



Kirkbride School students show off their Picasso Project "Philadelphia: Love & Liberty," a partnership with COSACOSA art at large and Passyunk Square Civic Assoc. See Picasso Inspires, p. 3.

Improving the lives of children and families in Southeastern PA

Fall-Winter 2018

THRILLING STEM CRAFT BOOSTS TECH LEARNING AND SUPPORTS PCCY

Thousands descended upon our second annual STEM Craft fundraiser at School of the Future, including 700 young gamers and future scientists who competed in stimulating Minecraft building challenges, throngs of accompanying parents, and the scores of organizations populating our STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics] fair.



More than 700 young Minecrafters and future scientists took part in STEM Craft, raising money to support PCCY and Philadelphia public schools [SEE "TURING TECH GRANTS DELIVERED", pg 2]

These 30 organizations worked hard to create fantastic, enriching experiences at our STEM fair and they did not disappoint. From creeping tarantulas to a mussel hatchery, Lego physics challenges to envisioning ideal habitats for animals, there was something for everyone, even coding workshops courtesy of Coded By Kids and Tech Girlz.

By midday, classroom after classroom was filled with eager gamers looking to complete three challenges for fun prizes and Minecraft glory. Minecraft, a game where players can do anything they wish, including go on adventures or just build structures using colored and textured blocks, naturally lends itself to creative, collaborative play in a shared 'world' where players can interact with each other.

"My son loved everything," wrote one happy mom. "He loved that he could be creative and play with other people on Minecraft and learn different things from all of the vendors."

While kids were busy gaming, building, and exploring, STEM Craft included a full day of workshops and information sessions for parents on how they can secure the resources their child's school needs, the dangers of toxic lead in aging homes, and a special presentation on cyber safety courtesy of the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office.

STEM Craft supports the work of PCCY and STEM education in Philly public schools, attracting major sponsors like PECO, AmeriHealth, Linode, and Seer Interactive.

SMILES TODAY HIDE THE HELL OF LIVING WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE

The stress was at times unbearable for Delaware County mother Sanjae Houston. She works part-time while her husband is self-employed in sales but for a little over a year they couldn't afford health insurance.

Sanjae sighs deeply as she recalls that period when she couldn't afford to have her daughter Rusheena, who is now 9, see a doctor.

"Definitely," she told PCCY, "it was a long year."

After a long pause, Sanjae quietly cleared her throat, and admitted, "To be honest with you, it was hell."

Many children in Southeast Pennsylvania and across the Commonwealth are uninsured, underinsured, or cannot access the basic health care services they need, including dental care. For the past 15 years, PCCY has been working to address this issue by organizing a weeklong free dental care event in partnership with dental practices throughout the region. This event, called Give Kids A Smile, is part of our advocacy mission to make sure every child in the state has access to health insurance.

This year, 30 dental practices in Philadelphia,



Sanjae Houston and her daughter Rusheena, 9

Delaware, Montgomery, and Chester counties opened their doors to provide free dental care to hundreds of children across the region. Together, these generous practices provided over 850 appointments for children to receive free dental care, including essential services such as cleaning, fluoride rinses and varnishes, sealants, and fillings.

Sanjae raved about the care Rusheena received at

longstanding PCCY partner UPenn's School of Dental Medicine. Not only did Sanjae say they were treated kindly, but she also appreciated how well the UPenn staff communicated to Rusheena about how the visit would proceed.

Fortunately, Rusheena reports she had no cavities.

Best of all, she now has health insurance, thanks to a little help from PCCY.

Along with providing essential

dental health services, Give Kids A Smile helps connect children to public insurance programs. Even though most children in Pennsylvania are eligible for insurance through CHIP or Medical Assistance, over 60% of the children whose parents called to make appointments for Give Kids a Smile were uninsured. Families like Rusheena's were all connected to PCCY's Child Health Watch Helpline, which helps families apply to public insurance programs.



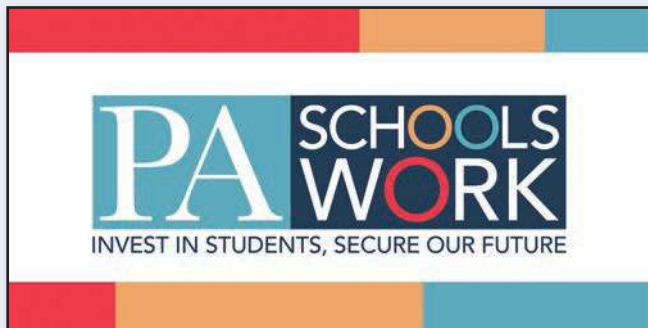
Two more bright smiles emerge from Kids Smiles, an amazing PCCY partner for Give Kids A Smile!

BREAKING THROUGH SO THAT STUDENTS CAN SUCCEED

Pennsylvania's bankrupt approach to providing a thorough and efficient education system has accomplished neither, preventing many of our students from reaching their potential, significantly hobbling the present and future prosperity of the economy of the Commonwealth, and compelling perpetual local tax hikes that create hardship in the vast majority of districts across the state.

PCCY met with nearly every candidate who ran for state House and Senate seats in Montgomery, Delaware, Bucks, Chester, and Philadelphia counties, to make sure they had the information they needed to make the choices we're relying on them to make.

That was on top of our regular work of meeting with legislators to share the latest information they may have missed and bringing the voices of constituents whose children, communities, and businesses suffer the consequences of a profoundly underfunded education system.



While the legislature added \$100M in new funding, only 8 percent of total education funding flows through the Fair Funding formula and PA languishes at 46th place in national rankings of state contribution of school funding.

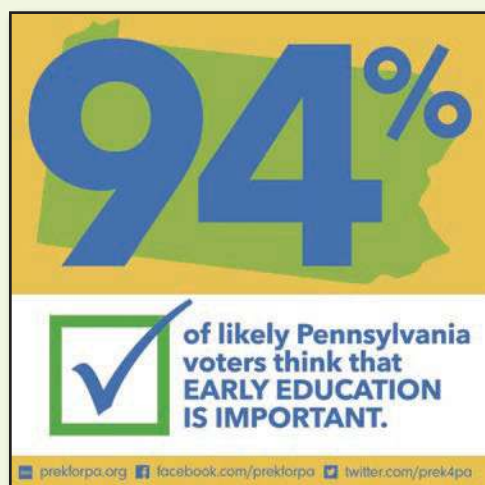
There's more work to be done.

Picking up from where the Campaign for Fair Education Funding left off, PCCY is excited to announce the launch of PA Schools Work, a non-partisan grassroots coalition imploring the state to ensure that all Pennsylvania students attend public schools that provide them with resources to graduate with 21st century skills to ensure success in college and their careers.

WE'RE ALL PART OF THE PRE-K MAJORITY

A new poll confirms what we've been hearing across the Commonwealth: Thanks to the hard work of the Pre-K for PA campaign, of which PCCY is a leading partner, Pennsylvanians are in lockstep when it comes to support for pre-K.

Support for pre-K has swelled to consensus levels, as 94% of likely voters now think that early education is important.



Harrisburg-based Harper Polling conducted the poll earlier this year, which indicates that three-quarters (75%) of likely voters support increasing funding to expand access to high-quality programs, and that support cuts across age, party, geographic, and socioeconomic lines.

Every single voting demographic in the state

favors expanded access to pre-K by at least a 2-to-1 margin.

"Legislators can win the support of voters of every stripe by leading with a strong commitment to increasing public funding so that every 3- and 4-year-old child in our state gets the strong start in life that pre-K offers," said Brian Rankin, PCCY's Board Chair.

As we do every year, PCCY staff, backed by our network of educators and parents, met with state legislators during budget season, arranged visits by lawmakers to local pre-K centers, and placed Op-Eds in community newspapers.

We were pleased to see pre-K funding in this year's state budget rise by \$20M – a good start.

SODA TAX WINS, BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR KIDS BEGINS

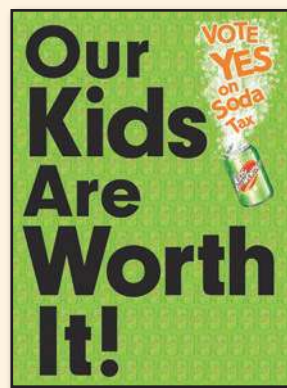
In one fell swoop, the lives of thousands of children got better and Philadelphia became a better place to raise kids.

Our hands are untied; the gloves are off: The Pennsylvania Supreme Court finally upheld the legality of Philadelphia's sweetened beverage tax (a.k.a. Soda Tax).

The beverage industry's costly and prolonged lawsuit had hindered Mayor Kenney's ambitious plan to give our youngest children a great foundation of learning, reduce inequality and poverty, and improve our schools. PCCY filed an Amicus Brief in support of the tax on beverage distributors, and now the Court has removed the final hurdle slowing us down.

Although City Council passed the beverage tax two years ago and the 1.5 cents-per-ounce tax on soda distributors went into effect beginning January 1st, 2017, the City limited the number of new pre-K seats to 2,000 while major repairs to libraries and rec centers across Philadelphia were left in a holding pattern.

While the Mayor was confident of the legality of the tax, the millions of dollars the beverage industry poured into the lawsuit and the relentless PR campaign demanded this prudent tact.



Making headlines across the nation and around the world, PCCY staff cheer history-making vote in 2016 as City Council passes soda tax to fund Pre-K, playgrounds, libraries, rec centers.

And now?

The 2,000 pre-K seats will grow to 3,000 by 2020; by 2023, that number will be at 5,500. Those children will be far less likely to become involved with the justice system, more likely to graduate high school, and less likely to need special education—benefits that the City and the District will reap for generations.

Pre-K expansion and upgrading recreation centers were key components of PCCY's Pledge for Philadelphia's Children, which then-mayoral candidate Jim Kenney signed alongside members of council. We are grateful for their strong leadership and for keeping their promise.

TURING TECH GRANTS DELIVERED



PCCY delivered \$10,000 of robotics kits to four public schools: Julia de Burgos Elementary School (pictured), Samuel Gompers School, John B. Kelly Elementary School, and Laura W. Waring School, the inaugural recipients of Turing Tech Grants, which aim to boost coding and robotics skills for students in grades K-8.

LEAD-FREE PHILLY COALITION SCORES MAJOR WIN

Every day, seven families in Philadelphia receive devastating news. Seven children in the city are diagnosed with lead poisoning each day, their lives forever changed.

The vast majority of children are poisoned by lead-based paint in older homes, meaning each tragic incident could be prevented if the City would only follow our recommendation: Get the lead out.

To spur action, we assembled a coalition of health organizations and clinicians, developers, housing advocates, families with children who were poisoned by lead, and PCCY. With this powerful Lead-Free Philly Coalition, we renewed our resolve and intensified our approach.

By the end of October, Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown, PCCY's longtime ally in the fight against childhood lead poisoning, answered the call and introduced a suite of bills

calling for the expansion of the City's lead disclosure law to apply to ALL pre-1978 rental properties.

"No parent should have to worry about whether the home they are providing for their children is poisoning them," Councilwoman Reynolds Brown said. "Lead poisoning is an issue of public health, as well as economic and environmental justice."

The proposed legislation means lead laws that better protect children from lead poisoning could be in the books by the end of the year.

In the city's five highest risk zip codes in North Central and West Philadelphia, at least 1 in 15 children tested have elevated blood-lead levels. Many of these children live in low-income and minority neighborhoods. And because only 43% of children receive the required two blood-lead tests by their third birthday, there are more children injured by lead we don't know about.



Kensington mother Jana Curtis with her children (right) urges City Council to take action at a Lead-Free Philly Coalition press conference. Jana's family was affected by childhood lead poisoning.

A MILESTONE FOR PROTECTING OUR MOST VULNERABLE CHILDREN

In an institution at age 13, Lilly had been body-slammed, strip-searched, and burned by staff. She had seizures that went ignored. She saw staff fight with youth. The education and therapy programs that her mom had hoped would provide some silver lining were nonexistent at Lilly's placement. "There was no school at the facility. We had to stay in one room all day. There was no teacher, no books, just a TV – and even that was only on when staff wanted to watch TV. There was nothing."

By now, we all know Lilly's story of danger and abuse was hardly an isolated case, especially following the 2016 reports of the choking death of teen David Hess and the rapes of three girls at Wordsworth Academy at the hands of facility staff. So PCCY met with city and state officials, child welfare experts, and advocacy organizations who all wanted the abuses to stop.

They all came together this year to change the story for foster children and youth involved in the juvenile justice system, who are scattered across the state in institutional facilities. Tragically 900 Philadelphia youth are in living in institutions far from home, cut off from any community, and far too often facing real risks to their health, safety, and academic progress.

In part due to PCCY's push, Philadelphia City Council unanimously passed a resolution establishing an official Youth Residential Placement Task Force to reduce the city's reliance on restrictive placements for youth, particularly those outside of city limits, and to dramatically improve the

quality of placements that Philadelphia contracts to house these children.

The task force is a significant step toward changing the story. Its mission is to reduce the number of kids placed in these institutions and improve the conditions of the facilities so that children placed in them can be safe, healthy, and learning.

PCCY and its partners at the Defenders

Association, Juvenile Law Center, Education Law Center, Support Center for Child Advocates, Disability Rights PA, CASA Philadelphia, and Community Legal Services made this happen, and together we will ensure this task force adopts a bold vision that changes the story for these children.



Philadelphia youth share their harrowing stories about the treatment they received at residential facilities.



PICASSO PROJECT INSPIRES

Five years in the making, Alexander McClure Elementary's mural mosaic was how successive classes of 5th graders responded to a violent incident. McClure was one of 14 Philadelphia public schools that received part of PCCY's \$65,000 strategic arts mini-grants through the Picasso Project, which provides innovative arts opportunities to students at under-resourced schools. Advocating for full and equitable funding for arts education since 2002, the Picasso Project delivered access to the arts to 41,000 students.

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PCCY "BEDROCK" DONORS ARE OUR FOUNDATION

PCCY has been helping kids and families in our region since 1980 – 38 years!! That is a long time to be passionately fighting to change young lives for the better. We are able to do it because, every step along the way, there have been loyal, longtime supporters like Muriel Kudera and Linda Katz Schleifer.

Muriel has been giving to PCCY every year since 1997. She told us: "PCCY seems to speak to issues that are really important to me such as the work you did around the 'fair funding formula.' Basically, education is my issue so I support groups that support our schools and our kids."

Linda also gives every year. She says: "As we all know, improving the lives of children is more than a noble cause; it is our hope for the future! And that is why I support PCCY.... as the work that this amazing organization does is also our hope for the future. I have been a supporter for the past twenty years and PCCY will always be one of my philanthropic priorities."

Linda and Muriel are part of the PCCY family. We are so grateful for the kind of commitment these ladies demonstrate with their donations. Every gift helps. No matter the amount, it is great to know that their steady support is something we can count on.



Muriel Kudera

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Support PCCY by making a donation

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Child Health

In 15 years our free days of care provided

15,500

children the dental and vision care they needed.

Early Learning

Thanks to PCCY's expansion efforts, more than

17,000

children are now enrolled in high-quality pre-K programs.

Public Education

Since 2002, more than

41,000

students have been inspired by the arts through The Picasso Project.

Family Stability

We advocate and develop initiatives for the nearly

153,000

children living in poverty in our community.