

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



Youth advocating in Albany for RTA in March 2017.



Local clergy coming together to support RTA in 2016.

## IT IS A WIN!

### We persevered and got it done – New York Legislators Raise the Age

In March 2013, WCA released its report *Dreams Deferred*. The report highlighted the reasons some young people between the ages of 16 and 24 are disconnected from school, work, and community. One of these reasons was a youth's involvement in the criminal justice system. WCA pointed out that to keep young people out of the justice system we need to raise the age (RTA) of adult criminal responsibility in New York. RTA has been a primary goal of WCA's advocacy agenda for the past four years.

On April 10, Governor Cuomo signed into law "raise the age" legislation. This law will raise the age of criminal responsibility to 18, bringing New York in line with the majority of other states. There is a year of planning as New York phases in the law for 16-year-olds by October 2018 and



Many Westchester advocates lobbying for RTA in Albany in March 2017.

17-year-olds by October 2019. The devil is in the details and the road of implementation ahead will not be easy, but for now, we celebrate.

We celebrate that thousands of youth will get a second chance through alternative to incarceration/diversion programs, that the majority of 16- and 17-year-olds will have their cases heard in family court, that parents are notified upon arrest of their child and age appropriate youth detention and placement facilities are used instead of adult jails and prisons.

WCA is grateful to our partners statewide who worked tirelessly through advocacy, community mobilization, and social media to keep the pressure on and successfully influence elected officials to include RTA in the 2018 state budget.

We appreciate the perseverance of our young people, clergy, the public and representatives from Westchester who stood with us. In addition, although not all of the policy points we sought made it into this bill, we have a solid foundation upon which to build. We look forward to working with state and local departments, agencies and officials to ensure implementation is effective in helping as many of our children, youth, and families as possible.

To join our RTA advocacy efforts please contact Allison Lake at [alake@wca4kids.org](mailto:alake@wca4kids.org).

# WCA's 2017 Benefit Dinner Will Benefit Many

Over 250 guests gathered on May 18th at Tarrytown House in Tarrytown to celebrate WCA's year of advocacy on behalf of young people as well as the achievements of our two honorees. The event raised over \$284,000 through sponsorships, ticket sales, journal ads, donations, and a live auction. All proceeds from the event are used to support the many ways WCA works to address children's needs.

## Macy Award Presented to Eileen Fisher

WCA honored Eileen Fisher with the Edith C. Macy Award for Distinguished



Antoinette Klatzky, Executive Director of the Eileen Fisher Leadership Institute, accepts the award on behalf of Ms. Fisher from WCA's President Doug Gould.

Service for the wonderful work of the Eileen Fisher Leadership Institute (EFLI). EFLI promotes leadership in young people through self-empowerment, connection with others, and activism in their communities, goals that resonate strongly at WCA. Accepting the award on Eileen's behalf was Antoinette Klatzky, Executive Director of EFLI.

## First Ever Corporate Children's Champion Award Presented to The Westchester Bank

WCA chose longtime partner, The Westchester Bank (TWB), as the first ever corporate honoree. Our Corporate Children's Champion Award recognizes and honors a business or organization with an outstanding record of advocacy, actions and/or philanthropy that has substantially benefited young people in Westchester. The Bank's commitment to the community is evident through its generous support of many Westchester nonprofit organizations, whose work benefits young people in our county. Accepting the award on behalf of the bank was President and CEO John Tolomer.

Also in attendance at the dinner were members of Westchester Companies for Kids (WC4K), WCA's committee of businesses involved in the conversation



John Tolomer, CEO of The Westchester Bank, our 2017 Corporate Children's Champion award recipient.

about kids. Co-chaired by John Tolomer and Kevin Bovet, VP of Sales and Business Operations for the Westchester Knicks, the goal of the committee is to help raise awareness of children's issues in Westchester, and connect the business sector with WCA's work in a variety of ways. WC4K has grown to 30 members, and we look forward to its continued growth.

If your company is interested in being involved, please call or email Betsy Steward, WCA's Director of Development, at 914.946.7676 x 303, [bsteward@wca4kids.org](mailto:bsteward@wca4kids.org)

## new faces @ WCA

Lauren is a rising junior at Cornell University majoring in industrial and labor relations. She is also pursuing a minor in developmental sociology. Lauren is a member of the varsity track and field team, where she does long sprints. During her sophomore year, Lauren joined the Cornell Daily Sun as a news writer. She is also a member of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee and the Spiked Shoe Society. She is currently on a pre-law track, and wishes to attend law school after graduation. Lauren grew up in White Plains, NY.





# Dr. Walter Gilliam Shines at the 2017 Advocacy Breakfast!

Despite a rainy morning, it was standing room only at Doral Arrowwood for our annual Advocacy Breakfast and Kathryn W. Davis Advocacy lecture on April 20. Our keynote speaker was Dr. Walter Gilliam, Director of The Edward Zigler Center in Child Development and Social Policy and Associate Professor of Child Psychiatry and Psychology at the Yale University Child Study Center.

Dr. Gilliam kept the audience enthralled as he shared his research on early childhood education and effective methods of reducing classroom behavior problems and preschool expulsion. His most recent work explores how implicit biases in adults negatively impact all children, but are particularly damaging to children of color. In his 2016 research brief, Gilliam defines implicit bias as “the automatic and unconscious stereotype that drives people to behave and make decisions in certain ways”.



Over 150 guests listened intently to Dr. Gilliam.

He touched on the study conducted for his research. Early childhood professionals were asked to observe the behavior of four preschoolers on video – one Black female, one Black male, one white female, one white male – all child actors, behaving appropriately, unbeknown to participants. Their task was to detect challenging behavior. By tracking the eye motions of the educators, Gilliam and his team saw that the Black boy was observed the most, and when asked which child required most of their attention, 42% indicated the Black boy.

The findings suggest Black boys, from the earliest of age, are observed for challenging behavior more often than their peers and, not surprisingly, are disproportionately disciplined, suspended and expelled from pre-K through 12th grade. Time ran out before we could have a discussion with the audience on possible solutions, interventions, trainings, etc. that could improve school climate. This ongoing work sits squarely with our GPS4Kids goal of seeing Westchester children and youth thrive regardless of race or zip code. The 2017 Children by the Numbers data bulletin, released at the breakfast, illustrates how race affects outcomes for children across their lifetimes.

WCA and its partners are committed to collectively finding policy solutions that work; if you would like to join us please contact Erica Ayala at [Eayala@wca4kids.org](mailto:Eayala@wca4kids.org)

**Missed the April 20th breakfast?**  
**Go to our website to watch video clip of the presentation.**

## 2017 Children by the Numbers Released

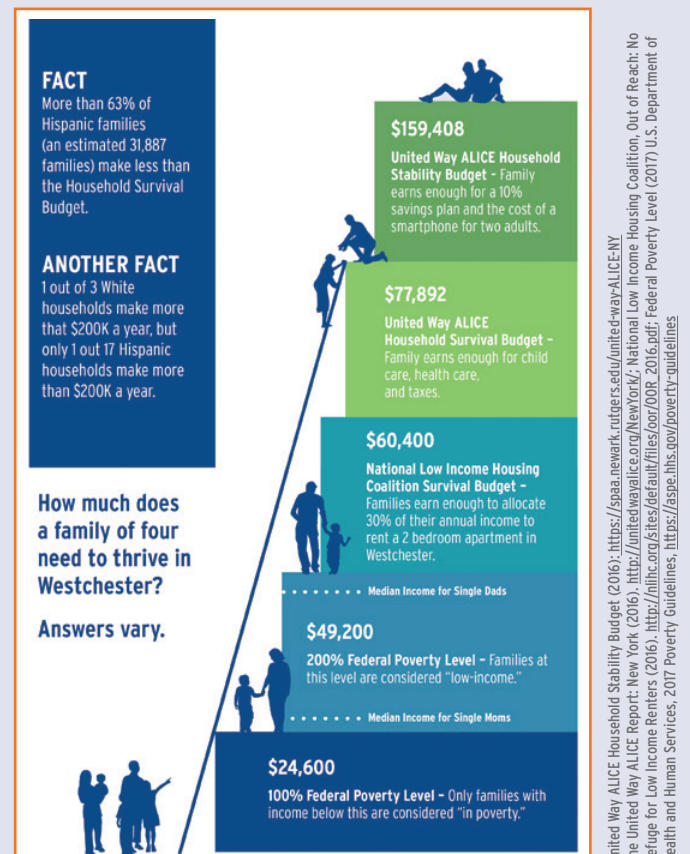
Hope and promise. Race and inequity. This year's data bulletin addressed all these items through a radical change in design and layout.

We wanted to bring people's attention to the good things that are happening in Westchester County, while also bringing to light the racial inequality that plagues the county, as well as the rest of the nation. The front page reveals that there are positive outcomes in communities that have historically faced struggle.

However, the rest of the data bulletin brings to our attention the challenges that still face our county. Westchester is fraught with inequality. Race and location – factors beyond a child's control – still play too large a part in determining whether or not a child will succeed.

We live in a place where absence rubs shoulders with abundance. Where the best opportunities seem only to be a community away, but the rift is so deep that the presence of fortune is torture for those who are denied its benefits. This year's data bulletin highlights the hope and the challenges that still face the county. We anticipate that it will continue the much-needed conversation of how to provide our children with the opportunities they deserve.

You can download a copy of the 2017 Children by the Numbers at [bit.ly/wcadatabulletin](http://bit.ly/wcadatabulletin).



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