



CONNECTICUT VOICES FOR CHILDREN



First for Kids 2009 Celebration

*Honoring citizens for
effective advocacy
and public leadership
on behalf of all of
Connecticut's children,
youth and families.*



December 3, 2009
5:30 p.m.~ 7:30 p.m.

Eli Whitney Museum
915 Whitney Avenue
Hamden, Connecticut



About Connecticut Voices for Children

Connecticut Voices for Children is a statewide, research and policy organization that works at the state and federal levels to advance strategic public investment and wise public policies to benefit our state's children, youth and families. We believe that all of Connecticut's young people should grow up healthy and safe, have opportunities for successful learning from birth through adulthood, live free from the limiting effects of poverty, prosper under the loving guidance of caring adults, and have the opportunity to give something back to their communities along the way.

Connecticut Voices works on a variety of issues, including early care, K-12 and higher education, children's health and mental health, foster care, juvenile justice, and state and federal tax and budget topics. Our research and policy reports are widely cited by the media and other organizations and are published on our Web site at www.ctkidslink.org. Our communications initiatives include sending E-Notes, an electronic newsletter, to more than 2,000 residents of Connecticut and beyond, as well as maintaining listservs on health and federal budget issues. We host many informational forums that bring Connecticut and national leaders together to share "best practice" thinking on a variety of policy and budget issues.

A strong supporter of working through coalitions, Connecticut Voices for Children is a founding member of the CT Juvenile Justice Alliance, the CT Early Childhood Alliance, and Better Choices for CT. We also coordinate the Covering Connecticut's Kids and Families Coalition. Connecticut Voices continues to be very proud of our role as a founding partner in Camp Totokett, the widely-honored Greater

New Haven area summer experience for children whose families are living with HIV/AIDS. At the national level, Connecticut Voices is a state partner in the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' State Fiscal Analysis Initiative, the Economic Policy Institute's Economic Analysis and Research Network, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, First Focus' Children in Focus initiative, the New England Alliance for Children's Health, and Voices for America's Children. We also serve on the steering committees of a number of these groups.

Connecticut Voices for Children's internship program attracts talented college and graduate students who desire a range of experiences in policy analysis and advocacy, while our policy fellowships offer full-time positions to exceptional recent college graduates with a strong interest in advancing public policy to benefit children and youth. Our innovative partnership with Yale Law School's Legislative Advocacy Clinic provides Connecticut Voices with the able assistance of law students each year. Connecticut Voices, in turn, provides these students with hands-on experience in the legislative process. We celebrate the accomplishment and service of state and local leaders through our First for Kids Awards.

And because policy change is often possible only through legislation, Connecticut Voices works to advance — through the Connecticut General Assembly and state agencies — the sound policy and budget choices necessary for the health and well-being of our youngest residents and their families, and Connecticut's future.

9th Annual First for Kids Ceremony

Musical entertainment provided by Chris Dorsey and JT Lincoln

Welcome

Congressional Leadership Award

Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro

Legislative Leadership Award

House Speaker Chris Donovan

Transformational Policy Leadership Award

New England Alliance for Children's Health

CT Voices for Children Founders' Award

Dr. Nancy Meyer-Lustman

Media Award

WNPR's "Where We Live"

Closing Remarks

CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro



Throughout her more than two decades of public service, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro has been an effective advocate on behalf

of Connecticut families, whether it was leading the fight for equal pay for equal work, advocating for paid sick days, defending the Children's Health Insurance Program, or finding ways to improve access to nutritious food.

Rep. DeLauro was first elected to Congress from Connecticut's Third District in 1990, and is currently serving her tenth term. She sits on the influential House Appropriations and Budget Committees. She serves as chairwoman of the Agriculture-FDA Appropriations Subcommittee and as a member of the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education and Financial Services Appropriations Subcommittees. In 1999, she was elected Assistant to the Democratic Leader by her colleagues, making her the second highest ranking Democratic woman in the House of Representatives.

Rep. DeLauro has been called a "hero for working families" by nationally syndicated columnist Tom Oliphant. She has helped Connecticut families get ahead by making economic improvement a top priority. She has fought for targeted tax cuts, such as a \$500 per child tax credit. Rep. DeLauro introduced legislation that would guarantee men and women equal pay for equal work. In her efforts to support both working families and public health, she has been a leading voice for paid sick days.

Rep. DeLauro has led initiatives in Washington and Connecticut to meet the challenges facing parents and children. She has championed legislation that would make child care more affordable, and has worked to improve public education by reducing class size and modernizing public schools. In 1999, Rep. DeLauro established "Rosa's Readers," a program now in its 11th year, that was designed to increase interest in reading outside the formal classroom environment.

During her tenure in Congress, DeLauro has taken a special interest in health care issues, leading the fight for affordable, quality health care. As a survivor of ovarian cancer, DeLauro has been a leading voice for increasing critical cancer research. In 2006, her work led to passage of "Johanna's Law"— a law that will increase awareness of the gynecologic cancers. She has fought to increase funding for breast and cervical cancer screening and research and has authored legislation to ensure longer hospital stays for women undergoing breast cancer surgery. She led an effort to enact national legislation to address the public health crisis of underage drinking in our country. She actively supported the renewal of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and defended it against funding cuts.

In her leadership position on the House Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee, Rep. DeLauro has worked to provide funding for a safe food supply and for Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulation of thousands of products we use everyday. With the nation's economy in recession and more families in need of basic supports, she was instrumental this year in obtaining additional funding for the Food Stamp and WIC programs. With rising instances of food-borne illness and questions about food safety, she co-founded the Congressional Food Safety Caucus to explore remedies to secure the food supply.

Prior to her election to the House of Representatives, Rosa DeLauro served as Executive Director of EMILY'S List, a national organization dedicated to increasing the number of women in elected office. From 1981-1987, DeLauro served as Chief of Staff to U.S. Senator Christopher Dodd. She is a graduate of Marymount College, where she received her B.A. with honors. She earned her Masters in International Politics from Columbia University, and studied at the London School of Economics.

For her outspoken leadership on behalf of Connecticut's children and families, we applaud Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro and recognize her service with our Congressional Leadership award.



LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP AWARD

House Speaker Chris Donovan

As the 2009 legislative session began, the outlook for Connecticut's children and families was gloomy. A declining economy and revenue shortfalls had produced an historic deficit. Deep cuts that would threaten the well-being of Connecticut's children and the economic future of the state were being proposed. House Speaker Chris Donovan provided the leadership necessary to hold the line against damaging program cuts and to find revenue solutions.

Representative Donovan was first elected to the Connecticut General Assembly in 1992, representing Meriden. He served as House Chair of the Labor and Public Employees Committee from 1997-2003, before being elected Majority Leader in November of 2004. He served two terms as Majority Leader and was sworn in as Speaker of the House in January 2009.

Speaker Donovan has been a leader on health care reform legislation, particularly in his efforts to increase access to affordable, quality health care by opening up the state employee health care plan to municipalities, non-profits and small businesses. He believes quality health care coverage should be available to everyone in the state. Rep. Donovan has led successful fights on campaign finance reform, stem cell research funding, and supplemental Medicare coverage, as well as expansions to the HUSKY program, minimum wage increases, school-based health clinics, school nutrition, and mass transit improvements.

This year, recognizing that Connecticut faced a revenue problem rather than a spending problem, Representative Donovan advocated for a more balanced budget bill that would include increased revenues to support the public structures that make Connecticut a great place to live – our public schools and universities, parks, transportation systems, environmental protection agencies, and public safety agencies.

He spoke out at numerous forums and news conferences across the state that were aimed at

educating the public about the budget proposals and advocating for more balanced revenue solutions. These events focused on a variety of public services, including early care, social services, libraries, and health care programs. While some difficult cuts were made in the final budget agreement, the damage to our children and our state and was far less than it could have been without Chris Donovan's leadership.

Under Connecticut's regressive tax system, low- and middle-income residents pay a higher percentage of their income in state and local taxes than high-income residents. Rep. Donovan forcefully and repeatedly advocated for an historic reform to Connecticut's income taxes, increasing rates for Connecticut's wealthiest residents to help make the tax system more fair and to bring in needed revenues to balance the budget.

Because he was concerned about the near-term impact of the economic downturn on Connecticut's families, he formed the Children in the Recession Legislative Task Force, which brings together policymakers and issue experts to find ways of meeting the needs of Connecticut's youngest and most vulnerable citizens in this difficult time.

Speaker Donovan has been a longstanding advocate for families both inside and outside of government. He earned his Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Connecticut School of Social Work, specializing in community organizing. He was a labor organizer with the Congress of Connecticut Community Colleges and worked for the Connecticut Citizen's Action Group, where he focused on environmental, energy and housing issues. He also worked for the Service Employees International Union on day care, family leave, and pay equity issues.

For his leadership in achieving a more balanced approach to the state's budget deficit and for his history of advocacy on issues affecting children and families, we honor House Speaker Chris Donovan with our Legislative Leadership Award.



NEW ENGLAND ALLIANCE FOR
Children's Health

TRANSFORMATIONAL POLICY LEADERSHIP AWARD



New England Alliance for Children's Health

The New England Alliance for Children's Health (NEACH), an initiative created by Community Catalyst in 2006, is a regional partnership of hospitals, advocates, health care providers, business leaders, interfaith organizations, and consumers who work together to ensure that all children in New England have access to the highest quality health care.

The Alliance has worked hard to protect children and our communities from ill-advised cuts on the federal and state levels to the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicaid during the last few years. It has helped partner organizations, including Connecticut Voices for Children, to develop new in-state and regional relationships and to solidify other partnerships. The Alliance has focused attention not just on coverage and access issues, but also on the unique quality of care needs of children.

The Alliance's collaborative efforts have helped state advocates achieve results that they would not be able to achieve on their own. In 2007, as Congress debated the future of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Alliance sponsored a New England-wide public opinion poll to gauge support for the program. Because a large number of New England residents were polled, groups in each state could measure public opinion in their state. The poll demonstrated overwhelming support in Connecticut for state action to support the HUSKY health insurance program and federal initiatives to expand CHIP. Connecticut Voices, in collaboration with state legislative leaders, announced these results to help build support for our legislative efforts. And the information gleaned from the polling helped state groups to better communicate policy ideas to policy makers and the public.

The Alliance helped state partners to continue to press for reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program, which was finally approved in February of 2009. It helped state organizations establish effective relationships with the Congressional delegation and their staff. The Alliance's electronic newsletters, accessible and informed staff, convening of annual regional meetings with partner organizations, and organizing of federal delegation meetings have enabled state organizations

to keep up with the flood of information about federal initiatives, including the reauthorization of CHIP and national health reform. In the process, we have educated ourselves and lawmakers about how New England stands out from much of the rest of the nation. As a region, we have done a far better job of providing health care coverage for children and families. As a result, NEACH and its partner organizations have informed lawmakers about how rollbacks in eligibility would have a greater impact in New England precisely because we have been in the forefront of expanding coverage to low and moderate income families for more than a decade.



In honoring NEACH, we are also honoring its smart, energetic, and talented director, Amy Rosenthal, and staff. Rosenthal serves as the Director of External Affairs for Community Catalyst. In this capacity, she manages the organization's government affairs

work and currently co-leads its national health reform campaign. Rosenthal has also directed the New England Alliance for Children's Health since its inception. She is both a great communicator and thoughtful listener, invaluable skills she has put to great use in bringing together a wide-range of stakeholders to improve children's health.

Previously, Rosenthal was the Executive Director of the Barbara Lee Family Foundation and served as Political Director for Barbara Lee, a well-known activist and fundraiser for progressive women candidates. She worked in the Massachusetts State Senate and the State House of Representatives, served as the Policy Director on a gubernatorial campaign, and provided political consulting services for several clients in New England. She also spent seven years working for three large academic hospitals performing public health work.

For its outstanding leadership in the area of children's health in Connecticut and throughout New England, we honor NEACH and its tireless director, Amy Rosenthal, with our Transformational Policy Leadership Award.



CONNECTICUT VOICES FOR CHILDREN FOUNDERS' AWARD

Dr. Nancy Meyer-Lustman

At first, the fit was not obvious. But as Dr. Nancy Meyer-Lustman continued to talk with the three other women, the necessity of founding Connecticut Voices for Children and the special role she would play in this new nonprofit became clear. Shelley Geballe, Judy Solomon and Janice Gruendel were long-time children's advocates in different disciplines — civil rights, health, child welfare, early care and education. Dr. Meyer-Lustman was an experienced clinical psychologist who was interested in expanding her efforts for children beyond an individual, office-based level. Together they decided that an organization that focused broadly on kids across budget, education, health and other areas affecting child well-being, was overdue. Congress was moving much more responsibility onto the states, so a robust, cross-issue state organization speaking up for kids was important. They also felt that the many other voices out there standing ready to advocate for children needed an avenue to do that, and emerging technologies presented an opportunity to use new ways to speak up for kids and families.

Dr. Meyer-Lustman brought her practitioner's perspective to the work, as someone who worked with children and families on a day-to-day basis. As a psychologist, she helped people to connect on emotional levels on emotional issues, and she embraced this role in the founding and early days of Voices, helping the other three founders understand how to connect with people and get them involved. She graduated from Yale University with a doctoral degree in clinical psychology in 1983. She had also been a Bush Fellow at Yale, and was exposed to social policy advocacy through that experience. One of her early ideas was to post stories and pictures of individual children on the walls of the state's Legislative Office Building to make their concerns and needs more real to policymakers. This approach has become central to Voices' pursuit of its mission — ensuring that the data and research we generate is always linked with revealing what these statistics really mean in children's lives.

Dr. Meyer-Lustman supervised other clinical psychologists, and she organized and taught a seminar at the Yale Child Study Center. She helped link Voices'

early efforts to the Center, which initially hosted the Voices Web site for free. She worked with other faculty members to develop a number of short papers for the Web site that were designed for parents. It gave Voices some instant credibility, and the Web site hosting provided the fledgling organization with a tool to reach others quickly at no cost. Voices even hosted internet training sessions, at a time (1995!) when a lot of folks did not know how to use Web sites.

After the early consuming period of Voices' founding, Dr. Meyer-Lustman stayed actively on Voices' Board of Directors, again playing the role of supporting those doing the "outside" work — contributing through her understanding of group process, making it her job to assist in ensuring that these critical aspects of organizational management and success went more smoothly.

It has been important to her that Voices remains the well-respected children's policy organization that legislators, organizations and individuals turn to as a resource. Voices' role in training future leaders is also particularly close to her heart, as this is a vehicle for continuing to fulfill the mission of Voices' founding leaders.

Dr. Meyer-Lustman continued to give richly to Voices through its most recent leadership changes. When Voices' President Shelley Geballe decided to transition to Distinguished Senior Fellow, Dr. Meyer-Lustman offered her the very helpful metaphor of becoming a "grandmother" to Voices, instead of a "mother". Again, she acted as counselor/midwife, in essence, when Voices needed a steady hand and an empathic, independent perspective.

She has been in a private psychotherapy practice in New Haven for over 25 years. She is currently on the faculty of the Department of Psychiatry at Yale University Medical School.

During this year when she has stepped aside as a Voices Board member, Voices is deeply grateful to Dr. Nancy Meyer-Lustman for her vision, dedication and hard work on Voices' behalf. And so we honor the intellect, and heart and soul she poured into Voices at from its founding by giving her our First for Kids Founders' Award.



Producer Libby Conn, Host John Dankosky,
and Senior Producer Catie Talarski

There are many journalists who are great writers and story tellers. There are fewer who are great citizens – who use their news medium to educate and engage their fellow citizens, so they can make more informed decisions on the important public issues of the day. The staff at Connecticut Public Radio who put together the “Where We Live” public affairs program are great citizens.

These are uncertain and perilous times for journalism. The number of Capitol and issue beat reporters in the state has declined precipitously. Since 2008, the Hartford Courant has eliminated nearly half of their news staff. Between 1994 and 2001, the number of radio news staff across the country dropped by more than half. The loss of journalists has deep and troubling implications for our democracy and public policy. If, as Thomas Jefferson said, “information is the currency of democracy,” the decline of journalism leaves Connecticut’s democracy in an impoverished state.

As many other news organizations have retrenched, WNPR has been expanding – moving to a news and public affairs format and beefing up its news staff. Where We Live, WNPR’s local morning talk and interview show, launched in 2006. The year after its launch, it was voted “Best Call-In Show” by the national organization Public Radio News Directors, Inc. It features conversation with local, regional, national and global guests, and topics that focus on how we live in Connecticut and on the planet. The program conducts regular interviews with lawmakers and opinion leaders in state government, and gives the audience the chance to join the conversation by phone or online.

Just this year, Where We Live has featured discussions on many issues affecting children and families, including state tax and budget proposals, unemployment, poverty, racial disparities, the impact of the recession on families, health reform, classroom diversity, government accountability, youth violence, single parents, career training for youth, and the impact of the federal stimulus.

We want to honor the excellent work that the Where We Live team has done in educating the public on child and

MEDIA AWARD

WNPR’s “Where We Live”

family issues over the years, but more fundamentally, we appreciate that the program takes public policy and the work of state and local governments seriously. Some journalists discuss public policy debates as they do electoral contests, adopting a horse race approach that documents who is ahead, who is behind, and what kind of mud was slung in which direction.

The Where We Live team instead engages issue experts and callers in discussions that draw on journalism’s deeper values of serving the public interest and educating citizens. John Dankosky, who also serves as the station’s news director, is the host and originator of the program. He manages a delicate balancing act in which he seeks to foster conversations rather than lectures, to engage listeners rather than merely entertain them, and to inform the public without becoming overly cerebral. He asks consistently smart and informed questions that draw out the expertise of his guests, and makes the whole production sound easy and natural.

John has been working in radio - mostly public radio - for 21 years. He has helped to build WNPR’s award-winning newsroom — cultivating one of the most talented news staffs in public radio. He has won awards for reporting, editing and hosting Where We Live. He also serves as an adjunct journalism professor at Quinnipiac University.

Behind a great radio host is a great producer, and John has two skilled staff to help in generating topics, identifying guests, researching issues, and preparing questions for the program. Senior Producer Catie Talarski got her start in documentary radio at the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies in Maine. Since then, her award-winning stories have aired on PRI’s The World, NPR’s Day to Day, NPR’s Weekend Edition Sunday, WBUR’s Here and Now, the NPR/PRX podcast, and other NPR affiliate stations. Producer Libby Conn first became interested in radio at Duke University, where she did her undergraduate work in History and Documentary Studies. Since graduating, she has worked with filmmakers, nonprofit organizations, and friends to tell stories on a wide range of topics. Libby’s documentary work has aired on public radio in Seattle and North Carolina, and has been featured on The Public Radio Exchange.

For their work in educating the public on child and family issues and fostering a more informed citizenry, we honor WNPR’s Where We Live team.

Past
First for Kids
Honorees

2008

State Policy Leader Award
Attorney General Richard Blumenthal

Legislative Leadership Award
Jonathan Harris

Transformational Philanthropy Award
Connecticut Health Foundation

Community Leadership Award
Center for Youth Leadership

Priscilla Canny Research Award
Walter S. Gilliam, Ph.D.

Connecticut Voices for Children Founders' Award
Shelley Geballe

2006

Transformational Policy Leadership Award
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Citizen Advocacy Award
Sherbie Worthen

Scholar Advocate Award
John L. Pottenger, Jr.

Connecticut Voices for Children Founders' Award
Ellen Scalettar

2005

Legislative Leadership Award
Senate President Pro Tempore
Donald E. Williams, Jr.

Transformational Philanthropy Award
Melville Charitable Trust

Media Award
Michele Jacklin

Connecticut Voices for Children Founders' Award
Dr. Janice Gruendel

Albert J. Solnit Leadership Award
Dr. Roslyn Meyer

2004

Albert J. Solnit Leadership Award
U.S. Senator Christopher Dodd

Legislative Leadership Award
State Representative Toni Walker

Public Service Award
George Coleman, Associate Commissioner,
CT Department of Education

Transformational Philanthropy Award
William Casper Graustein Memorial Fund

Citizen Advocacy Awards
Courtney and Jane Bourns

Connecticut Voices for Children Founders' Award
Judith Solomon



Note: There was no First for Kids award program held in 2003 or 2007.

Past
First for Kids
Honorees



2002

Albert J. Solnit Leadership Award
Representative Christel Truglia

Lifetime Achievement Award
Professor Edward Zigler, Yale University

Statwide Child Advocacy Award
Jeanne Milstein and the Office of the Child Advocate

Media Award
Ann Nyberg, Channel 8 News Anchor

Citizen Advocacy Award
Harry Orlick

Community Advocacy Award
Dr. Eric Cooper, President,
National Urban Alliance for Effective Education

Youth Mentor Award
Alan MacKenzie, Director, Our Piece of the Pie

2001

Albert J. Solnit Leadership Award
Senator Kevin B. Sullivan

Media Awards
The Hartford Courant's: Dave Altimari, Dwight Blint, Susan
Campbell, Beth Hamilton, Andrew Julien, Kathy Megan,
Daryl Perch, Colin Poitras, and Eric Weiss

Citizen Advocacy Award
Sheila Amdur

Community Advocacy Awards
Rev. Bonita Grubbs and Marilyn Ondrasik

Youth Mentor Awards
Michael Duggan, Will MacAdams,
and Richard Sugarman

2000

Policy Leadership Award
Lt. Governor M. Jodi Rell

Albert J. Solnit Leadership Award
Senator Toni Harp

Community Advocacy Award
Fernando Betancourt

Citizen Advocacy Awards
Eva Bunnell and Norma Schatz

Vision to Action Awards
Paula Armbruster, Anne Calabresi, Henry Fernandez, III,
Matthew Klein, Roslyn Meyer, and Jerome Meyer, Founders of
LEAP—Leadership, Education, and Athletics in Partnership, Inc.

Connecticut Voices for Children Founders' Award
Priscilla "Penny" Canny

1999

A Special Tribute To
Albert J. Solnit, MD

Albert J. Solnit Leadership Award
Representative John Thompson

Volunteerism Awards
Barbara Colley and Rev. Gary Smith, Camp Totokett

Citizen Advocacy Awards
Marva and Willie Jones, Grandparents

Media Award
Stephen Winters, *Connecticut Post*

Connecticut Voices for Children Staff

Jamey Bell, J.D. Executive Director
Cari Carson Policy Fellow
Linda Deemy Project and Development Associate
Alexandra Dufresne, J.D. Senior Policy Fellow
Shelley Geballe, J.D., M.P.H. Distinguished Senior Fellow
Joachim Hero, M.P.H. Research Analyst
Annemarie Hillman Policy Fellow
Mary Jennings..... Office Manager
Tamara Kramer..... Policy Fellow
Sharon Langer, M.Ed., J.D.. Senior Policy Fellow
Mary Alice Lee, Ph.D. Senior Policy Fellow
Veronica "Ronnie" Marshall Administrative Assistant
Claire Morduch Director of Finance and Administration
Cyd Oppenheimer, J.D. Senior Policy Fellow
Michael Sullivan, M.S.W. Director of Communications

Connecticut Voices for Children Board

Jean Adnopo
Yale University Child Study Center

Peter Arakas, Board Chair
Lego Corporation

Mike Bangser
Bangser Consulting

Jamey Bell (ex-officio)
Connecticut Voices for Children

Andrew Boone
UBS

Lynn Cochrane
Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc.

Hector Glynn
The Village for Families & Children, Inc.

Francine Goldstein
Aviation Products Management, Inc.

Reverend Bonita Grubbs
Christian Community Action

Note: Organization affiliations listed for identification purposes only.

*Speaking up for
Connecticut's kids
since 1996*



www.ctkidslink.org