

Media Advisory: Embargoed until 3:00 p.m. – November 23, 2004

Contacts: Tara Grieshop
KIDS COUNT Coordinator
Kentucky Youth Advocates
Phone: 502-895-8167

Valerie Salley
Research Consultant
Phone: 502-459-0848

Louisville Girls Deliver GIRLS COUNT Report to Metro Council

Louisville, City Hall, first floor conference room– A group of high school girls from throughout the city who represent the Louisville Girls Leadership Summit will present findings from the new report, *Girls Count in Louisville Metro*, to Metro Council representatives. The report was a joint effort by Kentucky Youth Advocates and the Alliance for Girls, which organizes the Louisville Girls Leadership Summit.

Girls Count includes an array of data on the status of girls in our community. “The status of girls is a powerful predictor of the health of the entire community,” according to Valerie Salley, a former Kentucky Youth Advocates policy analyst, who co-authored the report with Tara Grieshop, Kids Count Coordinator at Kentucky Youth Advocates.

According to the report, many girls in the community benefit from strong connections to adults, leadership opportunities and quality after-school time. These are the basic ingredients for girls reaching their potential.

According to Grieshop, “the question is, are we doing enough as a community to support girls?” “Now that we’ve identified some areas in which girls need more support to grow strong, the challenge is finding what efforts are underway locally that impact girls’ success,” Grieshop says.

The report provides baseline information, by Metro Council District, on girls’ economic security, education, health & safety, and opportunities for out-of-school activities, though data on out-of-school opportunities were limited. Key findings include:

- More than 21,000 girls in Jefferson County Public Schools live in low-income families (based on free/reduced-price lunch participation data).
- Teen births are on the decline citywide. Still, preventing teen births is an issue for every Council District. For many Council Districts, teen birth rates far exceed the citywide rate of 35 births per 1,000 girls ages 15-17.

--more--

- More than 4,000 girls in grades 6 to 12 missed 20 or more days of school (excused and unexcused absences combined) in one year, representing 18.4% of girls in those grades.
- Fighting is cited increasingly as a reason for female high school suspensions in Jefferson County Public Schools.
- Just one in three young women are enrolled college in Louisville. In some Metro Council Districts, only one in five are enrolled in college.

According to one Louisville Girls Leadership Summit participant who will help present the report, “Maybe the reason we keep having the same problems is that we don’t have good information. Now that we know what girls need, we should do something about it.”

This report was sponsored by Kentucky Youth Advocates and the Alliance for Girls. Additional funding partners include the National Council of Jewish Women, Louisville Section, the Girl Scout Council of Kentuckiana, Metro United Way, the Metro Louisville Office for Youth Development, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Ford Foundation.

“*Girls Count in Louisville Metro*” is available at Kentucky Youth Advocates by calling 502-895-8167 or www.kyyouth.org.

###