

A photograph of four young children of diverse backgrounds holding hands in a circle on a green lawn. From left to right: a boy in a red shirt and white shorts, a girl in a pink floral dress, a girl in a white floral top and blue jeans (seen from behind), and a girl in a red dress. They are all smiling and looking towards the center. In the background, there is a brick building and trees.

Voices

For Virginia's
Children

**ANNUAL
REPORT 2015
AND
2016 SUMMER
NEWSLETTER**

GREETINGS FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR



Dear Friends,

At Voices for Virginia’s Children, 2015 was a year of significant wins for children in public policy and funding related to early care and education and mental health, and included laying the groundwork for policy advances in 2016 in foster care and juvenile justice. We helped develop an electorate that is better informed about children’s issues by sponsoring a candidate forum in the pivotal 10th state Senate district last August. We also revamped our website, www.vakids.org, to make it easier to find the information you need about these issues, thanks to a generous capacity-building grant from the Meyer Foundation.



We are grateful for the growing support from individuals around the Commonwealth who recognize the importance of having an independent, data-driven voice for children at the State Capitol and beyond. In 2015, The Champions’ Circle, a group of donors who commit to give \$1,000 or more for three consecutive years, grew from 8 to 16. We are also grateful for the ongoing support of many of our corporate and foundation partners, including the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which entrusts Voices with the Virginia Kids Count Data Center. Please take a moment to read the entire list of our generous supporters.

We have continued to lead advocacy efforts for children in 2016, and you can read more about our successful General Assembly session in this report. This year has also brought two staff changes at Voices. Our Kids Count Director, Ted Groves, passed away in March. Voices will honor his contributions by bestowing the Theodore R. Groves Memorial Award as part of our 2016 Carol S. Fox Making Kids Count Awards on October 5. Please learn more about the awards on our website, www.vakids.org.

We are also losing Senior Policy Attorney Amy Woolard after nearly five years of dedicated work on behalf of children in the foster care and juvenile justice systems. We will miss having her as part of our team but look forward to working with her as a partner in her new role at the Legal Aid Justice Center. This summer, we are recruiting for both of these positions and are confident we will add more talented professionals to our team.

We could not fight for Virginia’s children without the support of our outstanding Board of Directors, Council of Advisors, generous supporters, and partner organizations. Thank you for helping us make 2015 a year of important wins for kids.

Sincerely,

Jamie Clancey

Jamie Dyke Clancey
Chair, Board of Directors

Margaret Nimmo Holland

Margaret Nimmo Holland
Executive Director



Individuals from around the state gathered on Mental Health Advocacy Day.



Youth advocates spoke to legislative aides at Youth for RISE Lobby Day.



Del. Christopher K. Peace addressed students on foster care while other delegates waited their turn.

WINS FOR KIDS IN THE 2016 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Voices for Virginia’s Children is the Commonwealth’s only multi-issue child advocacy organization. We work with policymakers on both sides of the aisle to advocate for laws and funding that improve the lives of Virginia’s children in critical ways. This year we experienced success for young children at-risk, for children of all ages who live with mental health challenges, and for youth involved in the foster care and juvenile justice systems. Thank you to our many organizational partners and the individual advocates who took time to contact their legislators or joined us at the Capitol on advocacy days!



Early Childhood Home Visiting funding increased. The Voices-led Early Childhood Policy Network championed the need to expand evidence-based home visiting programs for at-risk new families. An additional \$13.5 million was allocated to support expansion of Healthy Families, CHIP of Virginia, and Resource Mothers.

Why is this important? Home visiting programs are shown to reduce incidences of child abuse and neglect, improve child health outcomes, and help connect parents to employment. Only 12% of the estimated 100,000 children in Virginia who are at-risk are currently being served by these two-generation interventions.



Increased funding to support babies and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities. Gov. McAuliffe proposed the General Assembly approved an additional \$4.2 million in Part C intervention services so that Virginia can serve all babies and toddlers who are identified as having delays and disabilities.

Why is this important? Part C is a federal entitlement – requiring state matching funds – designed to provide early intervention services to babies and toddlers with developmental issues. Children’s brains develop most rapidly in the first three years of life; intervening early means 20% of those children served do not need to continue therapies once they turn three because they have caught up with their peers.



Del. Tag Greason spoke on early childhood issues.



Guests at the Early Childhood Policy Network breakfast listened to legislators who support early childhood education.



Foster care advocates attended a floor session at the Virginia Capitol.



Sen. Barbara Favola met with the youth during Foster Care Advocacy Day.



Youth and foster care champions spoke about the importance of the Fostering Futures program at the General Assembly.



Sen. Frank Ruff spoke with the youth on their concerns for the current juvenile justice system.



52% increase in funding for child psychiatry and children’s mental health crisis response services. Through our Campaign for Children’s Mental Health, Voices has been advocating for increasing the capacity of communities to provide mental health services for children and youth. For the fifth year in a row, due to Voices’ persistence, the General Assembly allocated additional resources for these two core services; the total allocation to communities will be more than \$10 million in state fiscal year 2018.

Why is this important? An estimated 130,000 children and youth in Virginia live with a serious mental health disorder, but many are not able to access the care they need. A 2011 study by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services found that child psychiatry and crisis response services were the two most important and most lacking mental health services throughout the Commonwealth, and the Campaign for Children’s Mental Health has been advocating to increase their availability ever since.



Fostering Futures program adopted. For the last three years, Voices has led the effort to have Virginia adopt this program, which will provide state and matching federal funds to assist youth who age out of Virginia’s foster care system at age 18 without any permanent family connections. Funds are used for critical housing and casework support, as well as other independent living assistance for youth ages 18-21 who are working and/or in school, helping them achieve stability and independence.

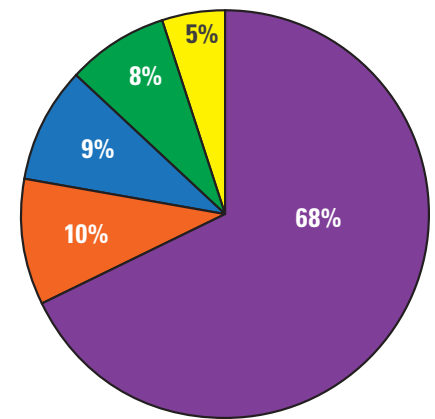
Why is this important? From 2008 to 2015, more than 5375 youth “aged out” of Virginia’s foster care system with no permanent family connections; Virginia has the worst rank in the country on this measure. Without help, one in five of these youth will become homeless, only 58% of them will graduate high school by age 19 (compared to 87% of general population), and one in four will become involved in the criminal justice system within two years of turning 18.



Reform of Virginia’s juvenile justice system. Voices helped guide proposals on reforming the failing juvenile justice system as part of the steering committee for the RISE for Youth Coalition. As a result of this year’s efforts, one of the state’s two juvenile correctional centers will be closing, with funds reinvested in a community-based continuum of services. One or more smaller facilities, aimed at rehabilitating youth, will be built to replace the correctional center.

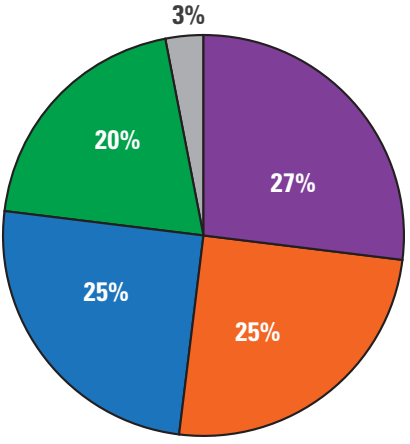
Why is this important? Virginia’s juvenile justice system is costly, unfair, and ineffective. Many youth incarcerated in the state’s facilities are there for minor offenses, and youth of color are much more likely to be incarcerated than white youth who commit the same offenses. The Department of Juvenile Justice’s latest three-year re-conviction rate for youth committed and released from a juvenile prison is 73.5%. Research and experience from other states point to more effective and efficient alternatives to protect public safety and reduce recidivism.

SCHEDULE OF INCOME FOR 2015



Foundations	\$441,250
Corporations	\$30,049
Organizations	\$59,295
Individual	\$62,165
Other	\$51,766
Total Income	\$644,525

SCHEDULE OF EXPENSES FOR 2015



KIDS COUNT	\$136,599
Early Childhood	\$125,726
Health and Mental Health	\$127,174
Foster care and Adoption	\$103,880
Family Economic Success	\$16,029
Total Program and Advocacy	\$509,408
Capacity and Growth	\$16,532
Lobbying	\$14,983
Management and Development	\$170,514
Total Expenses	\$711,437



CHAMPIONS’ CIRCLE SPOTLIGHT

Voices for Virginia’s Children introduced its first ever major gifts society in 2014. With eight inaugural members, The Champions’ Circle provided an opportunity for child advocates to help build a reliable base of support for our current and future work.

To join The Champions’ Circle, members make a three-year financial commitment of \$1,000 or more. This commitment provides Voices with the stability and flexibility to respond to the emerging needs of the Commonwealth’s children. It ensures that Voices remains the leading independent, non-partisan advocate for children at the State Capitol. As you know, Voices operates entirely through private funding, enabling us to put the interests of Virginia’s children first.

To learn more about The Champions’ Circle, contact **Michael Brown, Director of Development** at **804-649-0184 ext. 22** or **michael@vakids.org**.

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Friends and supporters mingled during our annual awards reception.

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- \$25,000 - \$99,999
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Rhudy & Co. showed why they support Voices.



Newport News Parks and Recreation staff presented a check to Voices.



Carol Fox, Carter Fox, Margaret Keightley and Jerry Keightley enjoyed the Making Kids Count reception.

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RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

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KIDS COUNT**
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