



# Childwatch

Speaking out for the region's children.

A Publication of Public Citizens for Children and Youth • July 2012

## A Look To The Future Strengthening Our Commitment To Our Region's Children

PCCY has spent much of the last year working on a strategic plan – an organizational roadmap for the next three years. We affirmed our belief that all children should be born as healthy as possible and be able to grow in homes and communities that are able to provide them safety and support, that they are able to attend child care programs that help them get ready for school and that they attend schools that are able to teach them well.

To us, that has translated to working very hard to make sure babies and children are able to have good health care. That's why we have worked to increase healthcare availability; that's why we have our Child HealthWatch; that's why we are so proud of Cover All Kids and CHIP and MA; that's why we have Sight Days and Dental Days; that's why we work in coalitions to implement The Health Reform Law; that's why we protest when kids lose their health insurance and, that's why we worry when behavioral health services in schools are cut.



**Thumbs Up!** By all accounts, PCCY's Annual Super Party, held on May 2, 2012 was a great success. (See page 6.)

To us, that has meant strengthening families and communities, providing needed support, increasing after-school activities, recreation and library opportunities, as well as summer jobs and programs.

To us, that has meant working to increase the likelihood that young children will be able to attend a high-quality early care and education program, learn, have fun, secure those socializing skills that are so important and increase the likelihood of success in school.

To us, that has meant working to improve the schools that are supported by public dollars and assuring, as much as possible, that they are accessible to all and that their funding is adequate to the challenge. To us, it has meant that kids are learning and that the schools are accountable to the many publics that rely on them.

As we look to the future, we are strengthened by our history and our commitment. We will expand our work in the region, both short-term and long-term, reminding everyone that kids matter – all kids – yours, mine and ours.

### In This Issue:

- Make Kids Matter Campaign  
- Page 2
- PA. Education Budget  
- Page 3
- City Schools  
- Page 4
- Early Care and Education  
- Page 5
- 2012 Super Party  
- Page 6
- Sight Day & Smile Day Success  
- Page 7
- Health News  
- Page 8
- General Assistance Eliminated  
- Page 9
- The Picasso Project  
- Page 10
- The Coming Transition  
- Page 11

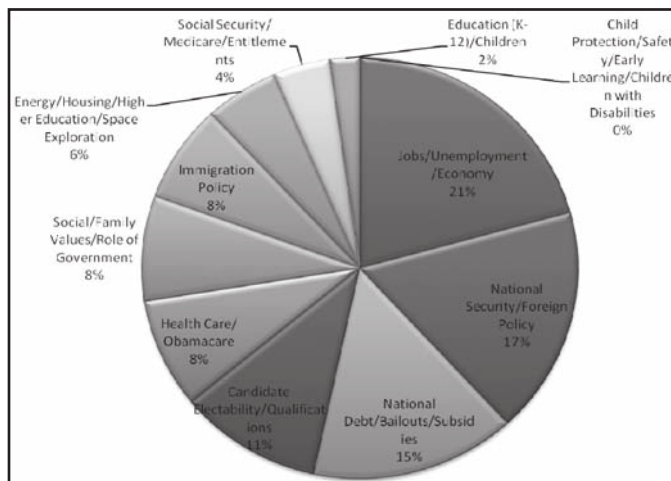
# Make Kids Matter Campaign

## Candidates Silent On Many Children's Issues

According to a Voices for America's Children report, despite representing 25 percent of the country's population and 100 percent of its future, children received less than two percent of the attention in the first twenty presidential primary candidate debates. Within this meager percentile, issues of children's safety and disabilities were completely absent. K-12 and higher education received minimal attention compared to the other areas of debate.

Candidates repeatedly make mention of their concern for children but rarely present policy positions or offer tangible plans for advancing the well-being of America's children.

Out of the 1037 questions asked of candidates, none directly addressed programs for child protection, safety, and early learning, which the federal government invests over \$50 billion annually. How could thousands of minutes go by without a single, substantive comment about their well-being? Candidates answered over 80 questions about the national debt and bail-outs. Yet, financial accountability for investments in our children was not discussed.



Not only are critical children's issues left out of the debates, but candidates on both sides of the aisle largely exclude them from their websites and policy positions. K-12 education was virtually the only child-focused topic touched upon by candidates (part of that discussion focused on elimination of the Department of Education!). Only Hermann Cain, Newt Gingrich, President Obama, and Ron Paul included children's K-12

education within their policy positions. Many additional supports that require attention and investment – quality early childhood education, child nutrition, access to health care, housing, and more – were ignored.

Our nation will only be able to correct our financial path and secure a more prosperous future if we invest in all of our children and prepare them for the 21st century economy. Candidates running for office this fall at all levels of government deserve your vote only if they are willing to discuss how they will address the needs of our youngest, most valuable resource – our children.

### Make Kids Matter Campaign

The candidates for legislative office are speaking, yet they remain silent on many kids' issues. You can help change that.

Join Public Citizens for Children and Youth's Make Kids Matter Campaign as we urge all candidates, in Pennsylvania and nationally, to devote substantive attention to our country's future, our children. PCCY will examine trends and explore topics of most direct concern for America's kids: budget cuts, education, child care, poverty and children's health. This election cycle, we'll not only ask questions; we need you to ask them too.

Join the discussion on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/pccypage](http://www.facebook.com/pccypage) and Twitter at [www.twitter.com/pccyteam](http://www.twitter.com/pccyteam) to learn what's up and advocate! It takes only a few clicks to get informed and take action to secure help and support for our nation's future.

*Join Us!*





# Pennsylvania Education Budget

## Questions and Answers On Changes

Just before the midnight June 30 deadline Governor Corbett signed the 2012-13 budget into law. While the deadline was made for the second year in a row an important opportunity to adequately invest in our students was missed. The \$27.66 billion budget does not restore a single dollar to help schools rebuild classrooms, restore programs or rehire teachers and vital staff after nearly \$1 billion in education funding cuts from last year. Pennsylvania students will have to wait at least another year for the investment they deserve.

**K-12 Funding:** *Does the budget include adequate funding for K-12 education?* Answer: No.



The budget flat funds K-12 funding, continuing last year's education funding cuts. Hundreds of school districts will need to increase property taxes just to meet annual increases in expenses. Almost 200 of Pennsylvania's 500 school districts, for example, have announced plans to increase property taxes over the rate of inflation. And schools all over the state are cutting valuable programs – teachers, kindergarten, art, after-school, counselors, nurses.

**Accountability Block Grant:** *Does the budget include the Accountability Block Grant (ABG)?* Answer: Yes.

The final budget flat-funded the Accountability Block Grant (ABG) at last year's level of \$100 million. Maintaining the ABG means that hundreds of children will have access to quality pre-kindergarten and full-day kindergarten programs and smaller class sizes in K-3 classrooms. Still, the state could have done more. The current ABG amount is less than half of what it was in 2010-11.

**School Vouchers:** *Does the budget provide money for School Vouchers?* Answer: Yes & No.

The budget provides \$50 million for a new Educational Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit program, also referred to as a 'Voucher Lite' program. This 'Voucher Lite' program provides \$50 million in tax credits to businesses contributing to scholarship organizations (private or parochial schools) that provide scholarships to students who attend the lowest-performing 15 percent of Pennsylvania schools.

The budget also increases the annual cap on an existing business tax credit program, the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC), from \$75 to \$100 million. The implications of redirecting \$75 million away from state revenue collections should not be downplayed. These programs shift millions of dollars away from our general revenue fund at a time of scarce resources when human services are being cut and reduce the money available for public programs and services, including public education.

**Distressed Schools:** *Does the budget include money for distressed schools?* Answer: Yes.

The budget includes \$49 million in the Basic Education Funding appropriation for distressed schools. The additional funds will provide \$39 million of supplemental aid to 16 financially distressed school districts (Harrisburg, Steel Valley, Sto-Rox, Reading, Westmont Hilltop, Coatesville, Chester Upland, Upper Darby, Erie, Lancaster, Lebanon, Allentown, Pocono Mountain, Stroudsburg, Jeannette City and York) and \$10 million for school districts qualifying through the Financial Recovery Transitional Loan Program.

**Special Education Funding:** *Does the budget provide increased funding for special education?* Answer: No.

Special education funding was flat-funded at \$1,026 billion for the fourth consecutive year. In addition, a special education reform bill, Senate Bill 1115, which would have reformed the state systems for special education funding and accountability, was postponed until the fall.

**Teacher Evaluations:** *Does the budget revise the teacher evaluation system?* Answer: Yes.

The budget provides \$900,000 in state funds to revise the current evaluation system. Under the new system, 50 percent of an evaluation would be composed of 16 multiple measures of student achievement and 50 percent would be based on classroom observations. Rating categories will also expand from "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" to "distinguished," "proficient," "needs improvement" and "failing."



# The City Schools Story

## A Budgetary Cliffhanger

Locally, the Philadelphia School District continued to careen towards disaster financially. The School Reform Commission (SRC) had planned for a budget that was spare but that included an additional \$90-\$94 million from the city. The Nutter administration tied it to the Actual Value Initiative (AVI), arguing that making real estate taxes more fair was desperately needed, and in the course of fixing the real estate tax problem, the city should make up for the millions that the schools had not received in property taxes over the years.

But the assessors were not finished and many Councilpersons felt they were unable to vote for something whose costs to their voters they did not know. Then the SRC released its proposed transformation plan just as folks were needed to advocate for more local dollars for schools.

Many school district advocates were against the plan so they were not ready to push for more dollars without being assured of the fate of the “transformation” plan. While PCCY advocated for the original \$94 million requested, we were far outnumbered. We joined many in city leadership urging the SRC to ask far more of the state.


*The budget was a cliffhanger.*

We worked hard to advocate for additional local funding to keep schools afloat. The School District will receive \$40 million – less than half of what was initially hoped for through property tax increases and the collection of delinquent taxes. The district plans to borrow at least \$218 million dollars through deficit financing. For a second year, Philadelphia students will feel the effects of a budget that fails to meet their educational needs.

As we go to press, local schools are losing nurses, counselors, teachers and valuable programs. While PCCY continues to press for more responsible accountable, transparent adequate funding, the next school year will be hard in Philadelphia and indeed in much of the state.

**Let's Get It Right  
Property Tax Reform**

**For Our Kids, For Our Schools,  
For Our City. Urge City Council to  
support the Actual Value Initiative  
(AVI) and more funds for schools.**



**Do  
it  
today!**

more info @ [www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org)



## Charter School Update

### Charters and The State

Amending Pennsylvania's charter school law was a top priority for many in the legislature and the governor in the spring 2012 legislative session. The spring session saw proposals that would create an independent funding commission to examine the charter school funding formula, strengthen charter school oversight and create a state panel that would authorize new charter schools.

In the fall of 2011, PCCY collaborated with other education stakeholders and examined Pennsylvania's charter school law, presenting policy recommendations to strengthen some aspects of the law. We were pleased to see amendments addressing charter school funding and oversight in line with those recommendations discussed during the spring session.

Yet, proposals to create a new state panel to authorize charters will take power away from local school districts and forego community input. In fact, concerns within the legislature about the proposed statewide authorizer stalled amending the charter law until the fall legislative session.

PCCY supports amending Pennsylvania's charter school law in a responsible manner. But we do not believe the statewide authorizer is the answer. We will spend the summer building upon our current charter school work as well as analyze the impact of any changes proposed.

Now that the issues are on your radar we hope you will stay tuned for updates and analysis.

**Follow PCCY's Education Team on Twitter @ PCCY\_EdTeam**



# Early Care and Education

## Young Children Lose In This Year's Budget

The public policy consensus is clear: if we want our communities to thrive, we should invest more – not less – in good-quality early childhood education. Nobel-winning economist James Heckman and economic development guru Timothy Bartik have made the case eloquently and convincingly in recent years. Unfortunately, the Pennsylvania General Assembly and governor took the opposite approach with the state budget adopted on June 30th. The main casualty was Child Care Works, which provides subsidy for low-income working families and parents in job training programs. Funds were cut more than eight percent from last fiscal year, and a full 19-percent loss from the beginning of the Corbett administration to now.

Not only does subsidy help low-earning parents provide a roof over their heads and peace of mind while they're at work, it allows at least some of these parents to access the kind of quality early education that would put their child on an equal playing field in elementary school. In Southeastern Pennsylvania, parents of about 33,000 children from infancy to preschool are currently receiving the subsidy, but many more could be eligible since nearly two in five children under the age of six are in low-income or poor families. However, because of severe under-funding, parents in most of the region are already waiting a full year from the time they apply to when their subsidy is granted.

### *How The Cuts Unfolded*

In February, the governor proposed a budget that cut \$24 million from the child care subsidy program. The proposed budget would also have shaved five percent from Head Start Supplemental Assistance (HSSA) and Pre-K Counts, both high-quality programs that target children from poor to moderate-income families who are at risk for school failure.

PCCY played an instrumental role in mobilizing early childhood advocates, working through our regional coalition. We provided coordination and communication, current budget information, sample materials, and a forum

for discussion and strategy. We partnered with direct providers of early childhood services to visit the majority of the region's lawmakers.

In the Senate, the governor's proposed cuts to Head Start and Pre-K Counts were restored to 2011-2012 levels. But, deep cuts were made to Keystone STARS, the state's ten-year-old quality improvement program that is credited with raising the quality of our child care system from among the nation's worst to a model for other states to emulate. The Senate budget then moved through the House – which restored \$4.7 million of that \$8.7 million cut – and worked with the Senate to restore \$100 million of flexible funds available to school districts for school-based pre-k, full day kindergarten, tutoring and other proven strategies to improve achievement.



Ultimately, the state will shave \$24 million from the subsidy program by reducing provider reimbursements and narrowing eligibility. Most of the remaining \$4 million budget cut will come from eliminating LEARN, a state-wide program that provided county grants which funded coordination and networks that brought together ECE programs, parents and schools, and focused mainly on kindergarten transition.

The good news is that other main pieces of the early childhood system – Keystone STARS, Pre-K Counts and HSSA – are level-funded with last year.

### *The Fight For Federal Funds*

About half the funds for early childhood programs in the region come from the federal government. Right now there are competing plans in the U.S. Senate and House. The Senate budget allows for very slight increases in funding for Head Start and the block grant that funds child care subsidy and Keystone STARS, while the House would cut all these items drastically. It is likely that a continuing resolution will leave federal spending as-is until after the November election, when Congress will face the automatic cuts to discretionary programs it set into motion last year.

# 2012 Super Party

## Reaching Up, Reaching Out

***Thank you for your generous support which helped to make PCCY's Super Party a great success!***

More than 350 friends attended PCCY's 2012 Super Party on Wednesday, May 2, 2012 at the Crystal Tea Room in the Wanamaker Building with former Governor Edward G. Rendell serving as our Chairperson. PCCY's annual event celebrated the talents of young people from across our region whose lives have been changed through the arts. Opening the evening was a jazz quartet from the High School for Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) followed by the Girls Chorus from Nebinger Elementary School, A Viola Quintet from Musicopia, poet Jammarr Hall from Philly Youth Poetry Movement and a resounding dance performance by Philadanco! Our guests enjoyed terrific entertainment, sit-down dinner and silent auction.

***Save the date: Wednesday, May 1, 2013***

**More photos at [www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org) > photos > 2012 Super Party**



***Our 2012 Super Party was a great success! Our performers were wonderful, our guests were terrific; our work, well-celebrated. Our sponsors deserve a special note of thanks for their contributions making the event the special night it was. Thanks to:*** DentaQuest; Dentistry for Children & Adolescents LLC; Dilworth Paxson LLP; Doc Bresler's Cavity Busters; Document Technologies, Inc.; Gilbert Printing Services; Health Partners; Independence Blue Cross; NorthStar Advisors LLC; Pediatric Dental Associates; Philadelphia Eagles; Saul Ewing LLP; Southeastern PA Oral Surgery LLC; Special Smiles LTD; The Philadelphia Foundation; United Health Care Community Plan; Upper Merion Dental Associates; Washington Savings Bank; Dr. Bernard C. Watson; West Pharmaceutical Services, Inc. and; Wills Eye Institute.

***We also thank the following people and organizations for their generous donations to our silent auction:*** Advanced Sports, Inc; Adventure Aquarium; Arden Theatre; Balance Studios; Ellie Barger; Sharon Barr; Bartram's Gardens; Bellini Grill; Brandywine River Musuem; Bristol Riverside Theatre; Dan Brody Photography; Bucks County River Museum; Camden Riversharks; Cappuccio's Meats; Office of

Senator Robert Casey; Chadsford Winery; Chanticleer Gardens; City of Philadelphia; Clementon Park Splash World; Delaware Theatre Company; Derek's Restaurant; Devon Seafood Grill; Domenick Crimi Photography; Doubletree Hotel; East Lynne Theatre Company; Garden State Discovery Museum; Hedgerow Theatre Company; Historic Conwell Inn; Historic Philadelphia Inc; Hyatt Regency Philadelphia; Interact Theatre Company; Margaret Kuo's Peking Restaurant; Laurel Hill Cemetary; Loews Hotel Philadelphia; Ray McCullough; McFaddens At Citizens Bank Park; MidAtlantic Restaurant & Tap Room; Montgomery Theatre; Morris Arboretum; The Mercer Museum; National Constitution Center; National Libery Museum; National Museum of American Jewish History; Kevin O'Brien; Louise Pangborn; Pennsylvania General Store at The Reading Terminal Market; The People's Light & Theatre Company; Philadelphia Flyers; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Philadelphia 76ers; Philadelphia School of the Circus Arts; The Philadelphia Shakespeare Theatre; The Philadelphia Zoo; Pileggi On The Square Salon; Plays and Players Theatre; Please Touch Musuem; Salon K; Teri Simon; Stephen Starr Restaurant Group; Theatre Exile; University of Penn Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; Vetri Restaurant Group; Villanova Theatre Company; Westin Philadelphia Hotel; Whole Foods Market - Callowhill; WXPn Radio; Deb Weiner and; Winterthur.



# Sight Day & Smile Day Success

## PCCY's Events Served Nearly 1,600 Children

This year's **'Give Kids Sight' Day**, April 14th, at Wills Eye and the Jefferson Medical College campus, focused on educating parents about their children's vision care benefits and outreach to all children, particularly those living in immigrant families. Nearly 1,200 children were served in just over eight hours:

- 1,172 children participated
- 565 received two pairs of free glasses
- 98 children required follow-up care
- 71 percent of children had vision care insurance (Medical Assistance and CHIP)
- 29 percent of children were uninsured
- 23 languages were spoken in children's homes
- 28 percent (approx.) of children live in immigrant families
- 500 volunteers helped throughout the day
- 2 free tokens were provided for every child

**Special thanks:** Eagles Youth Partnership, Wills Eye Institute, Jefferson Medical College, First Hospital Foundation, Children's Vision Coalition, Health Partners, Nationalities Service Center, Beneficial Bank, Boeing, Henrietta Tower Wurts Memorial, The Patricia Kind Family Foundation, The Seybert Foundation Union, Union Benevolent Association, UnitedHealthcare and Wells Fargo.



*Hello Handsome!*  
Luke Ballard, 7, is very pleased with his new frames. (left)

Jaimee Jackson, 10, is the perfect patient during her eye exam. (right)



Zachery Morrison, 10, gets a new toothbrush after his exam. (left)

Daniel Lawrence, 6, is all smiles after his teeth were cleaned. (right)



For the first time **'Give Kids a Smile' Day** was scheduled (June 20th) after the school year ended:

- 28 dentists participated
- 389 appointments were made for children
- 22 dental offices offered languages other than English to patients (Spanish, Hindi, Chinese, Vietnamese, Russian, Urdu, Punjabi)

**Special thanks** to our participating dentists, sponsors and the volunteers who made appointments for children:

5th Street Dental, AB Dental - Allegheny Ave., Family Dentistry, Gentle Dental Germantown, Health Center #6, Mohammad Arshad, DDS, Temple University Dental; Quality Community Health Care, Inc., Dental Dept., Easy Dental; Ernest and Iris Lewis-Moody DDS, Health Center #9, Pediatric Dental Associates - Episcopal Hospital, Pediatric Dental Associates - Roosevelt Blvd., AB Dental Torresdale, Revere Dental, Health Center #10, Doc Bresler's Cavity Busters, Gentle Dental Center City, Gentle Dental Chestnut Street, University Square Dental, Kids Smiles 2, Kids Smiles 1, About Your Smile, Nice Care Dental, Dr. John Del Gaiso, Gentle Dental, AB Dental- Pond St., AB Dental- Oxford Valley Rd.; Aetna Dental, American Dental Association (ADA), DentaQuest, Patty Jackson, the School District of Philadelphia

Be sure to check out the final 'Smile Day' tally at [www.pccy.org/smileday](http://www.pccy.org/smileday) and more 'Sight' and 'Smile' Day photos in our gallery: [www.pccy.org/photos](http://www.pccy.org/photos)



# Health News

## School-Based Behavioral Health and the Affordable Care Act

### School-Based Behavioral Health

School-based behavioral health services have been a presence in the School District of Philadelphia for a decade with about 5,000 children receiving treatment. But rarely do the providers, school staffers, administrators, and the parents and children utilizing these services have the opportunity to talk publicly together. PCCY hosted a June roundtable to discuss how well these programs, now integrated into the fabric of hundreds of schools, are meeting the needs of the children.

“We want to try to get everyone on the same page,” said Dr. Judy Silver, a University of Pennsylvania pediatric psychologist, who is also a PCCY board member. “We all want the same outcome and it is truly important that we as a community integrate services.”

Panelists included Leslie Becton of the Children’s Crisis Treatment Center, Bill Kwasniewski of School-Based Social Services, and Community Behavioral Health Services’ Dr. Cathy Bolton, who presented evaluation data and stressed that the open lines of communication between school teams that identify kids who need services are critical for successful outcomes. “Without that it’s very hard to set the groundwork for the treatment process.”

Panelist Ericka Broadus, a mother of two boys,

enthused about the services one of her sons has received over the past two years from Children’s Crisis Treatment Center staff in a school-based CARE classroom. “Before the program my child was a mess. Now he’s straight-A honor roll. This is not a hoax. It’s working. They listened to everything I had to say and didn’t interrupt me. And they don’t pity me,” she explained, adding that she volunteers with her son’s program. “If they need me, I drop what I’m doing. It’s very important to have this in every one of the schools.”

***Footnote: Unfortunately as we go to press, the CARE and School-Based Social Services programs have been ended.***

Another forum will be held in the fall as PCCY continues to pursue the recommendations from our behavioral health report published last year. “It is essential to have stakeholders at a roundtable from each of the major systems involved in school-based services,” says Colleen McCauley, PCCY’s Health Policy Director, adding that as more outcome data is available PCCY will want to see it. “We’ll look closely at the preliminary data that was presented to begin to figure out if these services are indeed working and are a good use of public dollars.”

PCCY’s report, “Behavioral Health Goes to School: An Analysis of School-Based Behavioral Health Services in Philadelphia,” is available online at [www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org) > **Publications > Health**, or by calling 215-563-5848 x35.

---

### Affordable Care Act

After much political contention the Supreme Court in June approved the major components of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). For the advocacy community, now comes the hard part: getting Pennsylvanians – elected officials and residents – prepared for implementation of the plan, which will go into effect beginning January 2014.

The Children’s Health Insurance Coalition, a regional network of insurers, providers, community organizations and advocates, recently gathered at PCCY to educate ourselves about the decision and its implications, and to figure out how to educate others about the benefits they will receive under “Obamacare.”

Comparing the state’s readiness to adopt the federal government’s requirements to that of a high school student facing the weekend with an important paper looming on Monday, Community Legal Services, Inc.’s Rich Weishaupt and Ann Bacharach of the Pennsylvania Health Law Project gave an overview of the ACA’s provisions to the two dozen members at the meeting.

“It’s now Friday and Monday morning that paper is going to be due,” Weishaupt cautioned. “PA’s out playing ball in the backyard.”

We can do it, but it means a lot of work on all our parts. Let’s all get to it! For a list of principles that would ensure that the development and implementation of the ACA works well for children in Pennsylvania, go to: [www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org) > **Child Health**





# General Assistance Eliminated

## Thousands of People To Lose Survival Support

The Welfare Code bill (Act 80) adopted by the Pennsylvania General Assembly along with the FY 2013 budget eliminated the General Assistance cash assistance program – the program of last resort for Pennsylvania's most vulnerable people. Elimination of GA means that close to 69,000 Pennsylvanians, the overwhelming majority of whom have physical and/or mental health disabilities that prevent them from working, will lose the extremely modest support the program provides (\$205/month). GA also provides a lifeline to women escaping domestic violence and intensive drug or alcohol treatment program patients. It also provides support to caregivers of children unable to live with their families.

Cutting GA makes poor budgetary sense. The \$205 a month cost per recipient is far cheaper than the alternative costs Pennsylvania will face if these people are left destitute. Without GA, some recipients will turn to homeless shelters (\$1,050/month) or end up in psychiatric hospitals (\$20,584/month); some may be incarcerated (\$2,750/month); youth may end up in foster care (\$600 - \$1,800/month); and, domestic violence victims may return to their abusers. Furthermore, if an individual is approved for federal SSI disability, the state would recoup the GA costs it incurred while the individual's application was pending.

DPW initially planned to stop GA payments as of July 1. Instead, the program ends as of August 1, 2012. Communities throughout the state will soon see the impact. In Philadelphia, nearly 36,000 people will lose their minimal survival support.

### ***Lack of Transparency and Heightened Requirements for Assistance Continue***

In addition to the elimination of GA, Act 80 contained several major policy changes that will make getting help even harder for low-income families. Similar to last year's passage of Act 22, which gave the secretary of DPW power to make program changes with almost no public involvement, legislative, or regulatory oversight, many provisions in Act 80 were proposed within the last 48 hours of the legislative session with no public hearings and little scrutiny.

Several of the provisions will make it more difficult for low-income families with high health needs to access health care services. For instance:

- Under current law some individuals<sup>1</sup> who have very high health care costs that significantly reduce their income are eligible for Medical Assistance under the Medically Needy Only category. The new law adds a work requirement of 100 hours per month earning at least minimum wage to custodial parents. In many cases, meeting this requirement will increase family income above the eligibility limit for the program.

Other provisions will make it more difficult for very poor families to receive cash assistance (TANF), and it will increase penalties for breaking program rules. Act 80:

- Set up a new job search requirement for parents applying for TANF. Currently individuals who are approved for assistance (\$407 per month for a family of three) must participate in job search, training, or community service for 20-30 hours per week and are provided child care and transportation assistance to do so. The new rules require individuals to apply for at least three jobs per week while their applications are pending, without the work supports that help to make a job search meaningful and successful.

A long time ago, Eisenhower told us that a nation must be judged by the way it treats its children, its seniors and those who are weak and needy. ***How are we doing????***



<sup>1</sup> Individuals must be in one of these categories: children under 21; the custodial parent of a child under 21 years; over the age of 59; pregnant; or, disabled and receiving or applying for federal SSI benefits.

# The Picasso Project

## Some Projects Granted Extensions

*"I believe the Picasso Project made me see more in myself... that I can be an amazing actress... that I can be somebody."*

— Sixth-grade student at Sankofa Freedom Academy Charter School

Picasso's 2012 grantees – an unprecedented 15 elementary, middle, and high schools throughout Philadelphia – ended the school year with culminating ceremonies, as students celebrated their artistic experiences with live dance, theater, drumming, poetry performances, film screenings and visual art including murals and art books.

For the first time, Picasso grantees were required to add an advocacy component to their projects. Student advocates interviewed City Councilpersons, wrote letters to state legislators, helped garner 1,500 signatures in support of arts education, testified at SRC meetings, invited community members to a panel discussion and submitted content to The Artistic Rebuttal Project, a collection of artwork created and published in defense of the arts. Several schools were featured in local newspapers, community radio stations, and television news outlets.

Six of the 2012 Picasso Project grantees will have the option of extending their projects next year! The selected schools will design and implement an additional project



inspired by the ideas, techniques or visual presentation of last year's projects. The extensions, worth \$3,500 each, are intended to help the schools anchor and amplify the successes from their first year of grant funding by working towards building a more sustainable art practice within the students' curriculum.

With the granting of two-year extensions in the fall, Picasso Project will have officially funded 100 schools. We're proud of this milestone (especially during our 10th year!) and look forward to helping schools and communities strengthen arts education and programming.

Check PCCY's Picasso Project page at [www.pccy.org/picassoproject](http://www.pccy.org/picassoproject) to find out which schools are granted project extensions!



Cleveland Elementary 5th and 6th graders show off the decorative pens they created and sold in their community.



## New Publication

### "Why High School Graduation Rates Matter"

In an era of high-stakes testing and tightened public education budgets, programs and staff not mandated by government are being removed from the schools. PCCY's new policy brief, "Why High School Graduation Rates Matter," examines the consequences of these cuts to individuals, communities and public programs.

The brief also notes the city's efforts to stem the high school dropout rate (Project U-Turn campaigns, accelerated schools, Re-Engagement Center) and to boost the percentage of students graduating. "Research proves how critical this population is to successful communities," says Shanee Garner, PCCY's Co-director of Education.

"Although Pennsylvania has made progress with respect to the graduation rate there is still much to be done to ensure that all of our students stay in school and have a pathway to return if they've left," says Garner.

For a copy of this and other publications, visit our website at [www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org) > **Publications** or call 215-563-5848 x11.



# The Coming Transition

## A Message From PCCY's President, Carolyn Adams

If PCCY's Executive Director Shelly Yanoff isn't in the office when you telephone, her recorded message assures you that she'll return your call as soon as possible and then pointedly urges you "in the meantime, do what you can for kids!" That tells you a lot about Shelly's approach to building this organization during the past 25 years.

Among the many lessons she has taught those of us lucky enough to work alongside her is never to squander an opportunity to speak on behalf of kids – even that momentary opportunity to capture the attention of a caller who is waiting to leave a telephone message. Shelly's talent for making the most of every available resource means that she and her amazing staff accomplish far more than anyone would expect, given the modest size of the organization and its budget. As one recent observer of our organization put it, "PCCY really punches above its weight!"

As we began preparing for her transition, we have been involved in a comprehensive strategic planning process to assure that PCCY will keep facing forward. That plan

includes exciting initiatives that will move PCCY's work further into suburban boroughs and townships and foster a new generation of advocates for children. The board has launched a search for a successor who shares the ambition, passion, and optimism that Shelly has built throughout the organization's board, staff, contributors and volunteers. We have engaged the Criterion Search Group to help us find that worthy successor.

Please direct all inquiries to: Beth Hare, President, Criterion Search Group, Inc., [hare@criteria.org](mailto:hare@criteria.org) or 610-581-0590



---

---

## Comings and Goings

### Hello, Desiree. Farewell, Tammy.

**HELLO!** Drexel grad student, Desiree Thompson, joins PCCY as the Arts Education Coordinator. With a background rooted in arts education (School of the Art Institute of Chicago), advocacy, and visual arts exhibition, Desiree has worked with the Chicago Public Art Group, The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, The Institute of Contemporary Art (West Philadelphia) and The Village of Arts and Humanities (North Philadelphia).



**FAREWELL.** Many thanks to Tammy Murphy who coordinated 'Give Kids Sight' Day and worked on many other health issues. Also, we send thanks to the many interns and volunteers who helped us help many kids this year: Christina Taylor, Alex Carey, Isabelle Sun, Natalie Feigenbaum, Heather Kates, Jon Lo, Allison Routman, Jing Zheng, Lu Bai, Yvette Almaguer and Keyonne Thalia.







Phone: 215-563-5848  
Fax: 215-563-9442  
Web: [www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org)

1709 Benjamin Franklin Parkway  
Sixth Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

address service requested

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 7287

## PCCY Roundtable



Join PCCY's *Education Roundtable*, a monthly discussion with local reporters of topical issues affecting the School District of Philadelphia and its students. Hosted by Shelly Yanoff, the half-hour program airs on PSTV, Comcast Channel 52, the District's own cable channel, and PhillyCAM on Comcast 66/966 and Verizon 29/30.

Check local listings for time.

## Mission Statement

PCCY - Public Citizens for Children and Youth is the region's leading child advocacy organization, dedicated to improving the lives and life chances of children in our region through thoughtful and informed advocacy. Founded in 1980, PCCY is an independent, non-profit organization.

## About The Newsletter

Writers and Editors: Christie Balka, Kathy Fisher, Steven Fynes, Shanee Garner, Colleen McCauley, Gretchen Elise Walker and Shelly D. Yanoff, Executive Director, Sid Holmes, Communications Director. Design & Layout, Steven E. Fynes.

## Contact Us

Telephone: **215-563-5848**

Email: **[info@pccy.org](mailto:info@pccy.org)**

Web: **[www.pccy.org](http://www.pccy.org)**