

From: "Citizens' Committee for Children of New York" <ADVOCATE@cccnewyork.org>
 Subject: CCC E-News: Fall Update 2009

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Securing Every Child's Birthright(R) to be Healthy, Housed, Educated and Safe
August/September 2009

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State Senate Passes Bill to Increase the Number of Family Court Judges!

There is a crisis in New York City's Family Courts. Overburdened court calendars are leading to long adjournments and incredible court delays. Judges cannot hear cases timely- so children remain in foster care, custody decisions are not made timely, and familial disputes remain unresolved. Children only get to be children once - they deserve better than to grow up in foster care or amid uncertainty because of court delay.

After years of advocacy by CCC and our colleagues, a bill to increase the number of family court judges, and thus reduce court delay for thousands of children, cleared a major hurdle. At the Senate's Special Session on September 10, 2009, the State Senate overwhelmingly passed S5968, a bill to increase the number of family court judges by 21 statewide (7 of which would be for New York City.) CCC greatly appreciates the Senate's leadership in passing this bill and congratulates Senator Samspon, who introduced the bill.

Before this bill becomes a law, it needs to clear two more hurdles. First the Assembly and then the Governor's Office. CCC looks forward to working with our colleagues, Assemblymember Helene Weinstein who is the Assembly sponsor, and the Governor's office, so that this bill becomes the law as soon as possible!

City Launches Take Care New York 2012

One September 14, 2009, CCC was pleased to be included in the launch ceremony for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's (DOHMH) Take Care New York 2012 campaign. This new campaign is a broad approach to improving the health of New Yorkers - prioritizing securing health care coverage for all New Yorkers and specifically focusing on the unique health needs of children, the importance of healthy neighborhoods and communities, and the need to combat health disparities across races, ethnic groups and income levels.

CCC was pleased to see that more attention will be paid to children's health and mental health indicators, from birth through adolescence, as well as more attention to prevention, early identification and investments in children. We believe that the overlapping focus on neighborhood health and on combating health disparities will also benefit New York City's children.

[Click here](#) to read the press release, which includes a link to the full report on the City's new campaign.

Improving Food Access for NYC's Families

In New York City, nearly half a million children are considered obese. This means that 24% of New York City children, almost double the national rate, are at risk of developing significant health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, depression, anxiety, and hypertension. In the past few years, CCC has advanced a comprehensive package of options to give families the tools and resources they desperately need to provide nutritious meals for their families and to live healthy and active lives.

A major contributing factor to the growing obesity epidemic is lack of access to healthy and affordable food. CCC has advocated for both long-term and short-term solutions to reduce food access barriers. In 2008, CCC achieved a significant victory with the passage of legislation to place 1,000 Green Carts, street vendors who sell fresh fruit and vegetables, in food deserts throughout the city. We advanced this idea as a way to bring reasonably priced fresh produce to these neighborhoods as quickly as possible. Currently, CCC is in the process of evaluating the implementation of Green Carts to ensure that they are achieving the intended goal. Over the summer, CCC staff and volunteers conducted several focus groups in the South Bronx, Central Brooklyn and East Harlem to assess the impact of the Green Carts. In early September, CCC joined forces with Karp Resources to interview Green Cart vendors on their experiences obtaining permits, licenses and microfinance loans to get their Green Carts up and running, as well as on how profitable their carts have been. Our investigation will continue throughout the fall, when CCC volunteers will perform street canvassing to learn more from Green Cart customers and vendors.

In addition, CCC is interested in more long-term strategies to strengthen community infrastructures to ensure that more food retail options are available to families in all five boroughs. The American Journal of Preventive Medicine reported in a 2006 study that the presence of a neighborhood supermarket reduces the incidence of overweight and obese residents. In New York City specifically, fewer food retail options coincide with higher rates of obesity and diabetes. Recently in Albany, CCC effectively advocated for the Healthy Food/Healthy Communities initiative, which allocates \$10 million to bring supermarkets to high needs communities. We are now leading the fight for the City's Food Retail Expansion to Support Health (FRESH) initiative, which will provide incentives for retailers to bring supermarkets to high needs areas. On September 23, 2009 the City Planning Commission approved the FRESH proposal and it now awaits a vote in the City Council.

School is Back- and the Mayor is Back in Control!

On August 3, 2009, after months of debate, the Senate voted to extend Mayoral Control over New York City public schools for six more years. The Senate approved Mayoral Control with a vote of 47-8. The Assembly had already passed legislation, sponsored by Assembly Speaker Silver, to re-authorize and maintain the basic structure of Mayoral Control. The Assembly's version included amendments requiring the Panel for Educational Priority to vote on contracts over \$1 million, to provide district superintendents with more oversight over local principals, and to require the Department of Education to hold public hearings prior to closing a school.

The Senate's final vote on this issue was delayed because of the leadership stalemate, resulting in an end to Mayoral Control and the re-instatement of the former Board of Education on July 1, 2009. Ultimately, the Senate passed legislation reauthorizing Mayoral Control and the Governor signed the bill on August 11, 2009, which effectively extends Mayoral Control of the city's schools for another six years. The Senate's legislation included a series of additional amendments to which the Mayor agreed. These amendments include creating a parent training center and an arts advisory council, granting superintendents greater power in their districts, and requiring the Department of Education (DOE) to regularly convene school safety meetings. The Assembly is expected to pass these amendments when the legislative session reconvenes.

2009 CELEBRATION BREAKFAST

Thursday, October 29, 2009
7:30 AM to 9:15 AM
Waldorf Astoria, Grand Ballroom

Keynote Address

Susan Fuhrman
President, Teachers College
Columbia University

Please join CCC, Susan Fuhrman and our honorees for this special event.
More information about the Breakfast program is available at www.cccnewyork.org.

Purchase Tickets

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Join us for our Fall 2009 Policy Briefing Series!

Addressing Children's Mental Health Needs During an Economic Crisis

October 2, 2009 at 9:30 AM

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Thelma Dye, Ph.D., Executive Director, Northside Center for Child Development Inc.
Jean Holland, Clinic Director, Northside Center for Child Development Inc.
Kathryn Salisbury, Director of Program Innovation and Community Partnership, Mental Health Association of New York
Robert Abramovitz, M.D., Moses Distinguished Professor at Hunter College School of Social Work

Environmental Health Issues: Pollution, Parks and Playgrounds

October 23, 2009 at 10:00 AM

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Dr. Frederica P. Perera, Director, Columbia Center for Children's Environmental Health
Peggy Shepherd, Executive Director, WE ACT for Environmental Justice
Kevin E. Jeffrey, Deputy Commissioner for Public Programs, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation

New York's Home Visiting Programs: Where we Are and Where We Go from Here

November 5, 2009 at 11:00 AM

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Lisa Landau, Director Nurse Family Partnership, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Kirk Maurer, Assistant Commissioner of the Office of Protective and Community Services, Office of Children and Family Services
Marci Rosa, Deputy Director of Collaborative Programs and Director of Home-visiting, Public Health Solutions
Tracy Agerton, Director, Newborn Home-visiting Program, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Opportunities to Promote Savings and Improve Child Well-Being

November 16, 2009 at 12:00 PM

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Carl Rist, Director SEED Policy and Practice Initiatives, CFED
Cathy Mahon, Executive Director and Assistant Commissioner, Office of Empowerment, NYC Department of Consumer Affairs
Lisa Mensah, Executive Director, Aspen Institute Initiative of Financial Security

Combating Childhood Obesity

December 2, 2009 at 4:00 PM

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Dr. Michael Rosenbaum, Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics and Clinical Medicine, Columbia University Medical Center
Stefania Patinella, Director of Food and Nutrition Programs, Children's Aid Society
Dr. Maida Galvez, Assistant Professor, Preventive Medicine, Pediatrics, General Pediatrics, Mount Sinai Hospital (invited)
Cathy Nonas, Director, Physical Activity and Nutritional Programs, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Proposals at the Federal Level that Impact New York

December 4, 2009 at 10:00 AM

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Zeinab Chahine, Managing Director, Casey Family Programs (child welfare)

Joe Thiessen, Vice President of Governmental Affairs and Policy, Voices for America's Children (early care and education)

Jennifer Marino Rojas, Deputy Director, Children's Defense Fund - NY (health)

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