



## WINTER NEWSLETTER 2017–2018



### Dear Friends,

This year, children and youth had the opportunity to put Virginia’s gubernatorial candidates on the hot seat, asking them questions

about what they would do for kids if elected governor. Voices for Virginia’s Children hosted the first-ever gubernatorial candidate forum focused solely on children’s issues on Sept. 8 at Reynolds Community College in Henrico County.

Youth moderators Sophia Booker, Steven Scherping, and Morgan Stanley asked candidates Ed Gillespie and Ralph Northam tough questions about how they would address the effect of the opioid crisis on children, expand mental health services to children and youth, and tackle the achievement gaps in education, among other issues. Close to 200 citizens attended the event, and thousands of others read about it through statewide media coverage or watched the videos on our website.

In addition to hosting the forum, Voices developed a comprehensive, nonpartisan election guide, “The Future of Virginia Starts Today,” to help partner organizations and citizens ask candidates thoughtful questions about a wide range of issues affecting children and families. Our staff trained dozens of organizations and hundreds of people throughout the commonwealth on the use of

the guide during the 2017 election cycle. This effort led to many candidates talking about issues not normally addressed during campaign season, such as how to mitigate the effects of trauma on children.

Now that the election is over, Voices looks forward to working with Gov.-elect Northam and the new and returning members of the General Assembly to keep kids’ priorities front and center. Thanks to your support and participation, we have great momentum moving into the 2018 General Assembly session and the first year of the new administration.

**Virginia’s  
kids are  
counting  
on us.**

Maintaining this momentum takes resources, however, and so I ask you to consider a year-end gift to Voices for Virginia’s Children. Together, we can serve as a valuable resource to our newly elected policymakers as they turn to the challenges of governing.

Sincerely,

**Margaret Nimmo Holland**  
*Executive Director*

## VOICES HONORS THREE FOR CHILD ADVOCACY WORK

Voices for Virginia's Children hosted the sixth annual Carol S. Fox Making Kids Count Awards Reception Oct. 4 at Richmond's John Marshall Ballrooms in recognition of the work being done to improve the lives of Virginia's children.

Created in 2012, the awards were named in honor of Carol Spaulding Fox, a founder, long-time board member, and board chairwoman of Voices (originally the Action Alliance for Virginia's Children and Youth).

This year, Janice Dinkins Davidson of Roanoke received an award honoring her strategic leadership of Children's Trust, a multi-faceted organization focused on the prevention of child abuse and advocacy for children's rights.

St. Joseph's Villa was recognized for its programs reaching more than 3,000 Central Virginia children and families facing mental illness, homelessness, autism, and other challenges. The final award went to the Virginia Latino Higher

Education Network for supporting and advocating for Latino success and advancement in higher education.

Lisa Schaffner, United Network for Organ Sharing public relations director and former TV news anchor, facilitated a panel discussion featuring the award recipients.

Thanks in part to our title sponsor, Dominion; our reception sponsor, AT&T; and other sponsors, the event raised \$60,000—the most in its six-year history. We thank all our sponsors, VIPs, and some 200 attendees for making this a night to remember!

**This year's Carol S. Fox awards honored Janice Dinkins Davidson (executive director of Children's Trust), St. Joseph's Villa (represented by Kathleen Burke Barrett), and Virginia Latino Higher Education Network (represented by Dr. Elda Stanco Downey and Dr. Maricel Quintana-Baker).**



**Above: Delegate Betsy Carr, Secretary of Health and Human Services William Hazel Jr., and St. Joseph's Villa CEO Kathleen Burke Barrett shared a laugh at the Carol S. Fox reception.**



**Left: Aunetta Gardner and Tiffany Ferrell of ncgCARE enjoyed the festivities.**



## Welcome!

### Voices adds new board and staff members

Voices is pleased to welcome five new members to its board of directors.

**Richard Bennett Jr., M.D.**, of Richmond is a pediatrician who works in private practice with his mother, Dr. Lillie Bennett. He is a member of the St. Joseph's Villa Board of Trustees, chief medical officer at Richmond Community Hospital, and principal investigator with Clinical Research Partners, LLC. Richard is a member of several professional associations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics.

**Kristin Bolton** of Manakin-Sabot is vice president and manager of the Strategic Market Services Division of Fidelity National Title Insurance Company. She is a member of the board of Do Rights Incorporated (juvenile diabetes) and recently served three terms on the board of Family Lifeline. She is a prior American Heart Association Heart Walk Executive Leadership member.

**Katharine Bond** of Richmond is executive director of the Dominion Foundation and director of public policy for the foundation's corporate parent, Dominion Resources, Inc. She works as a lobbyist before the Virginia General Assembly and is Dominion's public policy lead on renewable energy. Katharine serves on the Longwood University Board of Visitors, the College Building Authority of Virginia, and the Solar Energy Development Authority of Virginia.

**Karen Fralin** of Roanoke is a Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) volunteer. She began her volunteer work with the Child Abuse Prevention Council, teaching parenting classes to individuals mandated by the court to attend. She previously worked as the administrative director of the Shedd Montessori School in Roanoke.

**Crystal Twitty, Esq.**, of Sandston is the CEO and founder of Twitty Legal Consulting, a firm specializing in employment law and human resource compliance. She is a current board member of the Ronald McDonald House and a previous board member of Prevent Child Abuse Virginia. Prior to opening her own firm, Crystal was an assistant attorney general (2006-2011), associate counsel at the Virginia Community College System, and director of policy and compliance at John Tyler Community College.

In addition to these new board members, Voices welcomes a new staff member.

**Cassie Price** is Voices communications coordinator. She has been a freelance writer and editor for many years. Prior to joining Voices, she worked at the University of Richmond for 16 years, first at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies and then at the Bonner Center for Civic Engagement, where she focused on communications and managed the university's largest civic engagement program.

## In Memory of Rosel Schewel

I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Rosel Schewel of Lynchburg on Sept. 28 at the age of 89. Rosel dedicated her life to contributing to her community and improving the lives of children.

In 1994, Voices for Virginia's Children launched under the name the Action Alliance for Virginia's Children and Youth. Rosel joined the board the next year, providing wisdom and guidance at a critical time. At Voices, we believe every child deserves to grow up in a safe and stable environment with the opportunity to thrive — and Rosel's entire career was a living embodiment of this vision.

Among Rosel's many accomplishments was her almost 20-year career teaching at Lynchburg College's School of Education and Human Development. She was also a long-time Central Virginia

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) volunteer, speaking up for children who'd been abused and neglected as their cases went through court. She believed wholeheartedly that all children matter.

I am grateful Rosel was serving on the board of Voices when I was first hired in 2000. Her vision, candor, and can-do attitude inspired me. She and her husband of 68 years — former state Sen. Elliot Schewel — have been active supporters of our organization since the beginning. All of us at Voices are incredibly grateful for her leadership, which will continue to inspire us as we live out our mission to champion public policies that improve the lives of Virginia's children.

**Margaret Nimmo Holland**

## ADVOCATING FOR VIRGINIA'S CHILDREN: NEW CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

We are facing a lot of changes in the advocacy world, including a new gubernatorial administration and many new faces in the General Assembly. One thing that will never change, however, is our commitment to working with our partners to speak up on behalf of Virginia's children.

Voices for Virginia's Children is actively involved in building relationships with Virginia's new policymakers in the General Assembly and executive offices. Our executive director, Margaret Nimmo Holland, has been named to Northam's bipartisan transition team, and policy staff members are meeting with both new and returning legislators to educate them on children's issues.

Gov. McAuliffe will release his budget for the next two years on Dec. 18. Once Gov.-elect Northam is inaugurated, he will have the opportunity to submit amendments to the budget. As always, the legislature will then go through its own process to amend the introduced budget.

Significant items we will be tracking include:

- Health Insurance for Kids and Their Parents:
  - Protecting health insurance coverage for children and pregnant women in low-income, working families, even if Congress does not approve continued funding
  - Advocating for low-income, working parents to have access to health insurance
- Children's Mental Health:
  - Continuing implementation of plans to carry out a comprehensive, community-based array of behavioral health services for all ages throughout Virginia
  - Providing nontraumatic alternatives to handcuffing and law enforcement involvement when children and youth experiencing a mental health crisis need to be transported to inpatient care or hospitalization
- Improving Child Welfare: Providing temporary financial support for kinship care to help people who take children related to them out of the foster care system and into their homes
- Substance-Affected Infants and Their Families: Supporting efforts to enhance services to these vulnerable children and their mothers, including extending health insurance for new mothers beyond 60 days postpartum and improving access to early intervention and home-visiting services for young children and their families

Additionally, Voices is leading the effort to ensure that Gov.-elect Northam immediately creates a new Children's Cabinet focused on cross-cutting issues affected by multiple areas of state government. Coordinating a state-level effort to develop trauma-informed policies across state government is one example of a high-priority issue for the next Children's Cabinet.

Please go to our website ([vakids.org](http://vakids.org)) to sign up for emails that include the latest information and advocacy alerts, so that you can be involved in policymaking in the coming year.



### Happy holidays from all of us at Voices!

Voices staff Nikkia Johnson, Emily Griffey, Allison Gilbreath, Margaret Nimmo Holland, Michael Brown, and Ashley Everette wish you and yours a happy holiday!



Happy New Year from Voices KIDS COUNT director Beth Nolan and daughter, Aubrey!



Voices policy director Emily Griffey with daughter, Allison Irvine Ewees, born Nov. 24; son, Andy Ewees; and husband, Sharif Ewees.

## GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE FORUM

Voices' Election Guide raised awareness of issues affecting kids.



Youth moderators Sophia Booker, Steven Scherping, and Morgan Stanley posed with gubernatorial candidate Ralph Northam.



Youth moderators Sophia Booker, Steven Scherping, and Morgan Stanley pictured with gubernatorial candidate Ed Gillespie.



Morgan Stanley and Sophia Booker posed questions to the gubernatorial candidates.



## SAVE THE DATE

Second Annual Raise Your Voice  
Open Golf Tournament

Thursday, May 17, 2018

Hunting Hawk Golf Club

For more information, visit [vakids.org](http://vakids.org)