



The Independent Voice for Kentucky's Children

KENTUCKY
YOUTH
ADVOCATES

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Kentucky Youth Advocates Receives National Advocacy Award

Louisville, KY – The Alliance for Children and Families announced today that the recipient of its National Family Week Advocacy Award is Kentucky Youth Advocates. This national award recognizes an advocacy group that:

- Advocated for policy that enhances the lives of children and families;
- Presented a family-strengthening initiative;
- Lent support to legislation to improve the lives of vulnerable children and families; and
- Held a public discussion on issues that strengthen vulnerable families.

According to Ira J. Goldberg of Family and Children First, an affiliate of the Alliance, “The criteria for this national award fit Kentucky Youth Advocates like a glove.”

“It is exciting to see Kentucky Youth Advocates get this well-deserved recognition for their work on behalf of Kentucky children and families,” says Don Crary of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. “Because of Kentucky Youth Advocates’ sustained efforts over the past thirty years, millions of Kentucky children and families are better off today.”

Matt Fellowes from the Brookings Institution says “Kentucky Youth Advocates is hands down one of the most sophisticated and effective state advocacy organizations operating in America today. Kentucky Youth Advocates brings a practical, strategic approach to traditional tax and budget issues, as well as the vision and sophistication to take on new, 21st century issues as well, like the high costs of being poor. Kentucky is a much better place because of Kentucky Youth Advocates.”

Kentucky Youth Advocates is a non-partisan, non-profit children's advocacy group whose mission is to act as the independent voice for Kentucky's children. To that end, Kentucky Youth Advocates monitors the status of children, collects and analyzes data on child well-being and works with communities and state leaders to realize the organization's vision of "making Kentucky the best place in America to be young."

State leaders joined Crary and Fellowes in praise of this recognition for Kentucky Youth Advocates. State Auditor Crit Luallen observes, "The work that Kentucky Youth Advocates performs on behalf of Kentucky's most precious resource – its children – is a benefit to the entire Commonwealth. From improving Kentucky's educational opportunities to ensuring health care for all children, Kentucky Youth Advocates is ensuring a brighter future for the next generation." Blake Haselton, head of the Kentucky Association of School Superintendents, calls Kentucky Youth Advocates the "unparalleled voice on issues of children and the unparalleled source of policy solutions that work."

State legislators also acknowledge the effective advocacy work of Kentucky Youth Advocates. The Representative Joni Jenkins, head of the Jefferson County legislative delegation, observes, "When policy makers from either side of the aisle want straight talk on children's issues and the stakes at play, we go to Kentucky Youth Advocates for answers." Senator Julie Denton offers, "Kentucky Youth Advocates is to be commended for its ability to build unlikely coalitions to move policy on behalf of children. Its credible Kentucky specific research and quality data analysis make Kentucky Youth Advocates a group to which legislators turn."

"We at Kentucky Youth Advocates are honored and humbled by this national recognition," said Terry Brooks, Executive Director of Kentucky Youth Advocates. "We hope it will be a catalyst for both us and our many partners who are advocating that Governor-elect Beshear and legislative leaders from both sides of the aisle make Kentucky's children their top priority." Brooks suggest, "We believe that the Blueprint for Kentucky's Children – an effort by literally dozens of unlikely partners across the Commonwealth is the roadmap for this state to make Kentucky the best place in America to be young." The Blueprint, a six-year strategic plan for Kentucky's children, emphasizes three themes:

- A Fair Deal for Working Parents,
- Safe and Healthy Families, and
- A Fair Opportunity for Every Child.

Brooks adds, "The 2008 goals of the Blueprint – a state earned income tax credit, reconfigured KCHIP and child care systems, innovative steps toward increasing dental access and curbs on unscrupulous predatory lending are reasonable and achievable first steps."

On behalf of the Alliance for Children and Families, Family and Children First will present the award to Kentucky Youth Advocates at Tuesday's Louisville's Metro Council meeting, to be held at City Hall in Louisville at 6:00 PM.

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Kentucky Youth Advocates is a non-partisan, non-profit, children's advocacy organization. KYA represents a voice for Kentucky's most precious asset – its youth. We believe that Kentucky's youth deserve the opportunities and resources necessary to ensure their productive development and health.