

Working to ensure that all children are healthy, safe and prepared for life's challenges.

GPS4Kids Baseline Report Released at Launch Breakfast



GPS4Kids Program Manager, Erica Ayala, addresses the crowd at the 2018 Baseline Report Breakfast.



GPS4Kids Baseline Report Panel (from L-R): Dan Bonnet, Cheryl Hunter-Grant, Dr. Joseph Ricca, and Alana Sweeny.

On Tuesday, April 17, WCA released the *2018 GPS4Kids Baseline Report*. It represents the culmination of three years of identifying our goal, engaging key partners, and establishing the foundation for our Phase I focus: *keeping children in positive learning environments*.

After numerous meetings with our Data & Measurement Team, we selected six baseline indicators to both explain the current Westchester County landscape and establish the starting point for our work. Our Phase I work will measure success based on our ability to positively impact:

- Pre-K Enrollment
- Disconnected Youth
- Chronic Absence
- Out-of-school Suspensions
- Number of High School Guidance Counselors
- Graduation Rates

At the 2018 Baseline Report Breakfast, WCA introduced the indicators, four key community partners, and our next steps to a room full of GPS4Kids stakeholders at the Westchester Marriott.

With each of our six indicators, we provided a **GPS Narrative**. While we know that not all of the data available to us is up-to-date, the most localized, or inclusive, we started with the best data we could find. In the future, we want to dissect the data and not only aim to move the needle forward on the six

indicators, but also advocate for better, more up-to-date data sets. In some cases, programs, advocates, and educators are developing policies and budgets based on data that is three or more years old.

Additionally, we included **GPS Reflections** for each indicator where we outline how we plan to use data in a larger community conversation about children and families. For some indicators, such as disconnected youth, we suggested working with national partners that have access to more comprehensive data sets, such as Measure for America. In Westchester County, we currently measure disconnected youth from the ages of 16-19. However, Measure for America offers data on youth ages 16-24.

The *2018 GPS4Kids Baseline Report* is meant to serve as an entry point to more collaborative, inclusive, and comprehensive partnerships among direct service providers, elected officials, advocates, and others working on behalf of children and families in Westchester County. To that end, we invited four partners to speak on a panel at the Breakfast to discuss the 2018 Baseline Report and the next steps:

- **Daniel Bonnet**, Deputy Director, Center for College & Careers, The Guidance Center of Westchester
- **Cheryl Hunter-Grant**, Executive Director, Lower Hudson Valley Perinatal Network
- **Dr. Joseph Ricca**, Superintendent, White Plains City School District

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GPS4Kids Breakfast continued...

- **Alana Sweeny**, Executive Director, United Way of Westchester & Putnam

Our partners have been integral in guiding the next steps for GPS4Kids because of their work in Westchester County. Both Daniel Bonnet and Dr. Joseph Ricca offered a community-specific insight to positive learning environments, while Cheryl Hunter-Grant and Alana Sweeny shared examples from their work in Westchester County and beyond. Each panelist reflected on the report, described their take on what makes for strong positive learning environments, and discussed their work in relation to the six baseline indicators.

Moving forward, GPS4Kids will determine the success of our collective impact initiative based on our ability to “turn the curve” for each of the presented data indicators. Success will include, but not be limited to:

- Improved graduation rates throughout the County for all genders and races,
- Implementation of pipelines of support for youth ages 16-24 as they navigate personal, educational, and employment-related challenges, and
- Ensuring accessible and affordable early childhood education services for all families.

To reach success, we have identified a handful of preliminary strategic next steps that include:

- Holding district-specific listening sessions to learn how communities are reaching success and addressing challenges,
- Seeking statewide and national partners with access to more in-depth and/or timely data sources, and



Dr. Joseph Ricca addressing GPS4Kids stakeholders on what White Plains School District is doing to create positive learning environments.

- Collaborating with data-driven initiatives in Westchester County to increase the type of data collected and shared in relation to supporting children, youth, and families.

We encourage community members to visit our website for the interactive version of our report and to explore the data indicators for each school district and even each school (where applicable). We will mail hardcopies of the report upon request, as long as supplies last.

GPS4Kids is committed to ensuring all children in Westchester County thrive regardless of race or zip code, but we will need your help. The success of our community is dependent on the opportunities afforded to the families who make a home here, raise a family here, or start businesses here. Together, we can establish equitable opportunities to the children and youth born or brought here in hopes of the brightest future possible.

To join GPS4Kids, please contact Erica Ayala at EAyala@wca4kids.org.

Children **DATA CORNER** BY THE **Numbers Blog**

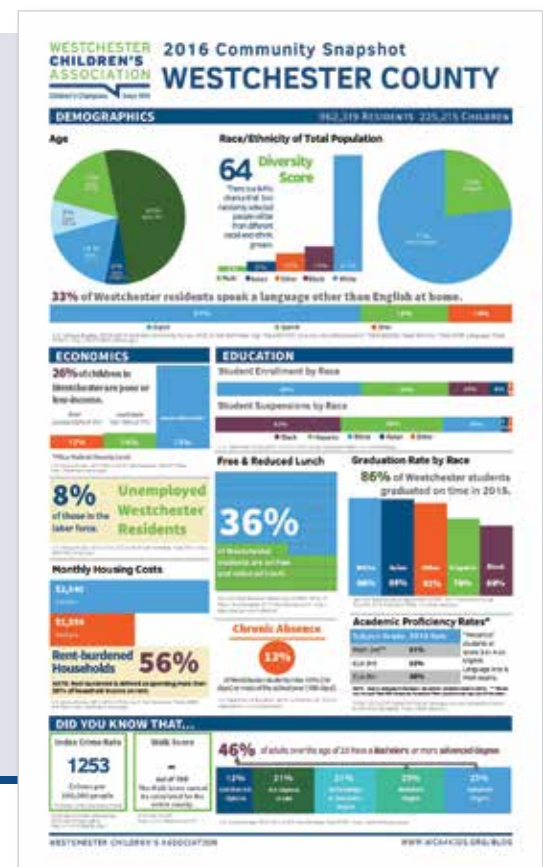
Community Snapshots for ALL Westchester County School Districts This Fall

You talked. We listened.

In 2014, *Community Snapshots* featured data for just five school districts in Westchester. Community organizations and initiatives, including My Brother's Keeper, utilized our snapshots for their own work. As more people found out about the snapshots, we got more requests to expand Community Snapshot coverage to other school districts.

So this year, instead of choosing one or two districts to add to our roster, we decided to include them ALL.

If you have not already, subscribe to our blog, *Children by The Numbers*, for the latest developments and keep an eye out for new *Community Snapshots* this fall.



Hosting Conversations to Turn Lives Around & Make Communities Safer



From L-R: Cora Greenberg, Allison Lake, Ismael Nazario, Gary Stern, Mary Frascello, Hon. Mary Anne Scattaretico-Naber, and Jeremy Kohomban.

In the spring of 2017, WCA celebrated the passage of the legislation to raise the age (RTA) of criminal responsibility to 18 in New York. Now, the hard work begins: ensuring that the implementation of this law will result in positive outcomes for youth and a more fair judicial system. Part of that work is continuing the conversation about the best ways to implement RTA and raising awareness among stakeholders and the public through various engagements and events. On March 1, 2018, at the Elizabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University in White Plains, WCA hosted a screening of *Rikers: An American Jail*, followed by a panel discussion.

Rikers: An American Jail is a documentary film by Bill Moyers bringing viewers face to face with men and women who have endured incarceration at Rikers Island. Their stories are told straight to the camera, offering details of their experience inside of Rikers and the impact it has had on their lives today.

After the screening, more than 160 attendees heard from a passionate panel about implementing RTA in Westchester County. Gary Stern, Engagement Editor and head of

the Editorial Board of *lobud/The Journal News*, moderated the panel. Panelists included: Mary Frascello, Assistant Commissioner of the Westchester Department of Probation; Jeremy C. Kohomban, Pd.D., President and CEO of The Children's Village; Ismael Nazario, featured in the film and now with The Fortune Society; and Hon. Mary Anne Scattaretico-Naber, Acting Family Court Judge.



The event offered insights and perspectives related to the bigger conversation around the Raise the Age legislation. WCA continues to advocate for change that will provide the roughly 1,000 justice-involved youth in Westchester with the rehabilitative, therapeutic, and educational opportunities that will help turn their lives around and make for safer communities.



The third of three sessions, Family Ties employees and clients come together to complete their advocacy trainings in White Plains. WCA's Program & Policy Associate, Jordana Lorenzo, developed the curriculum and led each training for the group. WCA's hope is for Family Ties members to pick an issue they feel strongly about and use their newly developed skills to advocate for positive change.

Teaching Future Advocates

Advocacy is at the core of WCA's work, whether it is directly advocating on behalf of issues affecting Westchester's children and families or partnering with organizations to take their advocacy efforts to new levels.

In 2017, WCA received a grant from Westchester Community Foundation to host 3-part advocacy trainings with three community partners: Family Ties of Westchester, YWCA GEMS, and Ossining Parents Advocating Collectively for our Children (OPACC).

To date, WCA has completed the trainings with Family Ties, which provides support and advocacy for families, and YWCA GEMS, a youth development program for girls. The GEMS are interested in advocating for anti-bullying efforts and equity for girls in the school setting. WCA is holding trainings for OPACC in May. After the trainings are completed, WCA will act as a resource to connect each group with opportunities to participate in advocacy at the community, county, or state level. Stay tuned for updates on each group's progress!

Inspiring Creativity and Dreams for the Future

All kids need love, guidance, a place to grow... and to have fun! Westchester Children's Association understands that need, and has been sending low-income and foster children to a cultural or sporting event annually for the past 12 years. With the support of our donors, we are able to give a child an experience they would not normally have access to. Every year, we ask our donors to support an appeal we call "Let's Take the Kids to a Show!" For every \$100 that we receive, we send one foster or low-income young person to an event. After purchasing the ticket, we use the balance of the donation to support our advocacy work on behalf of all kids in the County.

Our idea is that you can give ONE kid a fun and memorable experience, and at the same time, help WCA make sure that ALL kids have their needs met.

This year, we invited kids to watch the RUBBERBANDance Group, a risk-taking, innovative hip-hop ballet group. Experiencing a performance like this at a young age inspires creativity and dreams for the future. The young



Some of the young people that attended this year's Take the Kids to a Show event at Purchase Performing Arts Center.

people had the opportunity to meet with the dancers after the performance, and even engaged in an impromptu dance-off. You can watch the video on our Facebook page!

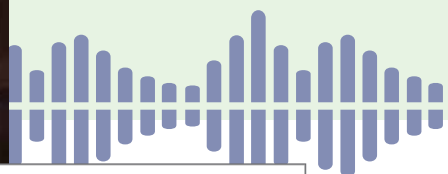
We are now in the planning stages for next year's event. Many thanks to our generous donors for providing such a wonderful experience for foster and low-income kids. When you sponsor a kid for a show, you support our advocacy work on behalf of all Westchester's young people.

To sponsor a kid next year, please contact Rebekah Raz at rraz@wca4kids.org

Listening to What Westchester Has to Say



Ground Truthing podcast host, Erica Ayala, in action interviewing Jim St. Germain for Episode 2 (released this past February). Find it on our website!



Westchester Children's Association presents

Ground Truthing

Insights from the ground up

In January 2018, WCA launched its first-ever podcast, Ground Truthing. The podcast spotlights community voices from across Westchester County discussing topics that impact children and families. The first season of Ground Truthing features partners working in early childhood education, juvenile justice, and sport for play, to name a few.

Guests represent content experts, advocates, and youth voices. The show will highlight bright spots and critically question existing policies and practices through data-informed conversations. GPS4Kids Program Manager and WCA staff, Erica L. Ayala, is the dynamic host of the podcast.

The term *ground truthing* refers to the practice of relying on direct observations and analysis. Through our new podcast, we will be ground truthing the best policies and practices for children and families in Westchester by speaking to direct service providers, youth leaders, business owners, and more. Our aim is to uncover the best solutions from the people and places most affected by the policies.

Find WCA's podcast on our website, as well as Soundcloud, iTunes, Stitcher, and Google Play. Ground Truthing is a Westchester Children's Association production. The show is edited by Eloise Sherrid. Original music is composed by Al Saniuk.



Bringing Together Westchester's Child Advocates

On Thursday, May 17, over 200 people arrived at Surf Club on the Sound in New Rochelle to celebrate WCA at our 2018 Spring Benefit: The Legacy of Tomorrow Starts Today! Our event was incredibly successful, raising nearly \$300,000 and exceeding our goal from last year!

WCA Board President, Doug Gould, awarded the Corporate Children's Champion Award to Richard French III from Regional News Network in recognition of his outstanding record of community interest journalism. John and Brenda Fareri and Dr. Michael Gewitz received the Edith C. Macy award for distinguished service in recognition of their leadership in creating the Maria Fareri Children's Hospital. Finally, WCA Deputy Director, Allison Lake, awarded the the Lifetime Achievement Award to Cora Greenberg for her dedication to this organization for the past 23.5 years.

In her remarks at the event, Cora reiterated WCA's duty: to make sure children of all ages have the opportunities and supports they need to reach their full potential.

With the help of our supporters, WCA will continue its work to improve the lives of all of Westchester's young people, from newborns to young adults. Now, in our 104th year, our mission remains the same: every child healthy, safe and prepared for life's challenges. Because of the generosity of our donors, we will continue to find out what kids need, make those needs known, and see that they are met.

Top: WCA Board of Directors.
Middle: Allison Lake and Cora Greenberg; Richard French and John Tolomer.
Bottom: John & Brenda Fareri, Dr. Michael Gewitz, and Doug Gould.

Celebrate as Cora Dances Her Way Into Retirement!

After more than 23 years as Westchester Children's Association effective and outspoken leader, Cora Greenberg will retire at the end of June. As a celebration of her many victories for Westchester's children, we will be sending her out with a bang.

Please join us on June 27 for an evening of food, drinks, dancing, and a lot of laughter. Our evening will begin at 6pm at the CV Rich Mansion in White Plains. Pre-registration is required and absolutely no walk-ins will be accommodated. Register here: <http://bit.ly/coraretires>



OCTOBER

16
2018

SAVE THE DATE!

Join us for

Vision Zero to Three
Thursday, October 16, 2018
Double Tree Hotel
Tarrytown, NY

Matthew Melmed, Executive Director of National Zero to Three, will deliver the 2018 Kathryn Wasserman Davis Child Advocacy Lecture at our Advocacy Breakfast. The Breakfast will be the cornerstone of Vision Zero to Three, WCA's half-day conference of presentations, action, and innovation focused on our babies, toddlers, and their families.

For more information contact: Jordana Lorenzo at jlorenzo@wca4kids.org

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