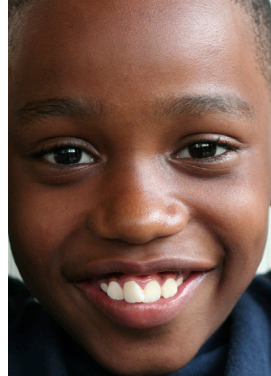




For Virginia's
Children



WINTER NEWSLETTER

2015/2016



Happy holidays from Voices for Virginia's Children!

We are excited about the important gains we've made for kids this year—greater safety in child care, more mental health crisis services for kids throughout the state and telepsychiatry in rural areas, and more funding for therapies that help babies and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities, to name just a few.

As always, working in coalition with other organizations and families is the key to our success. At our fourth annual Carol S. Fox Making Kids Count Award Reception in October, we honored three of our outstanding advocacy partners. Look inside the newsletter to read more about the significant accomplishments of Elly Lafkin, Grace and David Gallagher, and Family Lifeline.

We are proud of all that we accomplished this year and have a long list of goals for 2016. Voices is one of the few organizations that is completely supported by private funds—we do not take any public funding. We are proud of that fact because it allows us to remain independent as we advocate at the local, state, and federal levels for investments in kids. Being independent, non-partisan, and data-driven are characteristics that lead to our success for kids. We are incredibly grateful for our individual, foundation, and corporate supporters who also believe in our mission.

If you are not yet a financial supporter of Voices, I would ask you to consider an end-of-the-year tax-deductible donation. Every gift counts, just as every voice raised up for kids makes a difference. Together, we can continue to improve the lives of kids in Virginia.

Thank you!

Margaret Nimmo Crowe,
Executive Director

Voices and WCVE partner for Candidate Forum



From left to right: Marleen Durfee, Dan Gecker, Carl Loser, and Glen Sturtevant

This year, all 140 state legislative seats were on the ballot in November, but none was more closely watched than the 10th District Senate seat, which became available due to the retirement of Sen. John Watkins. Democrats were trying to win control of the state Senate by picking up a one-seat advantage in this election.

On Tuesday, August 18th, Voices sponsored the 10th Senate District Candidate Forum, hosted by WCVE, the public radio station in Richmond. The event drew approximately 140 people to hear all four candidates speak publicly together for the first time. WCVE aired the program later in the week.

Focusing on the most competitive legislative race in the state allowed Voices for Virginia’s Children to highlight children’s issues during election season.

Republican Glen Sturtevant went on to win the race, helping Republicans maintain a majority in the state Senate. You can listen to the forum on WCVE’s website to hear his thoughts on children’s issues. (<http://ideastations.org/radio/news/10th-senate-district-candidates-forum>).

Carol S. Fox Making Kids Count Reception was a success!



On October 7, 200 guests joined Voices for Virginia’s Children at the Bolling Haxall House in Richmond to celebrate the fourth annual Carol S. Fox Making Kids Count Awards Reception. Each year, the event recognizes an individual and organization that had a significant impact on the lives of Virginia’s children. This year’s recipients were Elly Lafkin, Grace and David Gallagher, and Family Lifeline.

Elly Lafkin, of Shenandoah, has become an extraordinary advocate for safety in child care because of her daughter Camden’s death in an unsafe child care arrangement. Elly has worked tirelessly to organize other families who have experienced similar losses and to speak out to elected officials.

Grace and David Gallagher are changing the conversation about adolescent depression in Richmond and beyond with the Cameron K. Gallagher Foundation and its signature event, the Speak Up 5k. The Gallaghers’ teenage daughter Cameron was living with severe depression and anxiety at the time she died from an undiagnosed heart condition at the end of the Shamrock Half Marathon in March 2014.

Family Lifeline has worked for almost 140 years to bring health and hope into the homes of many of the most at-risk families living in greater Richmond and Petersburg. It is the largest provider of early childhood intensive home visiting in the region and one of the largest providers of evidence-based home-visiting services in the state.

Voices for Virginia’s Children would like to thank our Title Sponsor (AT&T), Reception Sponsor (Dominion), all other sponsors, distinguished guests, and our emcee Lisa Schaffner for helping to raise \$47,000. Details of next year’s event will be announced in the summer. Please see back of newsletter for a picture of the winners.





Looking Ahead

Here at Voices, we have big plans for the 2016 General Assembly session!

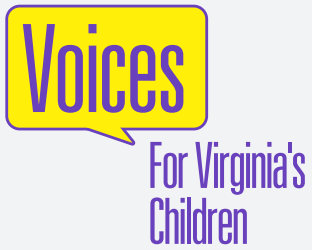
2016 is a critical year for Gov. Terry McAuliffe’s policy agenda. This month he unveils his version of the state budget for the next two years, which will feature the policy initiatives most important to his administration. The legislature will then consider changes to his introduced budget, along with thousands of bills. We have been working with the administration and with legislators to ensure kids’ issues are a high priority.



What will we be fighting for? Here are a few of our highest priorities, and you can see our full legislative agenda at www.vakids.org:

-  • **Fostering Futures:** We are determined to bring the Fostering Futures program over the finish line this year. This is an initiative that would allow Virginia to draw down significant federal dollars to support the more than 500 youth who age out of the foster care system every year as they work, go to school, and move toward independence.
-  • **Expanding home visiting for vulnerable families:** For the first time, Virginia’s home visiting programs, including Healthy Families and CHIP of Virginia, have banded together to request expansion funds through the Home Visiting Consortium. Currently, only 10% of eligible families are able to participate in home visiting, and that figure can and should be higher.
-  • **Expanding mental health crisis services and child psychiatry:** We continue to advocate for expansion of these highly impactful services for which we have fought the last four years. Mobile crisis teams, crisis stabilization units for children, consultation between child psychiatrists and pediatricians, and telepsychiatry are just some of the treatment options made available for kids through this funding.
-  • **Transforming Virginia’s juvenile justice system:** The time has come to change how we handle juvenile offenders. Research shows that incarcerating youth in large state prisons (as Virginia does), far from family and without mental health treatment or other rehabilitative services, only leads to high recidivism rates. Voices is part of the newly-formed RISE for Youth Coalition that is seeking a more effective juvenile justice system. You can learn more at www.riseforyouth.org.

Please visit our website to learn how you can join our efforts: sign up for emails, speak up at the budget hearings on January 7, 2016, and join us for Mental Health Advocacy Day on January 27, 2016.



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2015 Carol S. Fox Making Kids Count Award Winners: Amy Strite of Family Lifeline, David and Grace Gallagher, and Elly Lafkin