The Maine Children’s Alliance

15th ANNIVERSARY REPORT

“…You must work, we must all work, to make the world worthy of its children.”
– Pablo Casals (1876-1973)
Fifteen years ago, we both joined a group of visionary people who were committed to strengthening child advocacy in Maine. Our vision became a reality when we incorporated the Maine Children’s Alliance and Ellie Goldberg, our first President and CEO, joined us in a windowless one-room office in Portland.

We have come a long way since then. Now we have a staff of seven, a building of our own, and a long list of accomplishments that makes us proud. With support from a broad base of individuals, organizations, agencies and corporations, we have been able to make a significant difference in the lives of Maine children and their families. Working together, we have:

- Improved the early care and education systems
- Expanded access to quality, affordable health care, including behavioral health services
- Helped restructure the child welfare program to provide better outcomes for children
- Offered effective support for cooperation among local schools

We have much to celebrate – and much work still to do. We will continue to focus our attention on improving systems that affect the wellbeing of our young people. At the Maine Children’s Alliance, we believe this is the most effective and efficient way to have an impact on the policy makers, agencies and others whose efforts will determine our children’s success today and into the future.

We also believe that it takes a community, working together, to succeed. Our community extends across Maine and, for the past fifteen years, our community leader has been Ellie Goldberg. We are grateful for her hard work, vision and leadership. This year, Ellie has stepped down as President and CEO. Fortunately for the Maine Children’s Alliance, she will stay on as Executive Vice President and continue to be a strong voice for children.

Banker and community leader, John W. Whitehead once said, “Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see.” Our hearts are warmed to think that, far into the future, Maine’s children will be healthier, happier and more productive because of the work of the Maine Children’s Alliance. Please join us, as we set our sights on the future, and the work to be done in next fifteen years.

JACK ROSSER
Chair of The Maine Children’s Alliance Board of Directors

DEAN CROCKER
President/CEO of The Maine Children’s Alliance
From its inception, MCA has focused on system change buttressed by accurate, reliable data collection and analysis. MCA changes the lives of children by working with individuals, organizations, programs and agencies to improve the quality of services for children and the way these services are delivered. MCA frequently convenes a diverse group of stakeholders from the public and private sectors, seeking shared concerns, common ground and practical solutions.

IN RECENT YEARS, THIS WORK HAS INCLUDED:

- Providing support for the integration and improvement of complex systems (e.g., the creation of the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) at the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and child welfare system reforms)
- Successfully advocating for the creation of a Division of Early Childhood within OCFS
- The development of new strategies and programs to meet previously unmet needs, including School-Based Health Care Centers and the work of the Dental Access Coalition
- Analysis of complex issues with recommendations for constructive change (e.g., work with our congressional delegation; school reform)
- Strategic community outreach to increase the number of children and families with health care coverage

All these efforts at the state and federal level have created substantive and positive changes for individual children and families.

“The Maine Children’s Alliance [staff] have been pioneers in promoting research and evidence-based policies that improve the lives of all Maine children, youth, and families by encouraging a strong and unified approach to children’s services. This organization’s work with the Department of Health and Human Services, as Ombudsman for our child welfare system, has been exemplary in reforming our systems.”

GOVERNOR JOHN E. BALDACCI
March 2008
RECENT HIGHLIGHTS at the Maine Children’s Alliance

Data Collection and Analysis

Before we can work to solve a systems problem, we must have an in-depth understanding of the issue. MCA collects consistent, accurate and reliable data on a wide range of issues. This information provides a strong foundation for all the work we do.

- In early 2009, MCA published the 15th annual edition of the Maine KIDS COUNT Data Book. Over the years, more and more policy makers, advocates and others who work with children have come to rely on KIDS COUNT for accurate and up-to-date information. Funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT provides a wealth of information in three broad areas: physical and mental health, education and learning, and the social and economic contexts of children’s lives. The annual publication provides an in-depth picture of the current status of Maine’s children as well as trends in Maine over the past 15 years, indicating areas of both improvement and concern.

- In 2006, MCA released the “Maine Children’s Mental Health Report.” The report compiled indicators drawn from state survey data and state-level data from the public systems that ensure that mental health services are available for Maine children. These public systems consist of the state Department of Health and Human Services (the Division of Behavioral Health Services; the Division of Child Welfare Services; The Division of Early Childhood; and the Office of Substance Abuse), the Department of Education, the Department of Labor and the Department of Corrections. Based on the data compiled, extensive recommendations were offered on ways to integrate and coordinate data collection among the public systems through which children receive mental health services.

Based on the groundwork laid out in this report, MCA will be issuing a Children’s Behavioral Health Report regularly, beginning in the fall of 2009. Using the common set of indicators identified in the 2006 and substantial new data, these reports will highlight the successes and shortcomings in the mental health delivery systems. The first state in the nation to develop a children’s behavioral health systems data report, Maine will serve as a model for work in other states.

- The Children’s Growth Council has requested that MCA provide a baseline report on early childhood systems. The report will include indicators for school readiness and how well young children are doing, with recommendations for developing a cross systems effort for tracking child outcomes. The report will inform the recommendations that the Council will make to the legislature in January 2010.

“Your input is invaluable to me as the Congress works intensively to enact comprehensive health care reform.”

U. S. SENATOR OLYMPIA SNOWE
April 2009
Child Welfare and the Ombudsman Program

- MCA has administered the Child Welfare Ombudsman Program since its inception in 2003. Each year, the number of people who contact the program has increased. In 2008, the Ombudsman office received 384 calls. As a result of these calls, 175 cases that were opened and, for each one, we assessed both the individual concerns and any broader issues raised about child welfare practice and state policy. Even when the Office of the Ombudsman supports DHHS's decisions, practice or policy, concerns may be raised.

- The recommendations highlighted in the Ombudsman’s annual report have frequently served as a catalyst for systemic change in the state child welfare system. DHHS has implemented significant policy change regarding the placement of children in state custody, the focus of a number of the Ombudsman’s recommendations. As a result, fewer children are now placed in foster care and, when it is safe to do so, children are returned to their family, and priority is given to placing children in kinship care or adoptive homes. The number of children in foster care has been reduced by a third over the past six years, and the outcomes for children placed in permanent care are much better. The Ombudsman’s work to promote permanency planning has included active participation in a DHHS study entitled “Developing Shared Outcomes to Support Permanency Planning.”

- Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) describes the serious injuries that can occur when an infant or toddler is violently shaken. Working with a broad coalition of child advocates, health care providers and community groups, MCA is spreading the word that it is never all right to shake a baby. This message is being communicated through a number of avenues. “The Period of PURPLE Crying” is being given to parents of newborns in hospitals throughout Maine; home visitors, public health nurses and pediatricians are providing follow-up information; MCA and other organizations are providing community awareness presentations; and public service announcements are running on television and radio stations around the state.

The Early Childhood Initiative

- As a result of the Maine DHHS restructuring process, the Office of Child and Family Services was formed. Due, in large part, to the efforts of MCA, a Division of Early Childhood was established to ensure a system that will support the most effective, efficient and accountable system of services for early childhood learning and care. MCA provided...
insights and concrete recommendations, throughout the process, on how the system could be made more efficient and more responsive to the needs of children and their families. MCA continues to play an integral role in the work being done to improve preventative services, provide a seamless point of entry into the system for families, and implement other systemic changes. As a result of this work, young children will have a better start and improved long-term outcomes.

• With the hire of Judy Reidt-Parker as MCA's Early Childhood Specialist in September 2008, the organization is able to focus on strategies to assure that early childhood systems are structured efficiently, with policies that best serve Maine's infants and toddlers. MCA is a member of the Children's Growth Council, the Educare Leadership Team, and numerous other statewide efforts to improve the delivery of services to young children.

• In partnership with Raising Readers, a program of MaineHealth, MCA wrote and published an issue brief entitled “Infant and Toddler Language Development and Literacy.” The brief focuses on why early literacy is essential and how infant and toddler literacy and language development can best be supported.

• An article entitled “Assessing the Return on Public Investment in Maine’s Early Childhood System” is slated for publication in the fall issue of Policy Review, the journal of the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center. The paper offers concrete recommendations on ways the system can be improved.

Health Care

• Reauthorization of SCHIP (the State Children's Health Insurance Program) in February 2009 was supported by all of Maine's congressional delegation. As a prominent member of the Finance Committee, Senator Olympia Snowe played a pivotal role in its passage. MCA worked closely with the delegation, providing background information to congressional staff, and kept Maine constituents updated on the legislation through the media and direct communication with MCA members.

• Approximately 11,000 children and teenagers are eligible for MaineCare but not enrolled. In 2008, the Maine Children's Alliance and KeyBank jointly launched a statewide outreach campaign to encourage parents to enroll their families. KeyBank displayed MaineCare

“The Maine Children's Alliance … makes a significant contribution to the wellbeing of children and families of Maine. We are profoundly grateful!”

U. S. SENATOR OLYMPIA SNOWE
March 2005
applications in each of their 62 locations around the state, and Key employees joined MCA staff in making presentations to local service groups about the outreach project.

**Equality and Diversity**

- The Marriage Equality Bill, making civil marriage legal for gay and lesbian couples in Maine, was passed in 2009 by the state legislature. Through community outreach, opinion pieces in the press, and testimony before the legislature’s Judiciary Committee, MCA publicly supported the legislation. Speaking at the hearing in favor of the bill, Ellie Goldberg testified that “children of same-gender families can be hurt or become the objects of ridicule and harassment by other children and adults who do not understand or approve of gay and lesbian parenting. One way we can relieve children of that burden or stigma is by allowing their parents to engage in civil marriage and, in doing so, acknowledge and support their family structure.”

**Education**

- MCA’s Education Project has published several reports focusing on reform of public education. They emphasize the value and advantages of cooperative techniques for a state with a small and declining school-aged population. “A Case for Cooperation: Making Connections to Improve Education for all Maine Students,” was the first such effort, published in 2006. The report’s message, that greater use of voluntary and cooperative regional services would result in financial efficiencies and improved education, found a wide audience and was cited by Gov. John Baldacci when he released a plan to consolidate school districts.

The resulting legislation, however, shifted the emphasis from improving the quality of education to cost savings through administrative mergers – a change that resulted in local resistance, particularly in rural areas of the state. A second report, “A Case for Cooperation II,” took account of a rapidly changing reform landscape, and continued to emphasize the advantages of voluntary, locally designed solutions. As before, the report promoted classroom benefits through cooperation, not just budget considerations.

- As 26 new consolidated districts that were formed under the law began operations this year, MCA followed up with a timely report on the first new regional district, designated RSU 1,
which followed its own path through a private and special law that enabled it to organize a year earlier. “Education First: How the Bath Area Made Reorganization Work,” published electronically in July 2009, chronicles how five communities planned and developed a successful new district with a variety of innovative compromises and educational improvements. The report shows how the Lower Kennebec Regional School District can serve as a model for other school districts as they continue their work on consolidation, with the aid of a new state law backed by MCA. This law promotes the formation of voluntary cooperatives alongside more formal consolidation agreements.

Economic Stability

• In the spring of 2009, MCA worked closely with Maine’s congressional delegation and staff to ensure that the final version of the federal American Recovery and Re-investment Act (ARRA) included significant supports for children and their families. The expansion of four tax credits for families – the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit, the Making Work Pay Tax Credit, and the American Opportunity Tax Credit – was a keystone of this effort. These credits are fully refundable, so they will include help for families with modest earnings that pay little or no income tax but pay a significant portion of their income in payroll tax. Maine Senator Olympia Snowe championed the inclusion of these expansions, and Maine’s entire delegation supported the package.

• For the past fifteen years, MCA has maintained a close and positive relationship with Maine’s congressional delegation. As a result, the delegation has consistently maintained a focus on issues that affect children and families, including tax reform, child care subsidies and health care programs. Additionally, MCA has taken a leadership role in the region, working with other advocates for children to make sure the New England congressional delegation works collaboratively on legislation that affects our children.

• MCA also has a respected presence at the State House, working with the legislature on tax reform and economic security issues.
RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The Maine KIDS COUNT Data Book. ........................................ published annually
Annual Ombudsman Report ................................................. published annually
Early Childhood Development: Issue Brief ............................. March 2005
Case for Cooperation I:
Making Connections to Improve Education for all Maine Students ........... July 2006
Maine Children's Mental Health Report .................................. September 2006
Case for Cooperation II:
How School Reform Can Work for Maine Students ................. August 2008
2009 Head Start Report ........................................................ March 2009
Education First: How the Bath Area Made Reorganization Work. ............... June 2009
Assessing the Return on Public Investment in Maine’s Early Childhood System ......... Fall 2009
THE GIRAFFE AWARDS  SALUTING ALL OUR CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN

...Celebrating those who “stick their necks out” for Maine’s children, youth, and families...

1996
Bodine “Bo” Ames
Camp Kieve/Leader Decisions Institute
Geiger Brothers
Christine Hastedt
Kids Can Make A Difference

1997
Diversity Leadership Institute
Bill Hager
Robin McCarthy
Rhyme & Reason, Margo Clarke Simmons
Jane Weil
Steve Wessler

1998
Belfast Area Child Care Services, Inc.
Carol Bryan
Nancy Call
Renee Chaplin
Nathan Fenderson
Megan Ford
Eva Grover
Bernard McAllister

1999
Office of Child Care and Head Start
Americorps Act Crew
Lee Glynn
Genevieve Hatcher
Edward Hinckley
Kits for Kids
Maine Children’s Home for Little Wanderers

2000
Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield
Child Protective & Children’s Services Staff
of the Department of Human Services
Lucky Hollander
Kathy Leen
The Root Cellar

2001
Lisa Belanger
MBNA
Amy Mitchell
Camp Chrysalis
Donna Short and Merrie Bruskin
The Edge

2002
Early Childhood Education Programs,
Maine Technical College System
Harvest Place
Cary Olson
Therapeutic Alternative Program at
Mount Ararat High School

2003
Alan Cartwright
Pierce Atwood Attorneys
William J. Kayatta and Margaret Minister O’Keefe

2004
Richard Warren
Trish Riley
Jim Minott

2005
Drew Landry
Bangor Family Connections
Kids Legal Aid of Maine

2006
James Rier
Regis Trembley
Miles for Smiles

2007
Alan Cobo-Lewis
Center for Grieving Children
Freda Plumley

2008
TD Banknorth

2009
Jobs for Maine’s Graduate
Heidi Bowden
Emanuel Pariser
James Morse
Barbara Ford
15 YEARS OF DONATIONS

$100,000 – $1,000,000
Americas Promise - First Focus
Annie E. Casey Foundation
Anonymous
Betterment Fund
Bingham Program
DHS Bureau of Health - Oral Health Program
Maine Community Foundation
Maine Health Access Foundation
Office of the Governor
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Rick and Beth Warren

$25,000 – $100,000
Anonymous
Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield
Bangor Daily News
Bank of America Foundation
Branta Foundation
Cox Charitable Trust
Dead River Company
Department of Education
DHS Bureau of Health - Teen and Young Adult Health Program
Fleet – Maine
Hannaford Bros. Co.
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation
Libra Foundation
Maine Department of Education
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Neil Rolde
Sam L. Cohen Foundation
Stephen & Tabitha King Foundation
Verizon
Voices for America’s Children
Rick and Beth Warren
Zero to Three

$1,000 – $5,000
Rosemary Baldacci
Bangor Savings Bank
Bath Iron Works
Belfast Area Child Care Services, Inc.
Martha Bishop
Blethen Maine Newspapers
Manitou T. Bronzi
Camp Kieve
Catholic Charities Maine
Center for Community Inclusion
Gail Chase
Child Care Services of York County
City of Augusta Childcare Bureau
Community Concepts - Auburn
Dead River Company
Dean Crocker
Judith Dunn
Patricia Eaglebrook
Day One for Children and Families
Nancy DeSisto
Downeast Health Services
Eastern Maine Healthcare
Beth Ellers
The E.Y.E. Foundation
Familyworks
Flory Investment
Geiger Brothers
Genest Concrete Works Inc.
Jane Gilbert and Nancy Fritz
Betsey Greenstein
H.E. Sargent Inc.
Mr. and Mrs. Will Hertz
John Hornstein
Infant Mental Health
Jobs for Maine’s Graduates
William & Judith Jones
Kennecot Girl Scout Council
Kennecot Savings Bank
Key Bank of Maine
Kids Can Make A Difference
KidsPeace New England
Berry Kornreich
Victoria Kuhn
KVCAP Child and Family Services
Jana Lapoint
Dorothy Larrabee
Le Garage Restaurant
Jim and Jane Lester
Libra Foundation
Susan Longley
Sylvia Lund
Luke MacFadyen
Maine AFL – CIO
Maine Association for Infant Mental Health
Maine Center for Economic Policy
Maine Children’s Trust
Maine Development Foundation
Maine Medical Center
Maine School Management Association
MaineHealth
Mary Majorowicz
MBNA Foundation
Jane McCarty
Nina McKee
Maine Community Foundation
Marge and Bill Medd
Mediation & Facilitation Resources
Merrill Lynch
Dr. Roy and Lisa Miller
Harriet Miskell
James F. Mitchell Co. LLC
Nancy Morrell
Dr. Frank A. Musciano
Sive Nielan
Rabbi Harry and Mrs. Sky
Unity College
University of Maine Cooperative Extension
UNUM Provident
Verrill & Dana, LLP
Kathi Wall
WGME 13
Joe and Carol Wishcamper
Youth Alternatives, Inc.

$500 – $1,000
Belfast Area Child Care Services, Inc.
Bernstein, Shuz, Sawyer & Nelson
Gail Chase
Judith Dunn
Day One for Children and Families
Nancy DeSisto
Downeast Health Services
Eastern Maine Community College
Familyworks
Flory Investment
John Hornstein
William & Judith Jones
Kennecot Girl Scout Council
Kids Can Make A Difference
Victoria Kuhn

$5,000 – $25,000
Arms Foundation
American Academy of Pediatrics - Maine Chapter
Anonymous
Bangor Savings Bank
Central Maine Power
Community Health & Counseling Services
Maddy Corson
Davis Family Foundation
Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services

up to $500
A Family for ME
Sharon Abair
Abnak Girl Scout Council
Academy Hill School
Acadia Hospital
ACAP
Eleanor Adams
Jean Adamson
Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine
Advocates for Children
Susan Allen
Amaryllis Clothing Co. Inc.
American Cancer Society
American Legion Auxiliary
American Lung Association of Maine
Androscoggin Children’s Advocacy Center
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Loren Andrews
Donna L. Andrews
Androscoggin Head Start and Child Care
Cushman Anthony
API Technology
Patricia and Richard Armstrong
Aroostook Mental Health Services
Ms. Patti Ashland, RNC, MSN
Atlantic Communications
Atlee Gleason Eye Care
Alice Ayoub
Dr. David R. Baker
Governor John E. Baldacci

Le Garage Restaurant
Maine Center for Economic Policy
Jane McCarty
Nina McKee
Mediation & Facilitation Resources
Dr. Frank A. Musciano
Sive Nielan
People’s Regional Opportunity Program
People’s Regional Opportunity Program - Child Care
Ms. Freda L. Plunkett
Portland Architectural Salvage, Inc.
Dr. John and Leslie Rosser
Draw David and Ann Simmons
Rabbi Harry and Mrs. Sky
Susan St. John
United Way of Mid Coast Maine

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All efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this list. Mistakes and omissions do happen over the years. We apologize for any errors that may have occurred.
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Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Inc.
Healey & Associates, Inc.

Husson College
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Maine Medical Center
MEP MSI
Merrill Bank
Mitchell Institute
Northeast Delta Dental
Oakhurst Dairy
O’Connor GMC
Paris Farmers Union
Pierce Atwood
Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram

Spring Harbor Hospital of Maine Medical Center
Spurwink Institute
St. Joseph Healthcare
TD Banknorth
Time Warner Cable of Maine
Turner Barker Insurance
University of Southern Maine
UnumProvident
Verizon
Verrill & Dana, LLP
WBRC Architects/Engineers
Webber Energy Fuels
WGME 13
WLBZ-TV Channel 2

LEFT TO RIGHT: Carla Mowatt, Tonia Stevens, Emma Berkowitz, Claire Berkowitz, Ellie Goldberg, Judy Reidt-Parker, Bonnie Colfer, Dean Crocker
FRONT: Sarah Berkowitz
Our Mission:

Founded in 1994, the Maine Children’s Alliance (MCA) advocates for sound public policies to improve the lives of all Maine’s children, youth and families. By collecting and analyzing data on children and their health, economic and demographic status, MCA seeks to link research to practice and public policy. The organization regularly brings diverse groups together in coalitions that support policy initiatives that benefit children, providing oversight in state policy arenas and serving as a resource on children and family policy issues at the local and national levels.

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY…

To provide leadership and guidance…

To advocate for children…

To support our work …

The Maine Children’s Alliance is fortunate to be funded by a broad base of stable sources including grants, membership, corporate and individual donors, and contracts.

To view the most recent edition of MCA’s annual Maine KIDS COUNT Data Book or for more detailed information on MCA’s work, go to www.mekids.org.

Please Join Us