



Family, friends, supporters, and WCA staff gathered at the 2026 Spring Gala to celebrate a shared commitment to improving the lives of children and families throughout Westchester County. The evening honored the life and legacy of Maris H. Krasnow, Ed.D., recognized her lasting contributions to WCA and the community, and highlighted the collective impact that is possible when advocates, partners, and supporters come together on behalf of children.

WCA Celebrates a Meaningful Evening at the 2026 Spring Gala

On May 13, we welcomed supporters, community leaders, and advocates to the beautiful C.V. Rich Mansion for the Westchester Children's Association's 2026 Spring Gala. The evening celebrated our shared commitment to improving outcomes for children and families and raised more than \$75,000 to support our advocacy, research, and community initiatives throughout Westchester County.

This year's Gala was especially meaningful as we honored the life and legacy of Maris H. Krasnow, Ed.D., a dedicated WCA Board member and former Board President who passed away in September 2025. Throughout her life, Maris was a tireless advocate for children and a champion for educational opportunity and equity.

WCA proudly presented the Edith C. Macy Award for Distinguished Service to Maris H. Krasnow posthumously. The award, named for one of WCA's founders, honors the legacy of Edith Carpenter Macy, advocate, philanthropist, and activist, whose vision helped shape opportunities for children across the region beginning in 1914.

The evening opened with remarks from Executive Director Adam Rabinovitch, who reflected on his first year leading the organization and the enduring impact of WCA's work.

"It has been a true privilege to get to know many of you and to deepen my understanding of what this organization has stood for more than 100 years," Rabinovitch said. "At WCA, we act, we connect, and we educate — with one goal: to keep children at the top of the public agenda."

In tribute to Maris, whose love of music and Broadway was well known, guests enjoyed moving musical performances by Music Conservatory of Westchester students Ella Adamo and Riley Westlund, accompanied by pianist, Will Rich. Their renditions of "I Feel Pretty" from *West Side Story* and "Part of Your World" from *The Little Mermaid* brought joy and warmth to the evening. Guests were also treated to a beautiful piano performance of Rachmaninoff's Love's Sorrow by Karen Baer, a dear friend of Maris, creating a touching and emotional tribute.

A memorial video celebrating Maris' life highlighted her decades of service to children and her deep devotion to family. Her husband, Jesse Krasnow, daughters Freya, Raina, and Fallyn, and two of her grandchildren were present to accept the award on her behalf.

The evening continued with an exciting live auction led by auctioneer Angelica Malin, featuring travel experiences to Tuscany and Mexico, VIP tickets to *The View*, and a private comedy show. Guests also viewed a video showcasing WCA's impact and the many ways the organization works to improve outcomes for children and families across Westchester County.

We are deeply grateful to our sponsors, supporters, and attendees who made the evening such a success. **Special thanks to Westchester Medical Center, Maria Fareri Children's Hospital, and Hudson Valley Credit Union for their partnership as WCA's 2026 Series Sponsors.** Their support, along with the generosity of our entire community, helps ensure that children remain at the center of public policy and community action throughout Westchester County.

Ensuring every child is healthy, safe, and prepared for life's challenges regardless of race or zip code.

New Beginnings + Gratitude for Our Board

Dear Friends,

At Westchester Children's Association, our work is powered by people — dedicated individuals who bring their experience, compassion, and commitment to improving the lives of children across our community.



Nowhere is this more evident than in our Board of Directors, whose leadership helps ensure our advocacy stays grounded in what Westchester's children and families truly need. We are deeply grateful to every current board member for the time, care, and perspective they bring to this shared mission.

This month, we mark an important moment of transition. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Bob Knight and Stephen Godin as they conclude their service on the board. Their leadership, insight, and generosity have helped shape Westchester Children's Association's progress and impact, and we are sincerely appreciative of all they have contributed. While their formal roles are ending, their connection to this work - and to our community - remains strong, and we wish them the very best in what comes next.

At the same time, we are excited to welcome four exceptional new members: Eleanor Cotter, Dawna Michelle Fields, Mundheera Harkoo, and Kayla Hendrickson. Each brings a unique blend of expertise — from governance and finance to youth development, philanthropy, and community engagement — and a shared commitment to advancing opportunity for children. We are thrilled to have them join Westchester Children's Association's leadership and look forward to the energy, insight, and partnership they will bring as we continue building a stronger, more equitable future for every child in Westchester.

Onward,

Adam Rabinovitch, *Executive Director*

new faces + shared commitment @ WCA



Eleanor Cotter



Dawna Michelle Fields



Mundheera Harkoo



Kayla Hendrickson

WCA is excited to welcome four new members to its Board of Directors, each bringing a unique perspective and a shared commitment to improving the lives of children and families across Westchester County.

From leading national public health initiatives and helping nonprofits secure critical funding to expanding access to quality childcare and strengthening financial stewardship, **Eleanor Cotter, Dawna Michelle Fields, Mundheera Harkoo, and Kayla Hendrickson** bring a wealth of experience to WCA. Their careers span corporate social responsibility, nonprofit leadership, youth development, governance, and finance, but they are united by a belief that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive.

As WCA continues its work advocating for children, youth, and families, these new board members will help guide the organization's efforts with fresh perspectives, strong leadership, and a deep commitment to community impact. We look forward to introducing them to our supporters and working together to create a brighter future for Westchester's children.

WCA Convenes 5th Annual Youth Mental Health Roundtable

On April 9, 2026, WCA brought together more than 20 school districts, community organizations, county agencies, and mental health providers for its Fifth Annual Youth Mental Health Roundtable. The discussion focused on the growing mental health needs of children and youth across Westchester County and the importance of working together to meet those needs.

Participants shared concerns about increasing rates of anxiety, depression, family stress, and other challenges affecting young people. Schools continue to serve as a key point of access for mental health support, while community organizations play an essential role in providing services, resources, and programs that help children and families thrive.

The conversation highlighted the need for stronger



Panelists included Christian Templeman of Morgan Stanley; Daniel Bonnet of the Carver Center, and Dixelia Lopez, of the Ossining Public School District.

coordination across systems, expanded access to services, greater support for families, and continued investment in prevention and early intervention efforts. Participants also emphasized the importance of including youth and parent voices in shaping solutions.

The roundtable reinforced a shared commitment to ensuring that every child in Westchester has access to the support they need to grow, learn, and succeed. WCA thanks Morgan Stanley, the Westchester County Board of Legislators, and all participating organizations for helping advance this important work.

Participating organizations Included: Andrus, NAMI Westchester, The Guidance Center, Family Services of Westchester, Westchester Jewish Community Services, Student Advocacy, Pelham Together, Carver Center, Connect to Speak, Access Psychology Foundation, Child and Family Institute, Neighbors Link, the Westchester County Youth Bureau, Westchester County Department of Community Mental Health, and representatives from the Ossining, Peekskill, Port Chester, and Tarrytown school districts.



Celebrating WCA Program & Policy Director, Angel Gray



This spring, WCA's Program & Policy Director, Angel Gray, achieved two significant professional milestones that reflect her leadership, dedication, and commitment to improving outcomes for children and families.

In May, Angel was recognized by **914INC. Magazine** as one of its **2026 Wunderkinds**, an annual honor celebrating some of Westchester County's most accomplished young professionals under the age of 40 who are making a meaningful impact in their fields and communities.

In June, Angel graduated from **Leadership Westchester**, a highly respected leadership development program administered by **Volunteer New York!**. The program brings together emerging and established leaders from across the county for an intensive experience focused on community leadership, civic engagement, and collaborative problem-solving.

Angel's recognition and accomplishments are a testament not only to her professional excellence but also to her passion for advancing policies and programs that support children, youth, and families throughout Westchester County.

Please join us in congratulating Angel on these well-deserved honors. We are proud to have her as part of the WCA team and look forward to her continued leadership and impact in the years ahead.

New York State FY 2026-27 Budget Vote Outcomes



The New York State Fiscal Year Enacted Budget for 2026-27 brought several wins, but also came with shortcomings. The gaps, particularly in family support, children's health, and youth justice, risk leaving families reliant on limited community-based resources.

To ensure the best outcomes for children, NYS must continue to advance policies and funding initiatives that work together with local government and nonprofits to support children and their families from early ages up into adolescence.

FUNDING AREA	BUDGET RECOMMENDATION	BUDGET OUTCOME
EARLY CHILDHOOD SUPPORT		
Child Care Workforce	Create a permanent fund to increase compensation and improve retention for child care workers.	The Enacted Budget does not establish a permanent statewide child care worker compensation fund.
Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)	Fully fund child care assistance and expand access for eligible families.	The Enacted Budget includes the Governor's proposed \$1.2 billion investment in CCAP, bringing total program funding to more than \$3 billion .
Universal Child Care Pilot Programs	Invest in community-based models that serve as a bridge to universal child care.	The Enacted Budget includes \$66 million for Community Cares pilot programs in Dutchess, Monroe, and Broome County.
CHILD POVERTY		
Empire State Child Credit	Increase the credit to \$1,500 per child (ages 0–18), adjust annually for inflation, make the expansion permanent, and invest in outreach to ensure eligible families receive the benefit.	No additional investments were made to expand or strengthen the Empire State Child Credit.
Housing Access Voucher Program (HAVP)	Establish a permanent statewide housing voucher program funded at \$250 million annually to help families secure stable housing and prevent homelessness.	The budget includes \$50 million for the Housing Access Voucher Program pilot.
Cash Assistance	Double benefit levels, adjust annually for inflation, remove restrictive eligibility rules, and reform sanctions that can cut families off from assistance.	No increase was provided for public assistance cash grants.
Food Assistance for Immigrant Families	Create a state-funded food benefit program for income-eligible families excluded from SNAP due to immigration status.	No funding was provided for a state-funded food assistance program.
SNAP Security Improvements	Upgrade EBT cards to chip technology and replace stolen SNAP benefits.	The budget funds the transition to chip-enabled EBT cards but does not fund replacement of stolen SNAP benefits.
Emergency Food Programs	Provide \$75 million each for Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) and NourishNY.	The budget includes \$72.8 million for HPNAP and \$55 million for NourishNY .
Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	Invest an additional \$30 million to meet growing demand and serve more families.	WIC funding remains flat funded.
YOUTH WELL-BEING		
Children's Mental Health Services	Invest \$200 million to expand children's mental health services and strengthen the behavioral health workforce.	Not Included. The Enacted Budget does not include new investments to expand children's mental health and behavioral health services. However, it does provide a 2.7% inflationary increase for human service providers .
Child Welfare & Family Support	Establish a \$30 million Child and Family Wellbeing Fund to support community-based programs that strengthen families and prevent unnecessary child welfare system involvement.	Not Included. The Enacted Budget does not include funding for the Child and Family Wellbeing Fund.
YOUTH JUSTICE		
Youth Justice Innovation Fund	Create a \$50 million Youth Justice Innovation Fund to support prevention, early intervention, and community-based alternatives to detention and incarceration.	Not Included. While both the Senate and Assembly proposed funding for the Youth Justice Innovation Fund, the Enacted Budget does not include funding for the initiative.



Commissioners' Conversation Highlights Challenges & Opportunities for Westchester Families

On June 11, 2026, the Westchester Children's Association (WCA) hosted its fourth annual Commissioners' Conversation on Children at the Greenburgh Public Library. More than 75 community members, county employees, nonprofit leaders, educators, advocates, and public officials gathered to discuss the most pressing issues facing children, youth, and families across Westchester County.

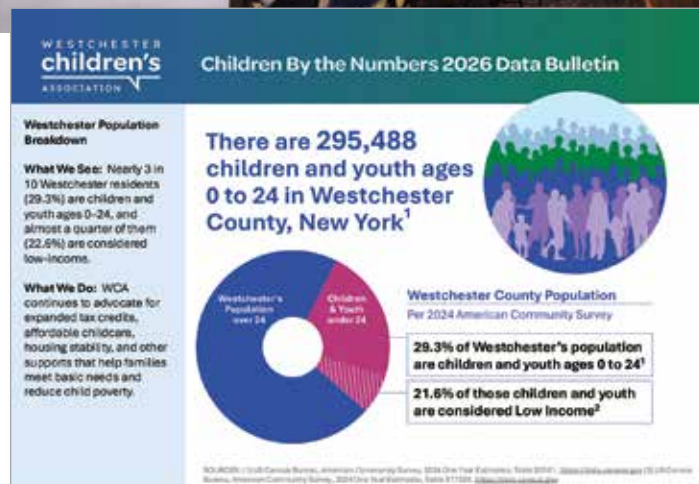
Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins welcomed attendees and emphasized the importance of collaboration in addressing challenges facing children and families: *"Issues facing children and families today cannot be addressed by any one agency or organization alone,"* Jenkins said. *"Whether we're talking about health, mental health services, early childhood development, education, housing stability, youth engagement, or family support, progress requires collaboration across government, nonprofits, schools, and community partners."*

Moderated by WCA Executive Director Adam Rabinovitch, the panel featured **Blanca Lopez, Commissioner of Planning; Elizabeth Oliveto, Program Administrator for Youth Development; John Befus, First Deputy Commissioner of Social Services; Michael Orth, Commissioner of Community Mental Health; Rachel Kotzur, Assistant Commissioner of Probation; and Renee Recchia, First Deputy Commissioner of Health.**

A common theme throughout the discussion was prevention and providing support before families reach a crisis point. Panelists highlighted how early intervention can improve outcomes related to housing, mental health, youth development, and public health.

Lopez spoke about addressing housing instability before families face eviction and the trauma that often follows. *"We have the services in place, but we have it when they're already free falling,"* she said, emphasizing the need to connect families with resources earlier.

Recchia highlighted the long-term impact of lead exposure on children and the importance of identifying hazards before children are harmed. *"If a child is lead poisoned, their IQ changes forever,"* she noted.



Befus shared conversations with parents of gang-involved youth, many of whom pointed to after-school programs, evening activities, opportunities for connection, and safe spaces as supports that could have made a difference. *"Sometimes it's simple. It's common sense,"* Befus reflected.

Orth echoed the importance of prevention and early intervention in children's mental health, discussing efforts to expand screening, awareness, and access to support before challenges escalate into crises.

Throughout the conversation, panelists emphasized the importance of working across departments and sectors to better serve children and families. Rabinovitch summarized this shared commitment by reminding attendees that, *"Children and families don't experience government support in departments. They experience systems."*

The event also featured a preview of WCA's upcoming 2026 Children by the Numbers Data Bulletin. WCA Director of Data, Finance, and Operations Limarie Cabrera and Data Analyst Brandon Washington shared plans for a new interactive online format that will provide advocates, policymakers, and community leaders with timely data throughout the year.

As the discussion concluded, participants reflected on the value of bringing together leaders from government and the nonprofit sector to strengthen partnerships and identify opportunities to improve outcomes for children and families. **The conversation reinforced a central message: when communities invest in prevention, collaboration, and early support, children and families are better positioned to thrive.**

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470 Mamaroneck Avenue, Suite 304
White Plains, NY 10605

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**WESTCHESTER
children's
ASSOCIATION**

**SAVE THE DATE
OCTOBER 20, 2026**

20TH ANNUAL KATHRYN WASSERMAN DAVIS

ADVOCACY BREAKFAST

JOIN US FOR AN INSPIRING MORNING DEDICATED TO
ADVANCING OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN WESTCHESTER.
HARRISON MEADOWS COUNTRY CLUB
123 NORTH STREET HARRISON, NY
8AM-10AM

FEATURING KEYNOTE SPEAKER

DR. DAMIA HARRIS-MADDEN,
COMMISSIONER OF THE NEW YORK
STATE OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND
FAMILY SERVICES (OCFS)



SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR

**20th Annual Kathryn Wasserman Davis
ADVOCACY BREAKFAST**

**Tuesday, October 20, 2026, 8 AM - 10 AM
at Harrison Meadows Country Club**

Each year, we bring together community leaders, educators, advocates, and supporters to discuss the issues shaping the well-being of children and families.

This year, we are honored to welcome

**Dr. DaMia Harris-Madden,
Commissioner of the New York State Office
of Children and Family Services (OCFS)**

as our 2026 keynote speaker

**Mark your calendars.
More details coming soon!**