

Ensuring all Westchester's children are healthy, safe, and prepared for life's challenges.

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Onward Into 2021!

It's a new year and WCA – like many of you – is taking stock. What were our successes? What are our challenges? How are we going to **build back better and stronger** after a year of the COVID-19 pandemic?

There were big wins! 2020 brought us renewed commitment with state partners to advocate for early childhood support for families. We amplified the urgency to identify and support families in overcrowded housing during the pandemic. We adapted quickly to growing demands for our data on children and youth broken out by race and ethnicity. We were energized by the excitement from students who became more civically engaged through our Project 2020. Increasing numbers of youth are being diverted from the criminal justice system to age-appropriate programs.

We intend to act on the theme from our Virtual Benefit and reimagine all kids thriving regardless of race or zip code. The racial unrest, political turmoil, health crisis, and deteriorating financial situation has us all bracing for the months ahead... but children cannot wait. We need to step into the vortex and challenge each other to work harder, smarter, and bolder.

WCA is ready to lead the charge for children in Westchester by:

- Promoting a remote learning agenda focused on equity in access,
- Supporting a broader youth justice platform beyond Raise the Age,
- Creating a data dashboard to stay on top of child and youth homelessness,
- Building a public awareness campaign for home visiting,
- Expanding Project 2020 advocacy training for youth, and
- Advocating for Solutions Not Suspensions legislation on school discipline.

Nonprofits have always been expected to do more with less. This is the year we need to end this handicap. If we are going to **build back better and stronger** we need financial support, political will, and civic engagement like never before. We need to fight the racism and the white supremacy that exist in our nation head-on. We need to support immediate needs of the pandemic, such as housing insecurities and access to health care AND support long-term advocacy to address the problems at their source. We must change the inequities in systems and policies that have been laid bare by the pandemic. It's an 'AND' approach not 'either/or' that will bring us to a better place.

Westchester is a collaborative county. WCA has had much success in convening partners to address our deep societal ills. We need everyone - philanthropists, government, and frontline stakeholders - to do their part. In spite of new challenges that seem to keep coming, we are still optimistic. Our work remains relevant and reliable... and is re-energized for 2021.

Onward, together!



Allison Lake

2020 Virtual Benefit Reimagined Life for Westchester Children!

We honored the
amazing work of:



Louise De Vel Muller, Former WCA President and Board Member, with our **Lifetime Achievement Award**



Dawna Michelle Fields, Associate Director of Community Affairs at Bright Smiles Bright Futures at Colgate, with our **Corporate Children's Champion Award**



Umran Beba, former Senior Vice President of Chief Global Diversity and Engagement Officer at PepsiCo, with the **Edith Macy Award**

Read the full story on page 2.

2020 Virtual Benefit Reimagined Life for Westchester Children!



Hollywood actor and longtime friend and supporter to WCA, **Michael Boatman**, kicks off the evening



Allison Lake, Mistress of Ceremony and Fund-A-Need champion

On October 28, 2020, WCA ventured into the world of virtual programming and hosted its first virtual Annual Benefit. Forced to abandon our much-anticipated gathering at the Surf Club last May due to the pandemic, we pivoted in the fall to our new theme “Imagine a Child” and celebrated our honorees online. The event, which was broadcast live with the help of Veekast Inc., helped WCA raise over \$130,000 towards our child advocacy work.

The event kicked off with an introduction by celebrity actor **Michael Boatman**, who is a long-time friend and supporter of WCA. Then, Allison masterfully steered us through the introductions, speeches, and even exciting online donations from donors new and old during the Fund-A-Need section. She challenged our audience of over one hundred viewers by saying, “Let’s take a moment and reimagine all 307,000 children in our County growing, learning, and thriving regardless of their gender, race, income, or where they live. What does that look like to you?”

Our Fund-A-Need was the highlight of the evening. It involved a live online auction and presentations by staff members and intern on our key issues including child and youth homelessness, innovative data, youth justice, and remote learning needs for students and families affected by the pandemic. In addition, we celebrated the hard work of the WCA Staff and Board and educated viewers about our child advocacy work. We also thanked **Regeneron** for their assistance in improving our internal data systems.

We look forward to using this virtual platform over the coming year for more events in the future. Thank you for your support!

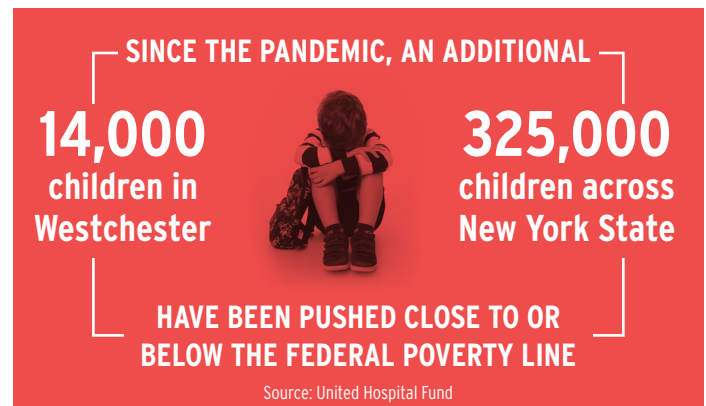
See a recording at wca4kids.org/Imagine-livestream.

WCA JOINS
STATEWIDE
CHILD POVERTY
REDUCTION
ADVOCACY GROUP

Let’s Cut Child Poverty Rates in Half by 2030!

In September 2020, WCA began groundbreaking work with a statewide group of advocates to **cut child poverty across New York State in half by 2030**. Poverty has devastating short and long-term negative impacts on children regarding their well-being, access to opportunities, education, and health outcomes. The latest data from the 2019 U.S. Census estimates that over 20,000 Westchester children and 700,000 children across New York State (NYS) live at or below the federal poverty line. Tragically, emerging data this year from the United Hospital Fund shows the impacts of the pandemic has pushed an additional 14,000 Westchester children and 325,000 NYS children and counting into or near poverty.

The **Child Poverty Reduction Core Group**, spearheaded by Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy, features WCA and other child advocacy organizations whose goal is to motivate statewide progress to strategically and systematically reduce child poverty across New York State with special attention to racial inequities. Other participating organizations include the Children’s Defense Fund, Citizens Committee for Children of New York, The Education Trust – New York, The Children’s Agenda, Robin Hood Foundation, and the American Academy of Pediatrics in New York State.



NYS Senator Jessica Ramos and Assemblyman Harry Bronson kicked off this initiative for the new legislative session with a press conference in October 2020. WCA has already begun speaking with state lawmakers to support new legislation that will establish the Child Poverty Reduction Advisory Council to develop a plan to cut New York’s child poverty rate in half over 10 years. The Council will explore expanding specific policies, making new recommendations with benchmarks and timelines, and releasing reports to make sure that New York meets its goal. In this especially difficult financial climate, this legislation also strives to prevent cuts to essential programs for children and families in order to make real strides towards creating a New York where no child experiences poverty.

Stay tuned for more! If you are interested in taking an active role in this campaign, contact Josh Prywes at jprwes@wca4kids.org

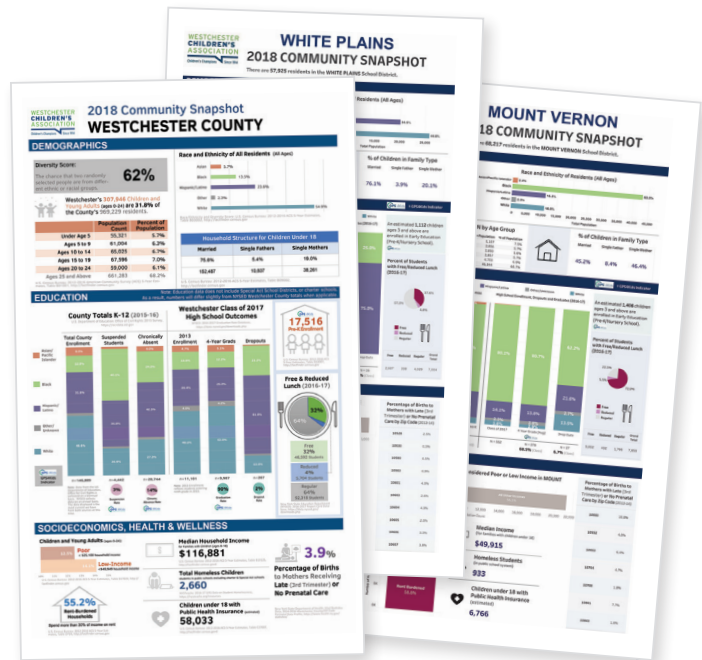
2021 Brings a New Vision to WCA's Community Snapshots

We are getting ready to launch our Community Snapshots for 2021! Community Snapshots are data portraits that highlight the demographic, socioeconomic, and educational profiles of Westchester County and its 40 school districts. These tools provide important information for parents, educators, organizations, and funders in local communities and can be found on our website, downloaded as pdfs, or printed to make them more accessible to the community.

Our Community Snapshots first came into being in 2014 and were confined to just 5 cities in Westchester. In 2018, we were able to expand to include all 40 geographic Westchester school districts. Our Snapshots have proven to be crucial now since having accurate, timely data to assess what is going on with Westchester's children is essential for today's advocates who are working in remote or hybrid environments but having to respond to emerging issues. Nonprofit organizations have shared with us how they use them for their own program needs assessments and grant writing. Parents use them to compare districts and monitor what is going on in their children's schools. Bijan Kimiagar of Citizens' Committee for Children of New York and Westchester resident said that, "WCA's Community Snapshots are such a vital data resource, especially in Westchester County where children and families' experiences across communities are so diverse. I'm excited to share the updated resource with others as we champion equity for children and families in our communities and schools."

The biggest change for the Community Snapshots may be in the way it will be released. Although our initial launch is planned for Spring 2021, new features will be added as data is updated. This allows us to update the site as data from different sources comes in at different release schedules. (It also gives you an excuse to visit our Community Snapshots page yet one more time.)

See where your neighborhood stands at wca4kids.org/2018communitysnapshotspdf/
 Questions? Contact Limarie Cabrera, Director of Data, Operations and Finance, at lcabrera@wca4kids.org.



Although the feedback continues to be positive, WCA is committed to finding opportunities for improvement with each released edition. New features for 2021 will include:

- **Current vs. past data –**
 We will expand on the previous point-in-time profiles to compare past and current data to show users trends over time.
- **Poverty data by race or ethnicity –**
 Unfortunately, events in 2020 have shown us how crucial it is to examine racial inequity with even greater scrutiny.
- **Remote learning indicators –**
 including data on access to computers and the internet.

new faces @ WCA



Jasmine Drew, MSW Intern, is a second-year, Masters of Social Work (MSW) student at New York University and is on the path to graduate in Spring 2021. Jasmine received her Bachelor of Science (BS) in Diplomacy and International Relations from Seton Hall University in 2019. A Westchester County native, Jasmine chose to complete her internship with WCA to strengthen her ability to advocate on behalf of under-represented/underserved individuals, to understand the role that state and local government plays in the daily lives of its constituents, and to continue learning the logistics of working in the nonprofit sector. At WCA, Jasmine works closely with Josh in the Programs and Policy department and has delivered advocacy training and participated in our advocacy for Solutions Not Suspensions and greater youth justice. At NYU, she serves as the President for both the Graduate Student Council and the Latinx Social Work Student Organization.



Josh Prywes was promoted to **Program and Policy Manager** on January 1, 2021 having previously served on WCA's Programs team since October 2018. In his new role, Josh is responsible for our advocacy projects supporting Westchester's children at local and regional levels and community engagement.

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**WESTCHESTER
CHILDREN'S
ASSOCIATION**

Children's Champions Since 1914

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White Plains, NY 10605

SPREAD THE WORD!

Tell your friends and family why
you love WCA and invite them to
join our mailing list at

wca4kids.org/joinus



DID YOU KNOW...

1 in 5 HOUSEHOLDS
did NOT have a computer
before the pandemic?

Donate monthly to support Westchester families
struggling with remote learning during the
pandemic ...and beyond!



Become a WCA Defender of Children
WCA4Kids.org/monthly-donor

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