



NEW MEXICO

VOICES FOR CHILDREN

2010 Annual Report





The New Mexico Children's Charter

The New Mexico Children's Charter was created by New Mexico Voices for Children in 2007 as part of our 20th anniversary celebration. We aim to accomplish the following outcomes within the next 20 years:

- No child lives in poverty
- Every child and adult has access to quality health care, including mental health care
- Every family has access to affordable, safe and high quality early childcare and education
- Every child has access to a public education system that is fully funded and in which resources are equitably distributed
- Every New Mexican can afford to go to college
- Our youth have access to positive development opportunities and alternatives to incarceration
- Our youth have enough positive options available to them that they put off parenthood until they are older and economically independent
- Every family has safe, affordable housing and sufficient, nutritious food
- Our economic development strategy provides for jobs that pay living wages, guarantee family leave, protect workers' rights, and provide access to education to improve skills and success in the workplace
- Our tax system is transparent, everyone pays their fair share, and it generates enough revenue to maintain necessary programs
- Children and families are a high priority in federal, state and local budgets
- Every family has access to appropriate credit, and predatory lending practices are abolished
- Our state has and enforces strong environmental laws that protect public health and the future of the planet
- All communities, regardless of diversity, size or place, have a voice in state government
- Our voter rights are protected and civic participation is encouraged
- Our elected officials are held accountable through campaign finance reform and ethics laws
- All New Mexicans are assured protection of their human rights and civil liberties
- No one experiences disparities in education, health, economic opportunity, housing, civil rights, self determination or personal power because of their race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation
- All immigrants to New Mexico are protected by just and humane immigration policies
- Every community is a safe, welcoming place for families and children

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends and Supporters:

When a family loses its home due to foreclosure, the turmoil and upheaval is felt keenly by the children. It can mean everything from having to change schools to experiencing homelessness. Some 17,000 New Mexico children suffered such stresses when their families were affected by foreclosure between 2007 and 2009. That's the bad news.

The good news is, countless children were spared this family tragedy because of the Home Loan Protection Act, which was put into place by the state in 2003. The legislation sought to curb “abusive mortgage lending” practices and, as a result, only 2 percent of New Mexico’s children were subjected to the destabilizing effects of foreclosure at a time when the sub-prime mortgage crisis was imploding across the nation. Children in some of our neighboring states did not fare so well. In Colorado, 4 percent of children were affected by foreclosure; in Arizona it was 8 percent; and in Nevada the rate was 13 percent—the highest in the nation.

The point of this story is simple: policy matters. Public policies shape and govern our communities. They can make the difference between parents having all the support systems they need in order for their children to thrive, and families who just survive.

Public policy can help protect our country’s most vulnerable citizens. It can lend a hand to those who are doing their level best but are still unable to rise above their circumstances. In short, our public policies should mirror our public priorities. But they often don’t.

Policy matters. That’s why New Mexico Voices for Children works to shape and advocate for public policies that are supportive of working families and their kids. It’s the best way we know how to create systemic, lasting change on a large scale.

Our victories are not always easy to quantify and, as you will see from the Year in Review, often take many years to realize. That is why your generous support is so critical to our work. It is also always greatly appreciated.



Our Staff

(This list reflects only staff members who were employed during the 2010 fiscal year of July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010)

Eric Griego, Executive Director

Troy Martinez, Chief Operating Officer

Finance Team

Ron Valek, Finance Director

Kwaku Sraha, Accountant

Policy Team

Bill Jordan, Policy Director

Nick Estes, Deputy Policy Director

Myra Segal, Deputy Policy Director

Research Team

Gerry Bradley, Research Director

Christine Hollis, KIDS COUNT Director

Communications Team

Sharon Kayne, Communications Director

Alicia Manzano, Outreach Director

Jessica Fulton, Outreach & Communications Specialist

Operations Team

Ric Armstrong, Development Director

Silvia Jewell, Office Manager

Juliet Yazzie, Receptionist

Programs

Regina “Gina” Begay-Roanhorse, 4 Youth Program Manager

Rasa Herzog, Youth Link Program Manager

Brian Urban, Youth Link Program Coordinator

Timea Eckerdt, Youth Link Program Associate

Miguel Acosta, Santa Fe Community Partnership Program Director

Shelley Cohen, Santa Fe Community Partnership Program Associate

Board of Directors

(This list reflects only board members who were active during the 2010 fiscal year of July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010)

Nancy Jo Archer, Chair (2009)

Anne Simpson, M.D., Vice Chair (2009), Chair (2010)

Carol Jones, Treasurer (2009), Vice Chair (2010)

Donald Simonson, Ph.D., Treasurer (2010)

Polly Arango, Secretary (2009)

Antionette Tellez-Humble, Secretary (2010)

Susanne Brown, M.D., Member

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Farhan Taghizadeh, M.D., Member

The Year in Review

Our 2010 fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2009, was a particularly challenging one for our state advocacy work in terms of fiscal policy. The Great Recession was hitting New Mexico hard and in September the Legislature was called into a special session to patch a growing hole in the state's bank account. The overwhelming legislative reaction was to cut spending, but we believe (as do many economists) that a cuts-only approach to the revenue shortfall would actually make the recession worse and weaken New Mexico's ability to recover. Moreover, economic down times are when working families—especially those that are already economically vulnerable—need supports such as Medicaid, unemployment insurance, and food stamps the most. Indeed, as the year played out, record numbers of families applied to these programs, as growing unemployment led to the loss of income and employer-provided health insurance.

It was during this time that we organized and led a coalition of small business organizations, faith leaders, and labor and advocacy groups called **Better Choices New Mexico**. The focus of this group was to inform the public dialog around the budget shortfall, advocate against deep and damaging cuts to critical state programs like education, health care, and public safety, and educate the public and policymakers about other options. This educational campaign was accomplished via the release of several fact sheets and publications and a 20-day public relations campaign that highlighted 20 ways in which budget cuts would harm New Mexicans. While we were unable to change the course of the special session, our calls for a “balanced approach” to solving the state budget crisis did impact the public debate around including revenue increases as part of the discussion. By the 2010 session, revenue increases were considered “inevitable.”

In November of 2009, our Policy Director, Bill Jordan, was named to the Governor's budget balancing task force. While the group came to many of the same conclusions that we had about the best ways to raise revenue in a recession, few of those recommendations survived when the Legislature convened in January.

One of the revenue-raising options that the task force brought up and the Legislature passed—but which we fought against—was to tax food. As you may recall, the Legislature had made groceries exempt from the gross receipts tax (New Mexico's version of the sales tax) in 2005. We had also opposed that move because that particular legislation also raised the gross receipts tax rate on other purchases. Broad-based sales taxes—like the tax on food—impacts lower-income families the hardest because they must spend all of their income on day-to-day necessities, which are subject to sales taxes. Higher income families, on the other hand, are more likely to be able to set aside some of their income in a savings account. While the Legislature voted to reinstate the tax on food, Governor Richardson vetoed the bill.

Two revenue-raising bills that we advocated on behalf of did pass—the closure of a state income tax loophole that mainly benefitted high-income New Mexicans, and a 75-cent-per-pack increase on cigarettes. While tobacco taxes do tend to fall more heavily on lower-income families, such tax increases discourage teens from starting to smoke and encourages some adults to quit. Unfortunately, we lost our fight to increase funding for the state’s child care assistance program, which helps struggling families provide higher quality child care than they could otherwise afford.

We also worked during that session to advocate against cuts to programs that serve young children, such as child care assistance and pre-kindergarten. For this work we led the group **Birth to Five New Mexico** with support from the Birth to Five Policy Alliance and the McCune Charitable Foundation. Although this was a much smaller effort than leading the Better Choices alliance, we were successful in educating lawmakers about the importance of a child’s early years to their later success, and in raising the visibility of ECE programs.

Shortly after the 2010 legislative session, we received a large, multi-year grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation to greatly extend our work around ECE issues. The project—called **Voices for the Future**—centers on creating a paradigm shift in public attitudes toward education. Since learning begins at birth, we believe our public investment in education should start then too. All young children should have access to high-quality ECE programs before they enter kindergarten. Such programs—particularly when they are aligned as a continuum that integrates with the first three years of grade school—can virtually transform our K-12 system simply by ensuring that children start school with the social, emotional and cognitive skills they need to succeed.

Numerous studies have shown that children who are behind when they start school do not catch up. What’s worse, the achievement gap between these children and their peers continues to grow as children progress toward high school. Children from low-income families that do not have the resources to provide nurturing early development experiences, such as high-quality child care, are most at risk for being behind when they enter school. Our work under the Kellogg grant has tried to highlight some of these disparities for policymakers.

In March of 2010, much of our hard work around affordable and universal health care was rewarded when Congress passed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Although this landmark federal reform is far from perfect, its passage marked an important first step toward providing health care to every American.



Long-time child advocate and NM Voices for Children Board member Polly Arango is pictured at our Amy Biehl Youth Spirit Awards in 2006. She passed away in 2010.

Our 2010 fiscal year ended on a very sad note. In late June the advocacy world lost an extraordinary champion when Polly Arango was killed in an accident. Polly had been a long-time member of our Board of Directors, but her advocacy circle went far beyond NM Voices. As a co-founder of two organizations, Family Voices and Parents Reaching Out, Polly was a fierce advocate for families with children who have disabilities. In fact, she worked closely with another New Mexico advocate who died much too young—Patty Jennings—to create state laws to guarantee that children with disabilities have the same opportunities as children without. She was instrumental in advancing

the concept of supporting families in ways that allowed them to keep their children at home instead of in institutions. Although Polly was passionate about the broader scope of work we tackle at NM Voices, she could always be counted on to remind us about parity for children with disabilities. She is greatly missed.

Reports and Publications

We released two reports through our Fiscal Policy Project—*New Mexico's Economy and the Recovery Act of 2009*, which took a look at exactly how New Mexicans were benefiting from the federal stimulus bill that was passed in early 2009, and *The Great Recession: How New Mexico Workers are Faring*, which looked at how the recession hit some employment sectors harder than others. Through our Better Choices campaign, we released numerous fact sheets detailing the damage a cuts-only approach to the budget deficit would do and explaining the benefits of a number of revenue options. We also released our annual **New Mexico KIDS COUNT** data book in early 2010 with the support of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

As usual, we also helped several of our national partners with the release of their reports, including the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*, which heralded the bad news that just 20 percent of New Mexico's fourth graders are reading proficiently.

Special Events

We held our first **Spirit of Hope Celebration** in October of 2009, where we honored the community service work of New Mexicans by bestowing the First Annual Alice King Public Service Award, First Annual Patty Jennings Citizen Advocacy Award, and the 16th Annual Amy Biehl Youth Spirit Award. New Mexico Supreme Court Justice Petra Jimenez-Maes received the Alice King Award and Angie Vachio, a long-time children's advocate and founder of PB&J therapeutic preschool, received the Patty Jennings Award. The winners of the Amy Biehl Youth Spirit Award were Alejandra Carbona of Albuquerque and Fionna Walters of Mexican Springs. Alex Wirth of Santa Fe and Arielle Hawney of Sapello were the second place honorees.



Spirit of Hope Celebration goes enjoy the pre-event reception in the lobby at the Embassy Suites. *Photo by Ray A. Mares*



Some of the nominees of the Amy Biehl Youth Spirit Awards pose for a photo after their own awards event at the Spirit of Hope Celebration. *Photo by Ray A. Mares*



Spirit of Hope Celebration emcee Deanna Saucedo poses with NM Attorney General Gary King and NM Supreme Court Justice Petra Jimenez-Maes as she receives the first annual Alice King Public Service Award for her work as a child advocate. *Photo by Ray A. Mares*

Our **Youth Link** program held its first ever statewide **Youth Leadership and Advocacy Conference** in February of 2010, at which some 250 middle- and high-school aged youths from across the state learned leadership and anti-tobacco presentation skills. Youth Link also hosted their Sixth Annual **Fame & Shame Awards** in May 2010 to honor 20 middle- and high-school aged youths nominated for the Youth Advocate of the Year Awards. Unfortunately, due to the state's budget shortfall, our Youth Link funding ended just as our fiscal year did—on June 30, 2010. In future, we will look for other opportunities to engage New Mexico youth to advocate for policies that impact their lives.



The cast of *Alice in Wonderland* takes the stage for the costume contest portion of the Fame and Shame event. *Photo by Ray A. Mares*



After the Fame and Shame Awards event, youths from across the state enjoy a dance party. *Photo by Ray A. Mares*

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Major Grantors

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Golden Advocate ~ \$10,000 +

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Financial Report

June 30, 2010

Assets

Cash	\$525,288
Accounts Receivable	\$114,261
Prepaid Expenses	\$18,427
Equipment (Net)	\$66,164
Other Assets	\$10,653
Total Assets	\$734,793

Liabilities & Fund Balance

Accounts Payable	\$95,477
Deferred Revenue	\$563,899
Other Liabilities	\$49,839
Fund Balance	\$25,578
Total Liabilities & Fund Balance	\$734,793

Revenue

Grants & Contracts	\$1,775,692
Memberships & Donations	\$132,190
Other	\$1,046
Total Revenue	\$1,908,928

Expenses

Salaries	\$1,104,863
Fringe Benefits	\$239,567
Travel	\$44,439
Supplies	\$64,016
Contractual	\$173,219
Other	\$328,870
Total Expenses	\$1,954,974
Net Profit (Loss)	(\$46,046)

Endowments

Beginning Fund Balance (7.1.09)	\$39,121
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Additions to the Fund:

Contributions	\$5,000
Interest & Dividend Income	\$475
Realized & Unrealized Gains (Losses)	\$2,587

Total Additions to the Fund	\$8,062
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Withdrawals from the Fund:

Grants & Distributions	\$0
Foundation Administration Fee	\$387
Investment Consultant Fee	\$115
Other Expenses	\$0

Total Withdrawals from the Fund	\$502
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Ending Fund Balance (6.30.10)	\$46,681
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