



Combined Annual Report

FY 2003

July 1, 2002 – June 30, 2003

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FY 2004

July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004

**Advocates for Children and Youth
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Mission and History

Advocates for Children and Youth (ACY) was founded in 1987 by a group of prominent child advocates in Maryland who saw the need for an independent organization to advocate for the needs of the state's children and families in the community, the media and the public policy arena. Our mission is to identify problems, promote policies and programs that improve results for Maryland children in measurable and meaningful ways, and evaluate the effectiveness of programs and policies for the state's children and youth. Our goals are to reduce child poverty, improve children's health, fund public education, protect youth in the juvenile justice system and reform the child welfare system.

ACY's core advocacy strategies include:

- ?? Informing public policy through data and research;
- ?? Organizing effective coalitions and mobilizing citizens to speak up for children; and
- ?? Attracting media coverage on issues affecting children and youth.

Activities and Accomplishments: July 2002-June 2004

Funding Public Education

ACY was faced with three main challenges during FY03 and FY04 in the public education arena. The first challenge was to ensure full funding of the Bridge to Excellence in Public Education Act (otherwise known as the Thornton Act).

Throughout the 2003 and 2004 General Assembly sessions ACY responded quickly and effectively every time the Governor attempted to make funding for Thornton contingent upon passage of his Video Terminal Display (slots) legislation. ACY issued numerous one-page fact sheets during the legislative sessions educating all lawmakers about the positive impact of Thornton on their jurisdictions and the potential impacts of any cuts.

On February 9, 2004 an estimated 9,000 parents, teachers, students, PTA representatives, union members, and activists marched on Lawyer's Mall in Annapolis to support the full funding of the Thornton Act. Advocating for this Act was critical to ensure that public schools received the \$1.3 million they were guaranteed in order to provide teachers with better training and support systems and students with smaller classes, after school programs, arts and music education, up-to-date textbooks, full day kindergarten, more advanced placement courses, and additional help for those who fall behind. ACY and other statewide partners hand delivered over 80,000 post cards to the Governor and key legislative leaders promoting full funding of the 2002 law.

The second major challenge and success for education was the repeal of Thornton's 'trigger' provision (SB 245). The 'trigger' provision would have allowed legislators to reduce the state's fiscal commitment to Thornton if the resources were not available. Ultimately, the 'trigger' provision was defeated.

ACY's third major challenge was preventing delays in the implementation of specific elements of the Thornton Act, specifically delays in the implementation of universal, full-day kindergarten for all 5 year old children in Maryland public schools and delays in the phase-in of the Thornton Act by linking increases for education to State revenue increases. Ultimately, neither of these attempts to delay the implementation of Thornton was successful.

Addressing After-School Funding Issues

Approximately 9,000 young people lost access to after-school activities in Maryland as a result of budget decisions in 2003. This was the result of a 60% cut from state-funded programs that provide safe and productive alternatives for youth during after school hours and during the summer months. ACY took a three-step approach to reverse this trend.

First, ACY worked closely with the Safe and Sound Campaign on Baltimore City and statewide strategies to restore cuts for after-school programs. On October 9, 2003 ACY joined forces with the Maryland State Department of Education, the Afterschool Alliance, and community organizations from across the state for Lights on Afterschool!, a nationwide campaign to draw attention to the need for quality after-school programs. The event celebrated the existence of after-school programs in Maryland and called for more funding for these programs.

To underscore the significance of after-school programs and the harmful effects of budget cuts, on February 16, 2004 the Youth Investment Partnership (YIP), including busloads of students accompanied by parents, advocates, and after-school professional, staged an afternoon of civic engagement exercises in Annapolis, culminating with a rally at Lawyer's Mall.

Lastly, ACY promoted the creation of a Youth Development Fund, which was to be established by dedicating income from a cell phone tax. The Baltimore City Council dedicated 30% of these funds to after-school programs. ACY and YIP met with the Mayor, sent letters, provided written testimony, made phone calls to officials and attended a rally in front of City Hall in support of this initiative.

On a state level, Governor Ehrlich signed the Afterschool Alliance Project 2010, which advocates that all children and youth should have access to quality, safe and enriching after school programs by the year 2010.

Improving Children's Health

ACY's top priority for children's health during FY03 and FY04 was to prevent cuts to the Maryland Children's Health Insurance Program and to ensure that all eligible children were enrolled.

The Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP) has provided over 115,000 children in Maryland with access to healthcare. However, in 2003 increasing numbers of children lost health coverage because of a \$3.8 million cut and the resulting loss of \$7.1 million in federal matching funds for MCHP. In a major victory for ACY, the Governor's budget put a temporary

halt to this trend by restoring eligibility for the Maryland Children's Health Insurance Program (MCHP) to children and families at 200-300% of the federal poverty level.

The difficulties continued when President George W. Bush proposed that Medicaid (including MCHP) funds be allocated to the states in the form of block grants. ACY and other advocates were pivotal in Governor Ehrlich's decision to oppose the President's Medicaid block grants proposal.

ACY did not stop at simply preventing cuts to MCHP: We stepped up efforts to maximize the funds available for Maryland's children. ACY also partnered with the Maryland Covering Kids Coalition on a *Back to School* Enrollment Campaign. We used outreach through public school and the leadership of the principals to target eligible children for enrollment.

ACY joined with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) and the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) to remove barriers and delays in eligibility for Medicaid for foster children who have been removed from their families because of abuse or neglect.

ACY convened an Enrollment Work Group to simplify the MCHP eligibility process for poor and low-income families. Almost 20,000 new children were enrolled in public health insurance as a consequence of our efforts to remove barriers to enrollment. Pediatricians across the state joined our campaigns advocating for accessible, affordable, comprehensive, age appropriate, health insurance for all children.

Reforming The Child Welfare System

In May 2003 the Department of Legislative Services (DLS) released an audit of child welfare case files. The audit revealed a number of major problems in the child welfare system. ACY helped draft language that formed the basis of *HB 480: The Task Force on Child Welfare Accountability*, using the DLS audit as reinforcement. The 2003 General Assembly directed the Governor to appoint a Task Force. ACY partnered with the Annie E. Casey Foundation to organize and support the bi-partisan group, which convened in Spring 2004. The Task Force was charged with developing a statewide accountability framework by December 2004. This framework for accountability was intended to be the blueprint for reform, and would become the central strategy for this issue for several more years in the future.

Promoting Justice for Youth in the Juvenile Services System

ACY continued to advocate for the closure of large juvenile detention facilities in favor of community-based alternatives. On October 18, 2003 the Maryland Juvenile Justice Coalition (MJCC), with staff support from ACY, mobilized advocates, parents, youth, and concerned citizens, to gather in Annapolis to express their concerns over conditions at Cheltenham Youth Facility and to advocate for more community-based services and smaller regional facilities that promote rehabilitation.

In April 2004, the United States Department of Justice issued a report finding dangerous and unconstitutional conditions of confinement at two Maryland juvenile facilities, Cheltenham Youth Facility and Hickey Training School. In response, MJJC again mobilized scores of advocates to take their protests to the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS). ACY promoted limitation on the size of juvenile facilities; improvements in education, health care and other necessary services; specific strategies to reduce racial disparities in detention; greater investment in comprehensive planning by the DJS, and requiring documentation and accountability for the agency.

In April 2004 programmatic responsibility and general funds for educational services in all DJS residential facilities was transferred to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for full implementation by 2012. Also, in April 2004 the Maryland General Assembly appropriated \$7 million for MSDE to operate the education programs at Hickey School. Ultimately all legal authority for educating youth at the Hickey center was transferred from DJS to MSDE.

In addition, the Governor signed legislation that required a comprehensive 10-year master plan for reform of the State's juvenile justice system as well as a bill prohibiting juvenile waiver of counsel. Other successes in juvenile justice included a bill to transfer programmatic responsibility and general funds for educational services in all DJS residential facilities to the Maryland State Department of Education by July 2012 and a new truancy reduction pilot program.

Investing in Opportunities for Children and Youth

Throughout fiscal years 2003 and 2004, the greatest threat to Maryland's children was a lack of adequate government revenues and the resulting budgetary and programmatic cuts. ACY pursued remedies to protect children and youth from this threat. ACY identified a menu of prospective revenue sources for the state that, if implemented, would alleviate the need for continued cuts to state funded programs and services, as well as preserve K-12 education funding. ACY made more than 35 budget presentations to 1,100 citizens in state agencies, private nonprofit organizations, foundations and community groups to educate audiences and build allies in support of budgetary priorities. ACY wrote and distributed statewide over 25 issue briefs in our *Choices and Challenges* series. During this time, ACY created a coalition to support public investments--The Coalition to Make Cents for Maryland's Children.

The Maryland General Assembly passed several revenue bills, including tax compliance and administration measures and corporate tax reform to close loopholes corporations use to avoid paying state taxes. The Governor and state leaders also agreed to raise the state property tax rate to provide sufficient funds to cover the costs of Maryland's debt service. Although these steps allowed some revenues to be raised, programs for children in Maryland were still very much in danger. ACY staff worked relentlessly to make certain that programs for children and families were fully funded and administered effectively.

Core Advocacy Strategies

Informing Public Policy through Data and Research

Each year, the Annie E. Casey Foundation releases a KIDS COUNT Databook that profiles each state and the nation on ten indicators of child and family well-being, using the best, most recent statistical information available. Advocates for Children and Youth produces the Maryland data and analysis for this important document. ACY provides accurate information on the condition of children that can be used to enhance the well-being of kids in Maryland.

The 2004 KIDS COUNT data demonstrated a number of disturbing trends. Maryland is not keeping pace with national declines in the rate of child and teen violence death, infant mortality, and child poverty. Alternatively, the data also revealed some improvements in Maryland with regard to child well-being, including a falling teen birth rate.

ACY also conducted research through The Sustainable Funding Project and published regular *Choices and Challenges* Issue Briefs, a series of one-page fact sheets with easy-to-understand charts and budget information that we distributed throughout the year. ACY created a web presence www.sustainfunds.org to increase awareness and distribute budget research and analysis.

Organizing Effective Coalitions and Mobilizing Citizens to Speak Up for Children

Teamwork was a key component in all of the successes throughout FY03 and FY04. The Maryland Children's Action Network (MD CAN), a non-partisan, community education and mobilization effort devoted to improving the well-being of all Maryland's children and youth, has continued to play a key role in ACY's strategic efforts. Over FY03 and FY04 MD CAN mobilized leaders to take part in events such as yearly children's conventions at Wilde Lake Interfaith Center to discuss the budgetary landscape and annual Children's Legislative Agenda Day (CLAD) in Annapolis. In addition, MD CAN staff traveled across the state educating communities about the impact of Maryland's budget crisis on children and families.

The Maryland Juvenile Justice Coalition (MJCC) has continued to work diligently to prevent and respond to juvenile delinquency by ensuring the right of every child to be treated with respect and dignity. MJCC held monthly community meetings in local churches and community centers on juvenile justice and detention reform. These meetings introduced citizens to the concepts of juvenile justice reform, identified opportunities for advocacy, and sought to build a constituency of individuals who were more directly impacted by the juvenile justice system than professionals and policymakers.

Through the Maryland Education Coalition (MEC), ACY organized over 50 organizations to promote full phase-in of funding for the Thornton Bridge to Excellence in Public Education Act. These ranged from unions to government agencies to grassroots organizations from throughout the state. ACY partnered with the Maryland State Teachers Association to co-chair the Support Public Schools Coalition.

ACY helped organize *Lights on After School*, a statewide initiative to highlight the positive impact of after school programs. We invited legislators and government officials to after school programs in their districts and arranged media coverage. During FY03 and FY04 ACY developed a statewide coalition, the Youth Investment Partnership (YIP) to increase youth development awareness, education and programming for all Maryland's youth. In addition, ACY worked in collaboration with The Reason to Believe Enterprise and the Safe and Sound Campaign, two Baltimore City initiatives aimed at increasing opportunities for vulnerable families and youth.

Attracting Media Coverage for Issues Affecting Children and Youth

As part of our attempt to educate the public and lawmakers about policies affecting children, ACY strives to gain exposure for our priority issues in print and broadcast media. Media outlets across the state took notice of the effective organizing and advocacy led by ACY and its coalitions. The following media outlets covered ACY's efforts.

Newspapers

- * Annapolis *Gazette*
- * The Baltimore *Sun*
- * Montgomery *Gazette*
- * The Washington *Post*
- * Maryland *Daily Record*
- * Prince George's *Journal*
- * Towson *Times*

Television Stations

- * Capital News Service
- * WBAL
- * Fox 45
- * WJZ
- * WMAR

Radio Stations

- * WEAA
- * WEAA
- * WYPR
- * WOLB
- * 92Q
- * WAMU

Beyond this media coverage, ACY and The Megaphone Project produced and distributed a short videotape that captured the essence of the Baltimore *Reason to Believe* Enterprise.

Staff FY03 and FY04

Executive Director	Jann Jackson
Health Director	Carol Fanconi
Education Director	Christopher Maher
Juvenile Justice Director	Heather Ford
Youth Development Director	Pat Gorman
Communications Director	Sharon Rubinstein
Government Relations Director	Jan Schmidt
Kid Count Director	Jennean Everett-Reynolds
Sustainable Funding Director	David McNear
Research Director	Amy Hill Lynch
Juvenile Justice Community Outreach Coordinator	Cameron Miles
Juvenile Justice Associate	Sheryl Marshall
Sustainable Funding/Youth Development Associate	Erika Taylor
Child Welfare/Education/Health Associate	Emi Okuda
Receptionist/KidPins/Communications Associate	Leonard Sparks (2003)
	Adam Godet (2004)
Development Director	Christine Brubaker
Finance & Human Resources Director	Nancy Roberts
Operations Manager	Alesia Richards

Note: please visit our website at <http://www.acy.org/contactus.shtml> for a current list of staff.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Fiscal Year 2003
July 01, 2002 – June 30, 2003

Revenue, Gains & Other Support:

Contributions & Grants	.....	\$1,083,184
KidPins	.....	\$109,700
Program Services Fees	.....	\$5,205
Investment Income	.....	\$2,185
Other Income	.....	\$28,112
Assets Allocated	.....	\$237,666
Total	.....	\$1,466,052

Expenses:

Program Services	.....	\$1,205,746
Management & General	.....	\$114,719
Fundraising	.....	\$145,587
Total	.....	\$1,466,052

*Audited by Clifton Gunderson, LLP. For a copy of the complete audit,
contact the Finance Department, Advocates for Children & Youth, Inc.*

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Fiscal Year 2004
July 01, 2003 – June 30, 2004

Revenue, Gains, and Other Support:

Contributions & Grants	.....	\$855,217
Special Events	.....	\$45,291
KidPins	.....	\$38,285
Program Services Fees	.....	\$2,993
Investment Income	.....	\$182
Other Income	.....	\$25,068
Loss on disposable assets	.....	(\$923)
Assets Allocated	.....	\$408,545
Total	.....	\$1,374,658

Expenses:

Program Services	\$1,187,122
Managing & General	\$70,592
Fundraising	\$116,944
Total	\$1,374,658

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FY03 CONTRIBUTORS

JULY 1, 2002 – JUNE 30, 2003

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Combined Report FY2003 and FY2004
July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2004

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