

1606 Santa Rosa Road + Suite 109 • Henrico, Virginia 23229 • 804.649.0184 • [info@vakids.org](mailto:info@vakids.org) • [vakids.org](http://vakids.org)



Voices is thrilled to announce that our policy analyst, Allison Gilbreath, has been named a 2019 *Style Weekly* Top 40 Under 40! She has been recognized for helping to make Richmond a better place through her accomplishments for youth in the foster care field and mentorship of the next generation of social workers with her alma mater, Virginia Commonwealth University — all before the age of 40. Allison is featured in *Style Weekly's* Top 40 Under 40 issue.

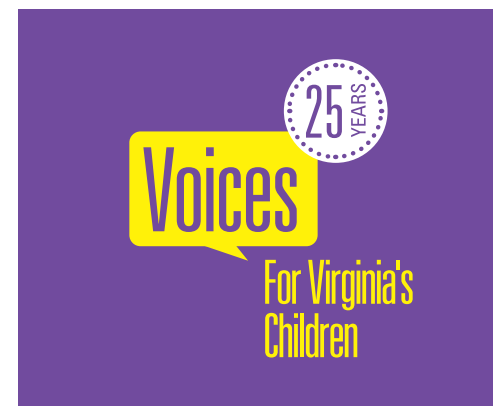
## Join us at the General Assembly and be a voice for kids!

Prepare to make your voice heard during the 2020 General Assembly Session!

Find more information and dates for advocacy days, tools for advocates, and talking points on our website at [vakids.org](http://vakids.org)



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## WINTER NEWSLETTER 2019 – 2020



### Dear Friends,

As we close out 2019, we reflect on 25 years of advocating for children across the Commonwealth. What an exciting silver anniversary year that included 1,000 advocates



Johanna Schuchert



Keith Hare

joining us for the Virginia Summit on Childhood Trauma & Resilience in April. We celebrated the foresight of our founders who ensured that children were represented by an independent voice at the state capitol and beyond. We now renew our commitment to expand our efforts to shape policies that create a brighter future for Virginia's youngest residents. After 6 years at the helm, our Executive Director, Margaret Nimmo Holland moved on to other endeavors. Her outstanding leadership will be missed as the board seeks her replacement.

During the upcoming 2020 General Assembly Session, Voices will encounter a new environment for advocacy.

While leadership may have changed, our efforts to promote access to early childhood education, improve the foster care system, and address children's mental health have not.

To ensure success we will continue to work in a nonpartisan manner to bring data-informed policy solutions to the table and the strong voice of advocates to the halls of the General Assembly. Voices looks forward to engaging with the new and returning members of the General Assembly to keep kids' priorities front and center. We will focus on how policy will impact equitable opportunities for children who

are often overlooked because of their families' income, their race, or their location.

Our role as advocates is about bringing the perspective of those who are impacted by the laws to the people shaping legislation. Our staff is poised to seize opportunities to help create better laws and public investments.

Thanks to your support and participation, we have great momentum! Maintaining this momentum takes resources, however, and we ask you to consider a year-end gift to Voices for Virginia's Children. Together, we can serve as the "go-to" resource for policymakers when it comes to helping Virginia's children thrive.

Sincerely,

Johanna Schuchert  
Interim Executive Director

Keith Hare  
Chair, Board of Directors

### 25TH ANNIVERSARY HONORARY COUNCIL

*Chair*

**First Lady of Virginia Pamela Northam**

**Ms. Jeannie Baliles**

**The Honorable James Dyke, Jr.**

**Mrs. Carol Fox**

**Mrs. Margaret Freeman**

**The Honorable Eva Teig Hardy**

**The Honorable William A. Hazel, Jr.**

**The Honorable Anne Holton**

**Mrs. Jinks Holton**

**The Honorable William C. Mims**

**Ms. Renette Oklewicz**

**Ms. Deborah Oswalt**

**Mr. Xavier Richardson**

**Mr. David Robinson**



# VIRGINIA SUMMIT ON CHILDHOOD TRAUMA & RESILIENCE

Voices for Virginia's Children hosted the first-of-its-kind Virginia Summit on Childhood Trauma & Resilience. The Summit was a key milestone in the Campaign for a Trauma-informed Virginia and focused on both policy changes and practices to prevent adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and promote resilience.

Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, founder of the Center for Youth Wellness and Surgeon General of California, was the keynote speaker on April 25, 2019 at the Greater Richmond Convention Center. Both

Governor Northam and First Lady Pamela Northam addressed the crowd of nearly 1,000 people.

To provide context for Virginia's efforts to improve trauma-informed policy and practice, members of the Governor's administration and the General Assembly shared their perspectives on a policy panel.

The afternoon featured nine breakout sessions highlighting trauma-informed care practices featuring presenters exclusively from Virginia. These breakout

sessions touched on trauma-informed practices in education, the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act, trauma-informed leadership in health care systems and law enforcement, and the intersection of racial equity and trauma.



**POLICY PANEL:** Daniel Carey - Secretary of Health and Human Resources, Sen. Siobhan Dunnivant, Sen. Jennifer McClellan, Del. Jeff Bourne, and Del. Chris Peace

The Summit closed with a focus on proactive and positive ways to release stress and engage youth with Healing the Community with Rhythm by the Drums No Guns Foundation.



Nearly 1,000 people attend the first-of-its-kind Virginia Summit on Childhood Trauma & Resilience in April

## Voices Celebrates 25 Years of Advocating for Kids



25th Anniversary Honorary Chair First Lady Pamela Northam gives the opening remarks

For 25 years, Voices for Virginia's Children has been fulfilling its mission to champion public policies that improve the lives of children. As we celebrate our quarter century anniversary, we acknowledge the foresight and determination of our founders, who ensured that — even though children cannot vote — they are represented by an independent, nonpartisan voice at the state capitol and beyond.

After the Virginia Summit on Childhood Trauma & Resilience on April 25, 2019, we celebrated our years of success with a reception

at the Hippodrome Theater. We recognized our founders, as well as past and present legislators on both sides of the aisle who have supported policies that enable Virginia's children to live their best lives.

We look forward to the next 25 years with a commitment to speak up for the needs of Virginia's children.



25th anniversary honorees of current and past legislative champions: Del. Emily Brewer, Del. Jeff Bourne, Sen. Monty Mason, Del. Betsy Carr, Sen. George Barker, Sen. Janet Howell, Sen. Emmett Hanger, Del. Ken Plum, Del. John O'Bannon, Justice Bill Mims, Sen. Edd Houck, and Del. Chris Peace. *Not Pictured:* Sen. Jennifer McClellan, Sen. Siobhan Dunnivant, Del. Mark Sickles, Sen. Barbara Favola



Nadine Burke Harris and Anne Holton join the festivities

## Voices Welcomes New Staff



Lauren Snellings joined Voices in April as the Research Director. Lauren is responsible for providing data and research expertise that informs our policy work.

She manages the Virginia KIDS COUNT data platform, supporting the Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT efforts. She also leads our 2020 Census advocacy and education initiatives. She is an appointed Commissioner on the Virginia Complete Count Commission.

Lauren is an epidemiologist with a strong research background having most recently worked at the Center on Society and Health studying social determinants of health. Lauren earned her Masters in Public Health from VCU and graduated from James Madison University with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health Education.

## Raise Your Voice Open raises over \$14,000

In September, golfers enjoyed a sunny day at Hunting Hawk Golf Club for some friendly competition during the Raise Your Voice Open. It was a fun-filled day where we raised over \$14,000 to champion public policies that improve the lives of Virginia's children.

Tournament participants enjoyed a variety of competitions in addition to 18 holes of golf. Competitions included closest to the pin, longest drive, and 250 yard range challenge. We also had awesome raffles prizes thanks to generous donors including Virginia Repertory Theater, The Richmond Flying Squirrels, Mise en Place and many more!

Voices thanks all the sponsors, supporters, and participants who made the tournament an exciting and successful fundraiser!



Golfers practice on the range before the tournament



The first place winners, Team Foundry Fathers

## Advocating for Virginia's Children

Our staff began preparing for the 2020 General Assembly session when the last session ended. Voices' team has provided expertise to shape early childhood policy, to study school-based health centers, and to review state policies to become more trauma-informed since last March. We hope that many of our ideas will be included in Governor Northam's budget proposal and endorsed by the Children's Cabinet in December. Our work throughout the year means that Voices' team is well-prepared to take our initiatives to a Democratically-controlled House and Senate, even when many of our long-standing champions will have retired from the legislature.

Our 2020 policy agenda will focus on:

- reducing racial disparities in maternal mortality and birth outcomes for Black mothers by extending health insurance coverage for low-income pregnant women.
- leveling the playing field for low-income children to afford and attend high-quality preschool by advocating for additional flexibility of state preschool funds.

- demonstrating the need for early childhood mental health consultation in early childhood programs to avoid expulsion of preschool students.
- reducing the impact of secondary trauma and caseworker turnover for children in the foster care system by increasing salaries for case workers.
- increasing investments in community-based networks focused on trauma-informed practices.

We will have many opportunities to meet with legislators, testify at hearings, and shape the conversation. Please consider setting aside time during your busy lives to join us as advocates for Virginia's children.



Emily Griffey  
Policy Director  
emily@vakids.org



Ashley Everette  
Policy Analyst  
ashley@vakids.org



Allison Gilbreath  
Policy Analyst  
allison@vakids.org