



Dear Friends,

In 2020, we endured a pandemic that was unlike any crisis any of us have seen in our lifetimes.

All of us were forced to make quick changes to respond to the emergency and – although we suffered many losses – we demonstrated our resilience and perseverance.

With your help, Westchester Children's Association rallied its resources to ensure that the needs of children and youth were not ignored.



WCA continued
to protect
Westchester's
children through
this difficult time.

Our small but mighty staff launched a special project to address a long-standing concern that became more urgent as students transitioned to **remote learning**: the digital divide between students and families that have or do not have sufficient training, computer devices, and internet connections to learn from home. We surveyed nearly 1000 parents and superintendents to learn more about circumstances that made learning more difficult and shared the results with stakeholders. Then we created a Remote Learning Factsheet showing factors impeding digital access and participation in distance learning. In many ways, addressing access to equipment was straight forward, but inequalities of access to affordable internet services, technical skills, and support remain through the summer and beyond. WCA will continue to advocate for more permanent solutions to close the gap.

The problem of insecure, inadequate, and **overcrowded housing** became a life or death concern for vulnerable children and families when we were all ordered to shelter-in-place and quarantine early in the year. WCA alerted the county of our concerns for families in overcrowded situations who are not traditionally counted as homeless and they reacted quickly. Temporary housing was set up at hotels to help separate families and to provide safe quarantines. We are all working to change policies to help overcrowded families.

We saw tremendous success with our civic engagement initiative: **Project Engage**. Although we could not come together in person, WCA convened close to 100 youth online in a virtual Speak Up/Speak Out where young people from around the county shared their concerns directly with County Executive George Latimer and other elected officials for Westchester County. We were also able to provide our advocacy training to high school students of Sleepy Hollow remotely where 90% of participants rated their training as "very" to "extremely" helpful.

WCA remains committed to broader **youth justice** reform through the full spectrum of ages and settings. We will help dismantle the school-to-prison pipeline by changing legislation on the use of suspensions in schools. Elementary-age students need our help so that they are treated as the developing children that they are. Finally, we will help to give second chances to emerging adults 18 to 25 years old.

We want to express our appreciation for our many supporters, donors, volunteers who helped us continue to protect Westchester's children through this difficult time. We applaud the heroic efforts made to provide emergency services during the COVID-19 pandemic and were glad to help provide insight into long-lasting solutions.

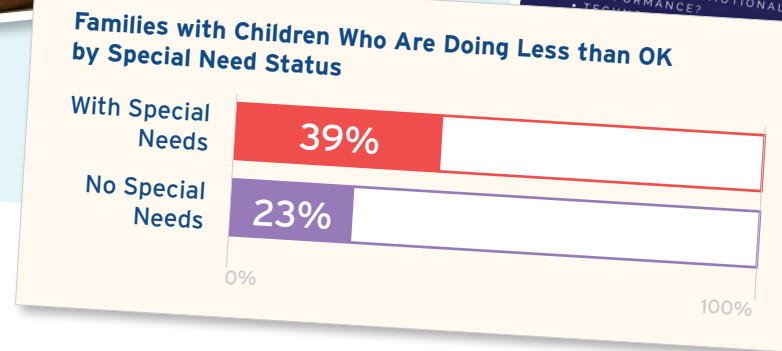
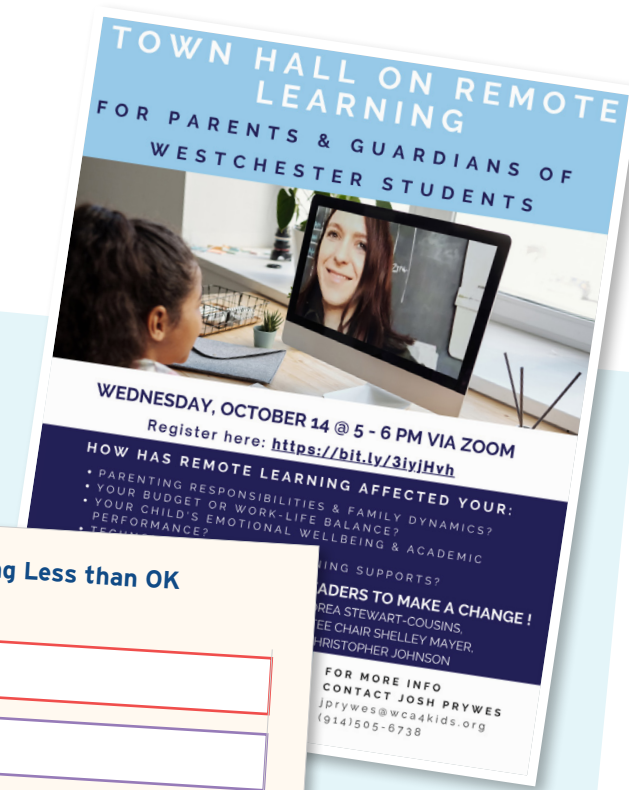
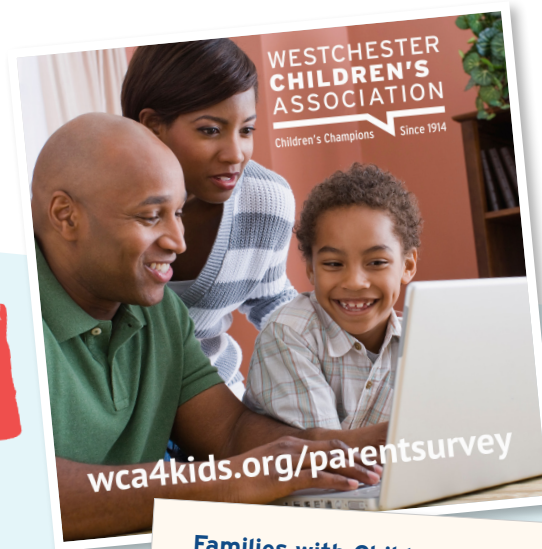
Sincerely,

Allison Lake

Ann Umemoto

Remote Learning

Visit our website for more...



Our Work

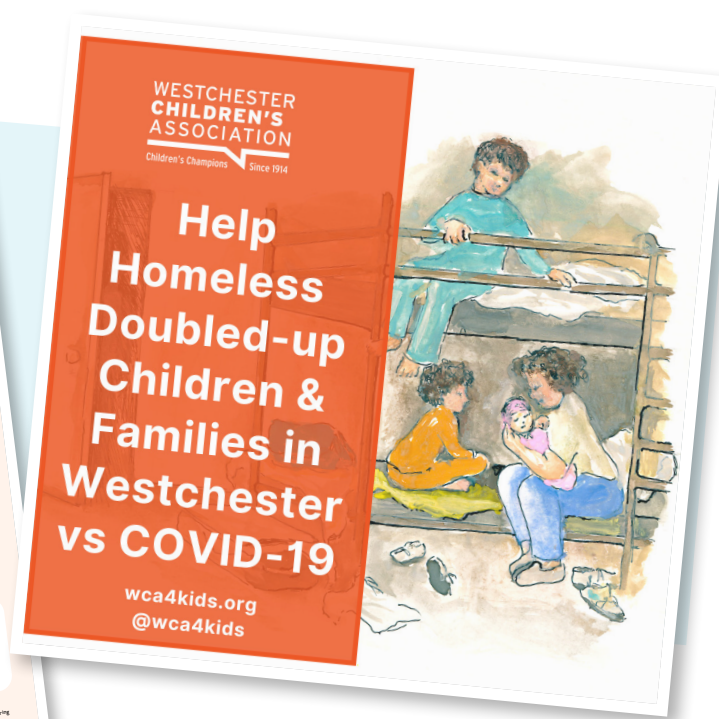
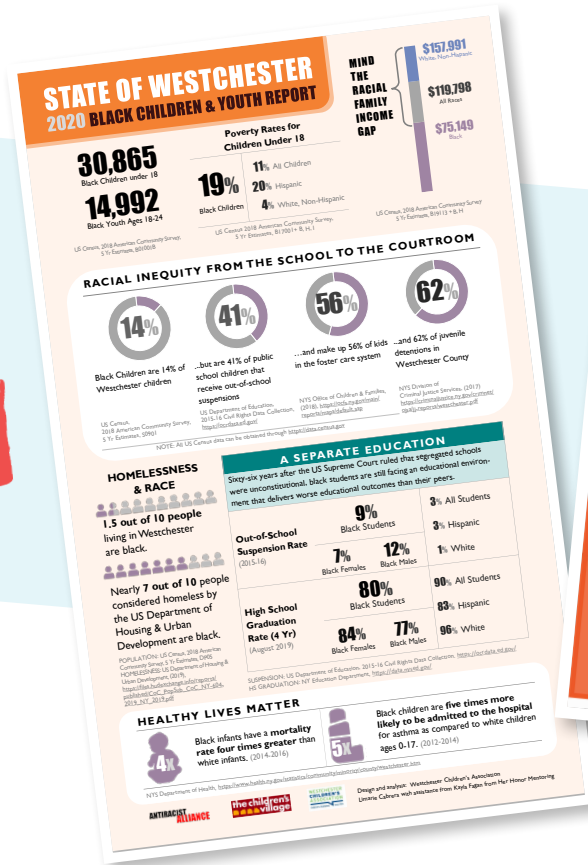
- Pivoted to respond to remote learning at the peak of the pandemic, we received 1,000+ survey responses from parents and Superintendents on their needs and experiences.
- Hosted virtual **Remote Learning Town Hall** alongside Family Ties of Westchester featuring parents, guardians, and state elected officials.
- Developed a **Remote Learning Agenda** for Westchester County with stakeholders
- Built public momentum to **permanently bridge digital divide** via our bilingual petition.

Our Impact

Throughout 2020, dozens of community partners, decision makers, and elected officials turned to WCA as a key player to drive digital access solutions for Westchester's children.

Data & Child Homelessness

Visit our website for more...



Our Work

- Led charge in Westchester to unpack school-age homelessness data trends by race and ethnicity alongside members of our **Child & Youth Homelessness Workgroup Data Subcommittee**.
- Created '**State of Westchester 2020 Black Children & Youth Report' Fact Sheet** for the Anti-Racist Alliance and Children's Village.
- Conducted '**Data Done Differently' presentation** for Ethical Society of Northern Westchester.

Our Impact

Nearly two-thirds of the more than 2,350 Westchester children who navigated homelessness during the 2019-2020 school year had doubled-up, overcrowded housing situations. We advocated for solutions that recognized their unique needs during the pandemic.

Youth Development & Engagement

Visit our website for more...



Our Work

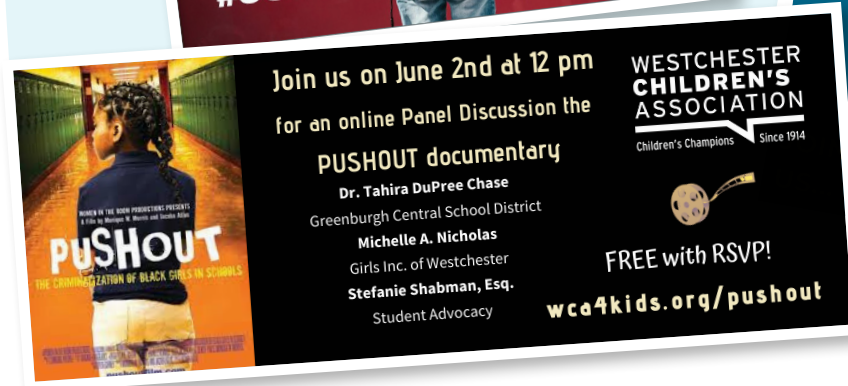
- Raised awareness about new voter pre-registration laws for 16 and 17-year-olds and expansion of voting rights in New York State.
- Convened close to 100 youth at our youth-led, **virtual 'Speak Up Speak Out'** event with County Executive George Latimer and other county, elected officials to let them speak for themselves about issues they felt were important.
- Led **advocacy training series** with students at Sleepy Hollow High School training over 50 students on message development and strategies to shape decisions that impact their community.

Our Impact

Through workshops, resources, and events, we have directly empowered over 150 youth to be more engaged in community decision making, with more than 90% of youth finding our training enjoyable and helpful.

Youth Justice

✦ Visit our website for more...



Our Work

- Led a **Lobby Day in Albany** where community members from Westchester County met with state legislators about the Solutions Not Suspensions Act and Raise the Age NY initiatives.
- Collaborated with local officials on a **pandemic response to ensure the health and welfare of children in detention facilities**.
- Hosted a **virtual screening and panel discussion about the documentary, "Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools,"** with insight from leaders of Westchester school districts and communities.
- Developed an **advocacy training video series** to help parents, guardians, and staff best support children in Westchester's youth justice system.

Our Impact

Ongoing advocacy with our state partners led to **48% decrease in youth arrests since 2015 & 95% youth not in Westchester County Criminal Court.**

WCA is the only organization in Westchester County, NY with the expertise, agility, and track record to lead our communities to the transformational changes our children need.

- **Our reputation** among our roughly 200 non-profit partners, legislators, and corporate executives inspires them to join us in our causes with confidence and enthusiasm.
- **Our independence** from government funding facilitates flexibility. Therefore, we rely completely upon donations from individuals and private foundations.
- **Our impartiality** improves our effectiveness, since the only criterion that influences our decision is what is in the best interest of children and youth of Westchester and greater New York state.

WCA – and our children and youth – depend heavily on gifts from individuals. We are able to pivot and respond to changing trends in issues that affect children and stay the course until needed changes are implemented due to this financial independence.

In 2020, we successfully held our first virtual benefit, where we reimagined all kids thriving despite COVID, and regardless of race or zip code. Our work on youth and childhood homelessness took on new meaning as we sought support for families in overcrowded housing during the pandemic. We spearheaded conversations about remote learning access so that all children could be successful during these stressful times.

We would not be able to do this work without the financial commitment of you, our supporters.

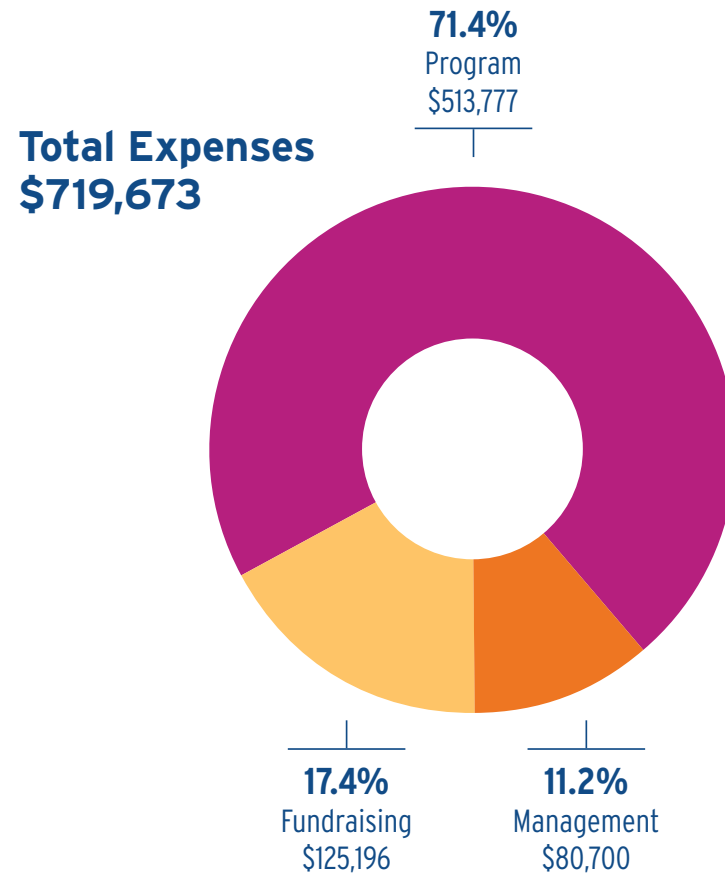
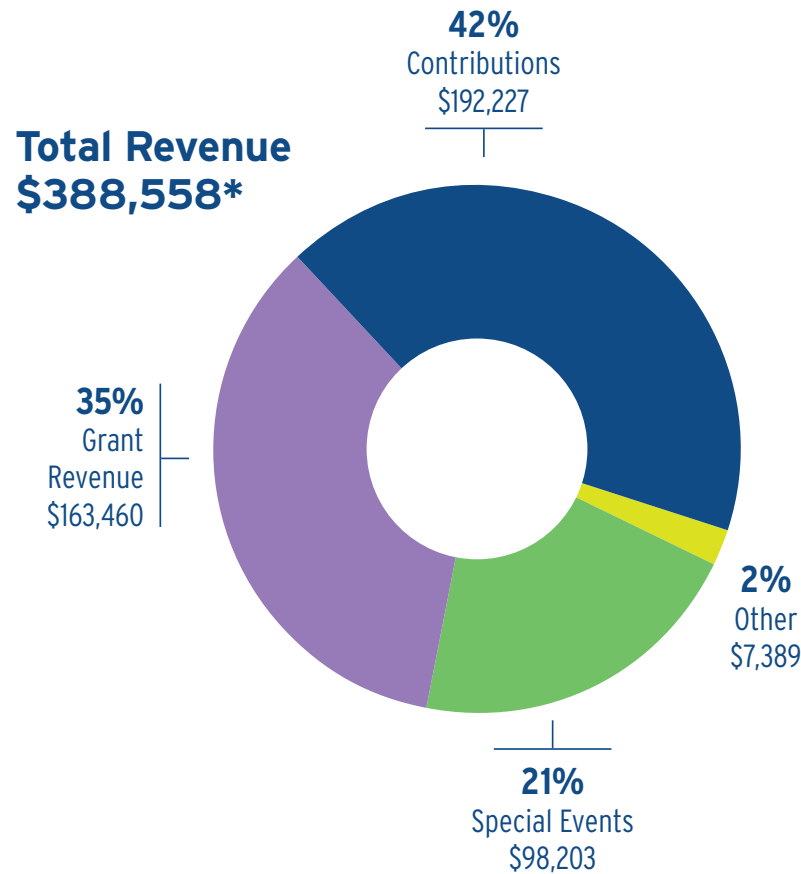
When we invest in kids, we invest in the future. Simply put, when THEY do better, WE do better. Your support is critical to our success and we are grateful for your donations and involvement in our work.

Thank you for helping to make Westchester a better place to be a child.

To make a gift to WCA, go to wca4kids.org/donate ✨

Financial Profile for 2020

In 2020, the short fall of revenues to expenses (\$331,115) was funded from unrestricted endowment funds as well as the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL). Both the PPP and EIDL are programs designed to lessen the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and are administered through the United States Small Business Administration. WCA has net assets (assets minus liabilities) of \$2,658,175 and unrestricted assets of \$433,630.



* Investments recorded a loss of \$72,721 as of 12/31/2020.

Note: A copy of the complete audited financial statement is available on the WCA website wca4kids.org. 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://wca4kids.org/about-wca/financials/>

WESTCHESTER CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION

Children's Champions Since 1914

*Thank you to
our generous donors!*

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:
 ☆ **Defenders for Children.**

If you would like to learn more about how you can become a defender for children, contact Rebekah Raz at rraz@wca4kids.org or 914.946.7676 x303

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Let's work together to help Westchester's children thrive!

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2020
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WESTCHESTER CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION

Children's Champions Since 1914

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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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Westchester's children and youth!**

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