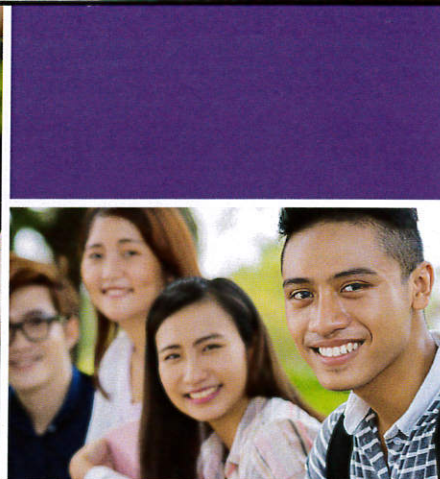


The logo for 'Voices' is a yellow speech bubble with the word 'Voices' in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

For Virginia's
Children



WINTER NEWSLETTER 2016/2017



Dear Friends,

What a great year of accomplishments for kids we've had here at Voices.

Among the wins for Virginia's children:

- **Virginia's youth in foster care who "age out" at 18 without having been adopted or reunited with family now have a lifeline**, thanks to the new Fostering Futures program. Our three-year advocacy effort led to bipartisan support for this initiative that pays for housing and other supports up to age 21 for these vulnerable young people as they attend school or work.
- **Babies and young children born into poverty or other disadvantaged situations are more likely to get a safe, stable, and healthy start in life**, thanks to the additional \$13 million in funding allocated by the legislature for home visiting programs such as Healthy Families and CHIP. Voices helped lead the effort to boost funding for expansion of these programs that help two generations at a time.
- **The families of children with mental health disorders are more likely to be able to access immediate help in a crisis**, as well as to have prompt access to a child psychiatrist, thanks to the fifth year of a funding increase from the General Assembly to communities across the Commonwealth. Voices' Campaign for Children's Mental Health remains out front on this issue.

We were also proud to share the story of Ryan Speedo Green, Suffolk native who overcame an incredibly challenging childhood to sing now on the world's biggest opera stages. A book about his journey, *Sing For Your Life*, authored by Daniel Bergner, was released to great acclaim in September. By the time this reaches you, "Voices Uplifted!" — an event the two men partnered on to benefit our organization — will have occurred at The Barns at Wolf Trap. We are grateful for their generosity in furthering our mission.

We celebrate these successes, yet our work is far from finished.

Our Commonwealth faces a sizeable budget deficit, which means that our wins for children must be fiercely guarded so that children do not suffer as a result. Changes at the federal level will no doubt bring a new set of challenges and opportunities affecting child well-being. Throughout it all, we remain steadfast in our commitment to improving the lives of Virginia's children.

Your support enables us to make that commitment, and I ask that you consider Voices in your year-end giving. The children of Virginia need us to be vigilant and passionate advocates on their behalf, and we are grateful we can do this important work together.

Best wishes for a happy holiday season and a wonderful 2017.

Sincerely,

Margaret Nimmo Holland
Executive Director

VOICES HONORS FOUR FOR CHILD ADVOCACY WORK

Voices for Virginia's Children was proud to host its fifth annual "Carol S. Fox Making Kids Count Award" reception at the Bolling Haxall House on October 5.

The awards were created in 2012 to honor Carol Spaulding Fox for her commitment to Virginia's children and youth. The 2016 Fox awards went to Jeanine Harper of Richmond for her work with Greater Richmond SCAN and ART 180 of Richmond for their work to encourage young people to express themselves through art.

This year, Voices honored Theodore (Ted) R. Groves, a valued member of our team who was instrumental in our efforts to examine racial and ethnic disparities in child well-being. Ted, who passed away in March, would have been pleased that we recognized Hopkins House of Northern Virginia, which provides educational opportunities for at-risk children and families, and ChildSavers of Central Virginia for their ongoing work to ensure that children have the best possible chance to grow up strong and healthy.

Thank you to Lisa Schaffner, who served as the evening's mistress of ceremonies, and to title sponsor Dominion for its generous support.

Senator Siobhan S. Dunnavant, former Virginia Secretary of Education Anne Holton, and Virginia Secretary of Health and Human Resources William A. Hazel Jr. joined us for our celebratory evening.



Delegate Jennifer L. McClellan, a long-time supporter of Voices' work, poses with Matthew Freeman and Tiffany Jana of TMI Consulting, Inc., one of the evening's sponsors.



Welcome!

Voices adds new board and staff members

Voices is pleased to welcome three new members of its Board of Directors.

Laurie Flynn of Alexandria worked at Columbia University's Department of Psychiatry, focusing on teen suicide prevention services. She served for 16 years as the executive director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). She has served as a board member of The Mind Research Network, NAMI NYC, and the National Network of Child Psychiatry Access Programs, based at Johns Hopkins. She now volunteers at the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria and as a tutor at a public elementary school.

Jennifer Gentry of Richmond is currently vice chancellor for institutional advancement with the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) where she is responsible for private fundraising, public relations, and marketing. She started the VCCS scholarship program — Great Expectations — for former foster care youth. Jennifer also serves as an adjunct faculty member with the University of Richmond's Institute on Philanthropy.

Annie Kasper of Richmond has a deep background in nonprofits and fundraising from serving on the boards of directors of Boaz & Ruth (Richmond) and Emerge Virginia. She also has served on the boards of state-level groups, such as the Council on Women and Capital Square

Preservation Council. Annie currently serves as board chair for Kasper Mortgage Capital.

In addition to these new board members, Voices has two new staff members.

S. Beth Nolan recently joined us as our KIDS COUNT director. Beth has deep experience in policy analysis, outreach, advocacy, and project management. She previously worked at Voices for Vermont's Children and most recently at the Virginia Health Care Foundation. Beth earned a bachelor's degree in political science from James Madison University and a master of public administration from the University of Vermont.

Allison Gilbreath is Voices' policy analyst for foster care and juvenile justice. Allison began her career with Prevent Child Abuse Virginia and most recently worked with the lieutenant governor's office, where she supported the Commonwealth Council on Childhood Success. Allison is a court-appointed special advocate (CASA) and has been appointed to the CASA/Children's Justice Act Advisory Board for the Department of Criminal Justice Services. Allison earned both her bachelor's and master's degrees in social work from Virginia Commonwealth University.



KIDS COUNT Data Center:

offering a wealth of information about Virginia's kids

Did you know there are more than 200 indicators on child well-being in Virginia's KIDS COUNT Data Center? Nearly 40 of those indicators are provided at the locality. This means you can look at how the county or city you live in compares to others in Virginia on topics such as child economic well-being, education, health, and foster care.

Voices works year-round to maintain this data and provide the most available and up-to-date so **you know how children are faring in Virginia.**

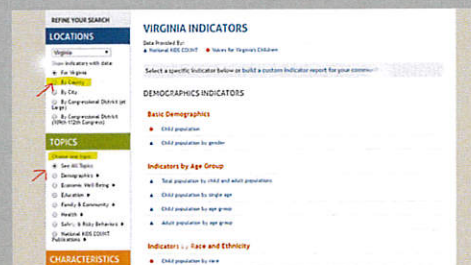
Now you can go to our KIDS COUNT Data Center and find out just how many children live below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) at 200 percent,

100 percent, and 50 percent. Recently, we added child food insecurity and households with a single parent as indicators.

Please visit our KIDS COUNT Data Center and see how children in your geographic area are faring. While you're at it, take a look at Voices' Data Page on our website to see what publications are available that might be useful in your own work with children and families.

And, keep an eye out. Voices is still refining, updating, and adding indicators it tracks, and will have updated locality-level infographics in the coming months.

Visit vakids.org/kids-count-data



VOICES' FIRST PRIORITY: PROTECTING VIRGINIA'S INVESTMENTS IN CHILDREN

Virginia faces a \$1.5 billion shortfall in the state budget, which must be balanced. After making significant progress last year for kids with investments in early childhood, mental health, foster care, and juvenile justice, we must fight to keep these funds. Otherwise, young children in at-risk families will be more vulnerable to abuse and neglect, children with urgent mental health needs will have to wait longer for help, and youth aging out of foster care with no family at age 18 will once again be left on their own.

Additionally, Voices will work to address the following issues in the upcoming General Assembly session:

- Adequately fund the Part C Early Intervention program that promotes the healthy development of babies and toddlers who are born with disabilities or delays.
- Continue efforts to improve the safety of child care in all settings.
- Support public-private partnerships for pre-K that ensure quality care for at-risk students in communities around the state.
- Ensure the safety and stability of children who are placed with relatives instead of in formal foster care by strengthening Virginia's "kinship diversion" system.
- Strive for more positive outcomes for justice-involved youth by continuing to monitor Virginia's juvenile justice system reform, ensuring that a broad array of services is available in communities statewide and that the families of these youth are involved in their rehabilitation.
- Continue to push for a transformation of Virginia's behavioral health care system that better addresses the needs of children and parents.
- Educate lawmakers on the brain research on the effects of children growing up in environments of toxic stress and about the efforts of a growing number of Virginia communities to encourage resilience and address trauma in children and families, laying the groundwork for more evidence-based state policies.



Wishing you and yours a warm, wonderful holiday season!

The Voices staff tries on some cold weather clothing for all those upcoming treks to the General Assembly this winter, where they will continue to advocate for Virginia's most vulnerable children. Best wishes for a warm, wonderful holiday from all of us at Voices for Virginia's Children!

Front row, left to right: Beth Nolan, Emily Griffey, and Ashley Everette.

Back row: left to right: Margaret Nimmo Holland, Michael Brown, Allison Gilbreath, and Nikkia Johnson.



For Virginia's
Children

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Help us help kids! Use your voice to help us advocate for Virginia's children. Visit vakids.org to:



Join Our Network

Sign up to read our blog, join our mailing list, and receive our informational emails.



Lend Your Voice

Voice your support for children by contacting policymakers to advocate for improvements in our laws.



Invest in Virginia's Children

Make a donation to help us continue our work helping thousands of Virginia's most vulnerable children. Your contribution is tax deductible.

visit us at vakids.org