

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



Dear Friends.

Westchester Children's Association prides itself on ensuring that kids are healthy, safe, and prepared for life's challenges. Our annual report is our thank you note to all of our supporters that made our work possible. If we are going to make a dent in creating a more just world, we need to continuously do the hard and time-consuming work of advocacy, mobilization, and systems change.

We can only do this work in partnership with you, so Thank You!

WCA4KIDS.ORG 2019 Annual Report



in 2019, WCA provided advocacy training to incarcerated youth to empower them to make better choices. We published a report <u>Making the Invisible Visible</u>
- <u>Westchester's Hidden Homeless Children & Youth</u> and created a child and youth homelessness workgroup focused on getting better data on our children and families living in doubled-up and overcrowded housing. We also published our <u>2019 Children</u> <u>by the Numbers Data Bulletin</u> with voices from the community and takeaways for Advocacy & Action.

This spring, families began to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting life as we knew it. **WCA quickly pivoted our work to address the impact of the novel Coronavirus on our most vulnerable populations.** WCA surveyed families and school superintendents to document the impact COVID had on the learning environment. Over 900 people responded to our survey highlighting the problems of access to technology and the social and emotional toll of remote learning.

If the pandemic has shown us anything, it has unearthed the importance of civic engagement at all levels of government. WCA was timely in launching Project 2020 this past fall to support young people in fighting for the change they want to see in their communities and in voting.

In the shadow of the pandemic, the nation vehemently expressed its outrage over the disproportionate impact of police violence on black lives. WCA has long recognized that race and ethnicity play a fundamental role in providing and taking away opportunities. Lack of access for many children is why we continue to advocate for early childhood supports to offer an equitable start life. We were contracted as the backbone agency for the state's Hudson Valley - Home Visiting Development Plan. WCA continues its fight to give all young people a fair chance for a productive future.

These are extraordinary times, but WCA has not stopped. Now more than ever we need fierce advocates for kids. Your generous and continuous donations allow us to continue to advocate, mobilize and demand change. We are thankful and energized by your investment and the work of our community partners, hardworking staff and dedicated board.

In partnership we can reimagine and make a better life for all Westchester's children.

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Sincerely,

Ann Umemoto

President. Board of Directors

Allison Lake
Executive Director

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1 in 4
children in Westchester
have to wait
30 days or longer
to receive
Early Intervention

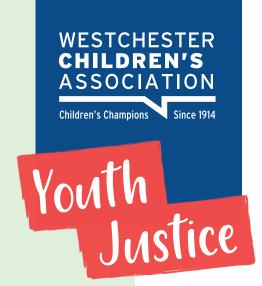
Services

Why this matters

Evidence shows the earlier services are received, the more effective they are. Delays in service delivery may mean delays in achieving positive outcomes.

- Released <u>Vision O to 3: Next Steps</u> report our action plan for early childhood advocacy and follow-up to WCA's Vision O to 3 Conference.
- Selected by NYS to participate in its First 1,000
 Days on Medicaid Workgroup, which collaborated to ensure young children on Medicaid have better health and life outcomes.
- Served as the backbone organization for the Hudson Valley region of the New York State Home Visiting Coordination Initiative, coordinating 2 regional summits to identify challenges and opportunities for home visiting programs for young children.

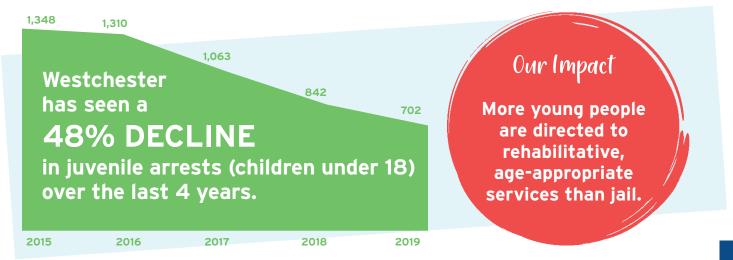




- Westchester youth arrests and detention
 placements decreased substantially since the Raise
 the Age Law went into effect in October 2018, with
 85% of youth diverted to community alternatives.
- Raise the Age: 6 Months-In Panel Discussion on implementation of Raise the Age legislation was attended by over 100 community members, service providers, government personnel, and county leaders.

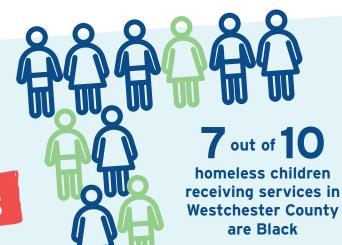


- WCA held a Raise the Age Education Roundtable
 Discussion with school districts, county administrators, and
 Woodfield Cottage Detention Center to explore solutions to improve education for justice involved youth.
- Advocacy Training workshops with 25 youth at Woodfield Cottage
 Detention Center over three weeks, provided positive, interactive
 opportunities for youth to develop their voice to speak up for
 change and advocate for themselves in all situations.





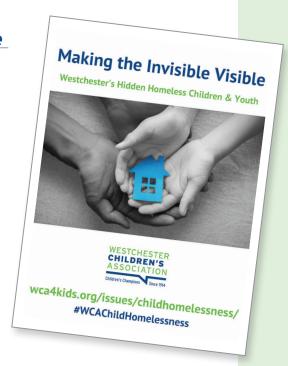
Child & Youth Homelessness



Why this matters

Race continues to be a primary factor in determining children's outcomes. WCA views data through a race equity lens to highlight and then address existing inequities.

- Released our groundbreaking report, <u>Making the Invisible Visible: Westchester's Hidden Homeless Children and Youth</u>, a comprehensive investigation into homelessness among children and youth across Westchester County that featured data analysis, community conversations and recommendations.
- Launched our Child & Youth Homelessness Workgroup to connect stakeholders, service providers, and leaders addressing homelessness from a children and youthfocused lens.
- Our annual Advocacy Breakfast, "Building Solutions at the Intersection of Poverty, Racism, and Homelessness" featured keynote speaker, Marc Dones, Executive Director of National Innovation Service.
- Released <u>Ground Truthing podcast</u> episode discussing solutions for homelessness and trends in Westchester.





Children's Champions Since 1914

Youth Development & Engagement

Over 26,000

16 and 17 year olds are eligible for voter preregistration in Westchester County Why this matters

People who vote are people who advocate. We are working to build a generation of future advocates to speak for themselves and for their own children.

- Designed and facilitated our Project 2020 initiative civic engagement toolkits and workshops with youth from the Peekskill Youth Bureau and Boys and Girls Club of New Rochelle to mobilize and empower youth.
- Vote4kids surveyed and publicized candidates for the Westchester Board of Legislators' priorities for children from all 17 legislative districts.
- WCA secured a historic funding increase of \$450,000 for Invest in Kids youth development programs by mobilizing youth, families, and community organizations to speak up for children in the Westchester County Budget.





Voices from Our Community

"Homelessness is not just about housing or health care or employment or services, but that it actually is about poverty, injustice, oppression and racism, and that we have to name the problem."

Marc Dones,
 National Innovation Service,
 WCA's 2019 Advocacy
 Breakfast Speaker



"There was enough research that demonstrated that kids who get suspended and particularly kids who get suspended frequently... (and) get disproportionately suspended based on race based on disability based on gender - that it's the beginning of a track that will likely in many many instances lead to a lack of success in school."



- Karen Blumenthal, Student Advocacy, WCA's 2019 Ground Truthing Podcast Interviewee



"...Not to be daunted by problems children face in this country. Instead... even though it may only feel like a drop in the bucket when we do anything to move the needle towards change, drops in the bucket is how you fill buckets."

Nicholas Kristof,
 New York Times Columnist,
 WCA's 2019 Benefit Dinner Honoree



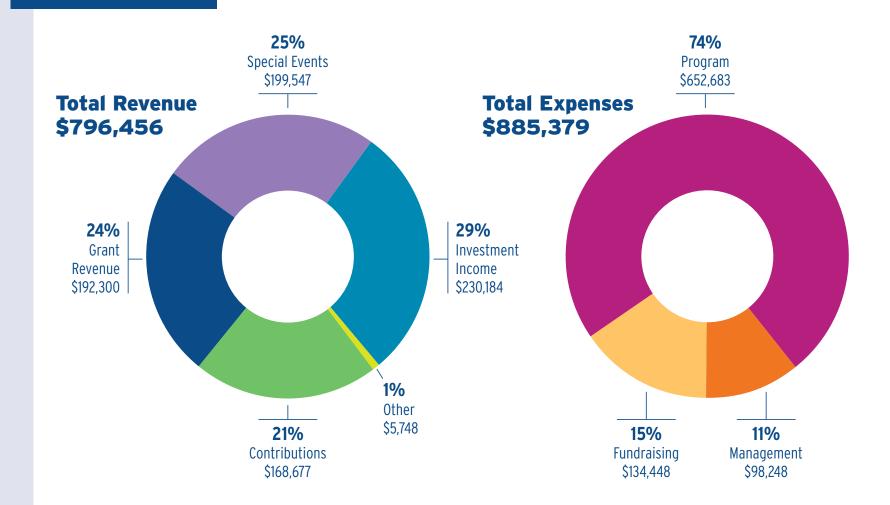
"It's incumbent upon us as adults to ensure that our children live in a safe and nurturing environment where caring and loving adults are always around... to ensure that children have safe passages back and forth to school and can recreate and associate in the communities where they live without fear of violence."

- **Dr. Jim Bostic,**My Brothers Keeper,
WCA's 2019 Ground Truthing
Podcast Interviewee

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Financial Profile for 2019



Note: A copy of the complete audited financial statement is available on the WCA website <u>wca4kids.org</u>. It may also be requested from WCA or the New York State Attorney General, Office of Charities Registration, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271. Go to https://www.wca4kids.org/publications/annual-reports

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Children's Champions Since 1914

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We are deeply grateful to all our donors who make our work possible.

Special thanks to those who are enrolled in our monthly giving program:

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OUR VISION Every child healthy, safe, and prepared for life's challenges

OUR MISSION

To identify children's needs, make those needs known, and see that they are met

OUR WORK

We turn data into knowledge, build a shared agenda, and mobilize for change



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