

# Viewpoint Viewpoint



## *Welcome Eric!*

NM Voices is excited to welcome **Eric Griego** as our new executive director. He came on board to steady the helm after a brief stint by Catherine Direen, who served as executive director after Kay Monaco left.

Eric most recently served as Assistant Secretary of the state Economic Development Department and we're excited to have someone with such an extensive working knowledge of public policy and advocacy leading NM Voices.

Eric's probably best known to Albuquerqueans as a former member of the City Council where he sponsored numerous initiatives including a Planned Growth Strategy, several youth initiatives and legislation making Albuquerque the second city in the country to publicly finance local elections. Eric's policy work has also taken the Albuquerque native to Washington, D.C., where he served as an economist on the research and policy staff at the U.S. Department of Labor, as well as working on Capitol Hill.

Eric lives in the Barelás neighborhood where he was born and raised. He attended Head Start in Wells Park and graduated from Albuquerque High School. He holds a bachelors degree from New Mexico State University and a masters in public policy from the University of Maryland.

Besides bringing an excellent understanding of public policy and research, Eric will undoubtedly raise NM Voices' visibility. He's already been asked to present the keynote speech at the New Mexico Association of Grantmakers' conference before he had even started work here.



*Eric Griego, Executive Director*

## New Publications

We've been busy releasing new reports and publications since our last newsletter. Of course they're all available online ([www.nmvoices.org](http://www.nmvoices.org)) and we'll send hard copies to NM Voices members at their request.



From our **Fiscal Policy Project**:

**Revenues in New Mexico: The Five Year Path to a Revenue Squeeze.** The state relies more heavily on revenues from oil and natural gas severance taxes than it did just five

years ago. This isn't a problem as long as gas prices are high. But as prices drop (and they always do) so does the amount of money we collect. This report explains how these and other changes in New Mexico's revenue sources will lead to a budget squeeze, possibly as early as next year.

**Tax Expenditures and General Sales Taxes in New Mexico.** Every year the state loses some \$5 billion in general sales taxes – mostly due to exemptions and deductions that benefit small numbers of businesses and individuals. This report is a follow up to “Moving Toward Revenue Transparency in New Mexico,” released last September, which laid out the argument for adopting a more transparent tax system.

**Corporate Shell Games: How Wal-Mart and Others Shield Their Profits from New Mexico Taxes.** This report explains the games some large corporations play – like paying themselves rent for using their own buildings – to avoid paying corporate income taxes to the state.

From our **Kids Count Program**:

**Hispanic Kids Count.** Much like our “Majority/Minority” report of 2003, this one takes a look at how the state's Hispanic children fare relative to the child population in general. This report highlights indicators such as economic security, educational attainment and language proficiency, with breakouts for every county.



**Border Kids Count.** Children who live along or near the U.S.-Mexico border face unique challenges. The relative lack of good economic development in the area means fewer year-round jobs and lower wages over all. This series of data snapshots looks at 24 state legislative districts, which span six counties.

New Mexico Voices Supporters can have free copies of these publications by calling 505-244-9505 ext. 10.

# New Mexico Voices for Children

## Race Matters Wrap Up

Our second annual Race Matters conference, where we continued to look at youth policy through a racial lens, was held in May and got very positive reviews. We expanded our curriculum this year to include tracks on education and white privilege, in addition to revisiting the subjects of child welfare, behavioral health and access to adolescent reproductive health. We also offered a youth-only track that proved to be very popular. Our keynote panel – made up of policymakers, educators and community leaders – was very informative and interesting.

Not only is this race work extremely important, it's also getting a lot of attention nationwide. The Annie E. Casey Foundation – one of our main funders for Race Matters work – has contracted with Community Development Associates, Inc., to develop a report on grantee activities. Here's what one of their research assistants had to say about NM Voices:

“Time and time again, folks point to you [Voices] and your colleagues as really modeling how to do this work in such meaningful, penetrating and powerful ways. Your ability to insist that racial equity be infused into every feature and fiber of the work rather than an afterthought or addendum to the work is something that has been poignantly described by so many people around the country who have gotten the privilege of working with you.” –Danny Meyer, Research Assistant, Community Development Associates, Inc.

Thank you to our sponsors: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Bueno Foods, New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department, New Mexico Department of Indian Affairs, and New Mexico Human Rights Coalition.



Above: NMVC Board Member, Anne Simpson, MD (right) speaks with a Race Matters attendee.



Below: Lunch provides a great opportunity for networking.



Above: NMVC Director of Community Partnership Development, Robert Lucero, speaks with Race Matters attendees.

# New Mexico Voices for Children

## *In Memorium*

Long-time NM Voices Board member and supporter Edythe Pierson passed away on July 1 at the age of 92. Edythe, a trained social worker, served as the Assistant Director for the state Agency on Aging. Also active in the AARP, she helped get that organization more involved in children's issues, and was honored by the City of Albuquerque by being inducted into the Senior's Hall of Fame. Edythe was laid to rest on July 15. At her memorial service, many family members remembered her as a woman of great faith, great conviction, and great cooking. They described Edythe as a quiet but effective person, who felt it was her duty to move from principles into action. She strongly believed that as a society, we had the responsibility to help the most disenfranchised, especially low-income mothers and their children to work towards removing barriers to opportunities. Edythe was a leader for social justice and equal rights long before it was socially acceptable for a woman to do so. She continued working for justice throughout her life, and continues to make a difference in New Mexico through the good works of her family and friends, and the new generation of advocates who saw her as a role model. We are honored and grateful that her family has requested that donations be made to NM Voices in lieu of flowers.



### **Bye-Bye Bright Eyes**

After months of searching, we've finally found a home for our Appaloosa colt, Bright Eyes. He was purchased by Tuxie Ballard for his 7-year-old son and now has a home in Texas. Not to worry – we checked out Mr. Ballard's references before we handed over the reins and it has been reported that Bright Eyes is now a bit too spoiled. Our thanks go out again to NM Voices board member Julius Harrington, PhD, for donating Bright Eyes.

### **Add Your Voice to Ours**

Without the crucial research and advocacy work we do, one-third of New Mexico's children—*those who live in poverty*—would have no voice in the public policy that affects them.

We need your support and your voice to help us carry out this important work. Please add your voice to ours by making a financial contribution to support our vital work. Go to [www.nmvoices.org](http://www.nmvoices.org) to make a contribution online, or call Felicia Griffin, Development Director, at (505) 244-9505 ext. 21.

Another way to add your voice to ours is to sign up to receive e-mail via our GetActive/Convio program. You'll receive the **e-Voices Monday Minute** newsletter as well as event notification, legislative alerts and much more information. Visit [www.nmvoices.org](http://www.nmvoices.org) to enroll.

**e-Voices**  
Your Voice Counts

## ***We're All Grown Up!***

Founded in 1987 by a group of pediatricians, New Mexico Voices for Children this year marks its twentieth anniversary of advocacy work on behalf of New Mexico's children. In that time we've gone through a few name changes, and we've even shifted the focus of our work a bit, but our mission has never changed: to speak for New Mexico's children in order to improve their well being and that of their families and communities. We will be celebrating our 20th year at a gala event later this year. Stay tuned for details.

In our last newsletter, we brought you a list of 20 reasons we do this work. This issue we bring you 20 good ideas for children. Enjoy.

### **Twenty Good Ideas for Children**

1. Reform the health care system to one that provides universal care.
2. Examine and address the racial disparities in all systems and programs that serve children so that every child can reach their full potential.
3. Index the minimum wage so that it rises with inflation.
4. Return to a more progressive income tax system that supports working families.
5. Raise childcare assistance to at least 250 percent of the federal poverty level.
6. Fund voluntary home visits for all new parents who want it.
7. Fund voluntary four-year-old pre-K for all families who want it.
8. Decrease the child-to-teacher ratio in elementary classrooms so each child gets more individual attention.
9. Increase the availability of affordable housing.
10. Increase food stamp enrollment for those who qualify and need help.
11. Fully fund behavioral health care, and drug and alcohol treatment so it is available to all who seek it.
12. End predatory lending including payday loans, car title loans, tax refund anticipation loans and home mortgages.
13. Fully fund adult education and incumbent worker training so that working New Mexicans can improve their skills and their salaries.
14. Promote economic development that creates good-paying year-round jobs.
15. Increase unemployment insurance benefits while maintaining our low employer tax rates.
16. Mandate that corporations making a profit in New Mexico pay their fair share of corporate income tax.
17. Create a more transparent tax system so the state is made accountable for the tax breaks it doles out to special interest groups.
18. Put reasonable incentives in place for the development of clean, renewable energy sources so our planet can continue to support us.
19. Put stricter air pollution laws in place so fewer children develop and suffer from asthma.
20. Mandate public financing of campaigns to return democracy to the people of New Mexico.



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## Newsletter



### *In this issue:*

Welcome Eric .....	1
New Publications .....	2
Race Matters .....	3
In Memorium .....	4
Bye-Bye Bright Eyes .....	4
Add Your Voice to Ours .....	4
We're All Grown Up .....	5
Twenty Good Ideas for Children .....	5