

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2014

Greetings from Voices' Executive Director

I am so pleased to be writing you as Voices for Virginia's Children celebrates our 20th anniversary! Although I am still in my first year as executive director, I am in my eleventh year at this organization. We have evolved so much in the last two decades, and I feel fortunate to be leading this part of our journey, together with our dedicated staff and board of directors, partners, funders, and fellow child advocates.

Voices is grateful for our founders, who had the vision and tenacity to start an organization dedicated to speaking up for the children of our Commonwealth. Although our name has changed – we started as the Action Alliance for Virginia's Children and Youth – we have remained true to our original mission. We continue to champion public policies that improve the lives of Virginia's kids, particularly the most vulnerable.

We started celebrating our anniversary in April in Roanoke at a party hosted by former Voices board member Betty Carr Muse and current board member Charlotte McNulty Kagey and her husband Bill. Former Gov. Linwood Holton and former First Lady Jinks Holton, long-time supporters of Voices, attended the event, which allowed us to introduce our work to a group of leaders in the Roanoke community.

The celebration will continue throughout the summer and fall. Whether you are one of our founders or are a new child advocate, we hope you will join us at one of these upcoming events:

- **An Evening with Ryan Speedo Green: July 15 in McLean.** Ryan is a Bass-Baritone with upcoming roles in productions at the The Metropolitan Opera and with the Weiner Staatsoper in Vienna. Ryan is from Suffolk, Virginia and is donating his time and talent to benefit Voices.
- **Prince Michel Winery event: September 6 in Culpeper.** Join us for a party to benefit Voices at the winery on September 6. Or, visit another time during September for a wine tasting, and a portion of the proceeds will benefit Voices.
- **The 2014 Carol S. Fox MAKING KIDS COUNT Awards Ceremony: October 7 in Richmond.** Sponsorships are available now, and it's not too early to start planning to invite a table of your friends. Please contact Michael Brown at michael@vakids.org for more information.

We look forward to celebrating this important milestone with you!

Sincerely,
Margaret Nimmo Crowe



Voices Board Member Charlotte McNulty Kagey, Betty Carr Muse, Gov. Linwood Holton and First Lady Jinks Holton celebrate the organization's 20th anniversary in Roanoke on April 30, 2014.



Voices Executive Director Margaret Nimmo Crowe with Ryan Speedo Green during his visit to the Commonwealth Center for Children and Adolescents in Staunton last fall. A Virginia native, Ryan sang for the children at the hospital and shared his experiences growing up. He will be singing at Voices' event in McLean on July 15.

VOICES AT THE CAPITOL

Thanks to the 460 of you who emailed your legislators in response to our action alerts during the session! Our joint efforts made a significant difference for children in the arenas of early childhood, child welfare and mental health. As always, we worked with many partner organizations in our advocacy efforts.

As of press time, we are still waiting on the final outcome of many of our issues because of the stalemate over whether and how to connect the more than 400,000 currently uninsured Virginians with adequate health insurance coverage. We continue to be engaged in the effort to “close the coverage gap” for low-income working adults, one-fourth of whom are parents.

HERE IS A STATUS REPORT ON THE HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR WORK THIS SESSION IN OUR KEY POLICY AREAS:



CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

BUDGET ITEMS:

- We supported \$7.5 million in the proposed biennial budget for mental health outpatient services for transition-age youth (ages 17-24). Originally proposed by then-Gov. McDonnell, this funding has been preserved in all versions of the budget so far. **PENDING**

- We fought to add to the funding allocated in the last two years for community-based crisis response services and child psychiatry; the Senate included \$1.5 million over the biennium in its budget. **PENDING**



EARLY CHILDHOOD

LEGISLATION:

- We supported legislation that directed the Virginia Department of Social Services to create a task force to study how to implement fingerprint background checks for child care providers. Another piece of legislation directed VDSS to study linking child care subsidy reimbursement rates to the observed quality of programs.

SIGNED INTO LAW

BUDGET ITEMS:

- We advocated for just over \$1 million of restored funding for the comprehensive home visiting programs, CHIP and Healthy Families. The House budget includes this funding for both programs; the Senate budget includes funding for CHIP. **PENDING**

- We advocated for the extension of a “hold harmless” provision to a change in the Virginia Preschool Initiative student slot allocation; without that provision, 32 communities will lose state funding, possibly resulting in cutting back their VPI programs this coming fall. **PENDING**



CHILD WELFARE/FOSTER CARE

LEGISLATION:

- We advocated for two bills aimed at supporting relative caregivers that passed both House and Senate unanimously and were signed by the Governor: 1) a bill that will generate recommendations around the state's use of “kinship diversion,” a practice that leans on relative care to prevent foster care placement; and, 2) a bill that will give kinship foster parents a stronger voice in advocating for youth in their care if a placement change for non-safety reasons is under discussion. **SIGNED INTO LAW**

BUDGET ITEMS:

- We championed extension of foster care services and adoption assistance from age 18 to 21. Governor McDonnell included our proposal in his outgoing budget, and the Senate also included it in its budget. **PENDING**

LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

On February 3, 2014, Voices helped Dels. Chris Peace and Rob Krupicka host a legislative reception for elected officials and business community supporters of early childhood education. Twenty legislators attended along with Gov. McAuliffe, Lt. Gov. Northam, Sec. Hazel, and Sec. Holton.



From left: Reception co-host Del. Rob Krupicka, early childhood education supporter Tom Hirst, Sen. Barbara Favola, Voices Senior Policy Analyst Emily Griffey, and Magaly Galdo-Hirst.



From left: Reception co-host Del. Chris Peace is joined by Del. Betsy Carr, Keith Martin of the Virginia Chamber of Commerce, guest speaker Sen. Brice Wiggins of Mississippi, and Kathy Glazer of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation.

YOUTH IN NEWPORT NEWS DONATE TO VOICES

Thanks to the City of Newport News Parks & Recreation Youth Programs for making Voices for Virginia's Children a beneficiary of its ninth annual “Hoops 4 Hope” event. The children participating in the youth programs in Newport News conducted small fund-raising events for two months that culminated in a fun-filled basketball skills day. Thanks to the hard work of our participants and families, the kids were able to raise more than \$5,000 for two organizations. Voices for Virginia's Children is honored to be a recipient. The participation, enthusiasm and results from centers this year was incredible. Thank you for making kids count!



VOICES WELCOMES NEW STAFF

Ashley Everette is Voices Policy Analyst for children's mental health and health and is the coordinator of the Campaign for Children's Mental Health. Ashley comes to Voices with many years of nonprofit, early childhood development, children's mental health and research experience. Most recently, she worked for ChildSavers, a non-profit organization in Richmond, where she developed and implemented a community-based, early childhood mental health consultation program. She has also played an integral role in the Virginia Association for Infant Mental Health and is one of the first infant mental health professionals to be endorsed in the state of Virginia. Ashley is a graduate of Randolph-Macon College, and earned her Master's Degree in Child Development from Tufts University.

Michael Brown is Voices Annual Fund Director, responsible for developing and implementing the development plan as well as building relationships with new and current individual donors, increasing Voices' visibility within the Commonwealth, and increasing our fundraising capabilities. Previously, Michael was the Director of Development with Make-A-Wish Greater Virginia. He has his Certificate of Fundraising Management (CFRM) from the Indiana University School of Philanthropy, as well as a Bachelor's of Science in Kinesiology from the College of William and Mary. He also played in the Detroit Tigers' organization for two years.

VOICES IN THE MEDIA

As an advocacy organization, Voices continues to cultivate relationships with key reporters across the state to share its expertise on key children's issues with decision-makers and the general public. Here is a small sample of media Voices helped generate in the last several months. Find the full array of media coverage on the Voices website: www.vakids.org/news

media. For media specific to the Campaign for Children's Mental Health, please visit: www.1in5kids.org/media.

The Washington Post: 03/11/2014

“Overlooked after Va. Tech shooting, Children's Mental Health Gets Attention” - Article on children's mental health funding during the 2014 general assembly session.

Virginian-Pilot: 03/09/2014

“Woolard: Our duty, our children” - Op-ed authored by Voices Senior Policy Attorney Amy Woolard on Virginia's opportunity to opt-in to the federal Fostering Connections Act.

The Roanoke Times: 03/05/2014

“Crowe: Continue Innovative Children's Services” - Op-ed authored by Voices Executive Director Margaret Nimmo Crowe on the progress many communities have made in the last two years in helping kids in psychiatric crisis.

Richmond Times Dispatch: 03/04/2014

“Lawmakers Seek to Help Youths Aging Out of Foster Care” - Article on the importance of extending foster care supports and adoption assistance to youth aging out of the system.

The Washington Post: 02/27/2014

“Virginia Preschool Funding Formula Change Could Cause Arlington to Lose Slots” - Article highlighting a proposed change in Virginia's preschool funding formula.

Richmond Times Dispatch: 01/28/2014

“Virginia Lags in Offering Consistent Reading Instruction” - Article highlighting Annie E. Casey report on early reading proficiency.

VIRGINIANS SPEAK UP FOR CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH

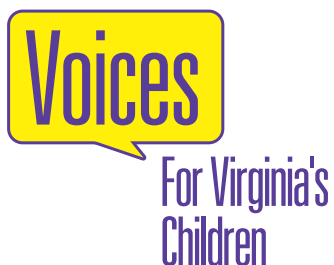


1in5kids.org

The Campaign for Children's Mental Health

In honor of Mental Health Awareness month in May, more than 90 of you shared "selfies" with us on social media to explain why you speak up for kids' mental health. We were thrilled to have the support of the McAuliffe administration in reducing stigma from the highest levels of state government. Right, **Sec. of Public Safety Brian Moran, Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam, Gov. Terry McAuliffe, and Sec. of Health and Human Resources Bill Hazel** joined in the effort.

The Campaign for Children's Mental Health teamed up with the Child Mind Institute to highlight children's mental health. Joining more than 100 national organizations, we worked to address the stigma and misinformation around children's mental health. Through the "#ISpeakUp Selfie campaign," we used social media to bring children's mental health the attention it truly deserves. **Check out all the selfies on the Campaign's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/1in5kids) or on Twitter (@vakids).**



We champion public policies to improve the lives of Virginia's children.

701 East Franklin Street, Suite 807 • Richmond, Virginia 23219 • 804.649.0184 • info@vakids.org

