As WCA's transformative Centennial Campaign nears its completion at the end of March 2016, we are thrilled that people from all corners of Westchester County have stepped forward to support our efforts on behalf of children. And as we move into the final phase of this campaign, we are committed to making the most out of this momentum to help make sure that all of the young people in Westchester get what's needed to reach their potential. Please mark your calendars to join us for our end-of-campaign celebration at our Spring Benefit on April 13!

We're so close!  
Can you help us reach \$6.5M?

**\$6.1M** so far

**MAKE A GIFT ONLINE AT**  
[wca4kids.org/donate](http://wca4kids.org/donate)

**Many thanks on behalf of**  
**Westchester's kids!**

### BREAKING NEWS!

## Introducing the Westchester Companies for Kids Committee (WC4K)

WCA is excited to announce that a group of Westchester companies committed to standing up for children is taking shape! Convened by WCA, the Westchester Companies for Kids Committee – WC4K – will be Co-Chaired by John Tolomer, President and CEO of The Westchester Bank, and Kevin Bovet, VP of Sales and Business Operations for The Westchester Knicks.

Each participating company will be informed – and involved as appropriate – about major challenges confronting Westchester's children and the ways WCA is helping to affect change. Member organizations will be recognized by the community as a company that is doing the right thing for our children, and will be identified with a high level peer group that shares the same philanthropic philosophy.

The committee will be recognized at its official debut at WCA's 2016 Spring Benefit, on Wednesday, April 13, 2016 at Surf Club

on the Sound in New Rochelle. (See event details below.)

WCA's Collective Impact initiative, GPS4Kids (see page 1), depends on participation and awareness from all sectors of our community – government, education, non-profits, neighborhoods, and the business world – in order to make things better for kids. WC4K will play an important role as a partner representing the business community in addressing children's issues. Although the committee will not formally meet, member companies will help WCA connect with and inform their leadership, employees, clients and colleagues about the issues that need to be addressed.

Many thanks to The Westchester Bank and the Westchester Knicks for their leadership role, and congratulations to all members!

If your company is interested in joining, please contact Betsy Steward, WCA's Director of Development, for details: [BSteward@WCA4Kids.org](mailto:BSteward@WCA4Kids.org); 914.946.7676 x 303.

### LOBBY DAY IN ALBANY

**Speak directly to your elected officials about "Raise the Age"!**

**RAISE**  
**theAGE**  
**| NY**

**WHEN** Tuesday, March 8th, 2016  
**WHERE** Albany, NY  
WCA will provide training and a free bus from White Plains  
**WHAT** Lobby to Raise the Age

Despite widespread public support, New York State elected officials failed to reach an agreement about how to raise the age of criminal responsibility last year. It is time for them to make New York's 16- and 17- year olds a priority. This all day visit will be an opportunity for youth and adults that care about them to join with advocates from across New York state to urge state lawmakers to raise the age of adult criminal responsibility this year.

Please e-mail Sarah Yergeau to attend: [syergeau@wca4kids.org](mailto:syergeau@wca4kids.org)

**MARCH**

**8**

**CELEBRATE WCA/OUR CENTENNIAL CAMPAIGN**  
**WCA's Spring Benefit Gala**  
*The Legacy of Tomorrow Starts Today*

**WHEN** Wednesday, April 13, 2016  
**WHERE** Surf Club on the Sound in New Rochelle, New York  
**WHAT** Join us to celebrate the conclusion of our 5-year Centennial Campaign and help us honor Allan Houston, the 2016 recipient of WCA's Edith C. Macy Award for Distinguished Service

NBA All-Star, Assistant General Manager of the New York Knicks, and General Manager of the Westchester Knicks, Mr. Houston is also founder of the Allan Houston Legacy Foundation, which works to strengthen the role of fathers in their families, and to inspire young adults to become entrepreneurs. In recognition of these efforts for the betterment of children, youth, and families, WCA is pleased to recognize Allan's work throughout Westchester and the nation. Make your reservations now!

**APRIL**

**13**



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CELEBRATING  
**100**  
YEARS

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Children's Champions Since 1914

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