

Middlesex Coalition for CHILDREN

End of Year Report
2014

Prepared by Izzi Greenberg
Executive Director

Mission

The Middlesex Coalition for Children's mission is to improve the lives of children growing up in Middletown and Middlesex County. The Coalition holds public meetings monthly on issues important to children. It convenes task forces to mobilize and coordinate community efforts to address specific children's issues, and advocates for children at the local, state and national levels.

We thank the generosity of our 2013-14 funders:

Community Foundation of Middlesex County

Fund for Greater Hartford

Graustein Memorial Foundation

Liberty Bank Foundation

Middlesex United Way

Annual Summary

The 2013-2014 year was a year of big changes for the Coalition. In April 2013, the Coalition hired a new, part-time Executive Director to take over responsibilities for the previous volunteer Director. A steering committee was formed and with strong leadership from the board and the outgoing director, a streamlined transition occurred.

As with any transition, it takes time to fully integrate new staff into all roles, but all of the major roles and responsibilities were implemented. The new director, Izzi Greenberg, began working with the board, steering committee and sub-committees, as well as attending all relevant statewide partner organizations, committees and working groups (such as the DCF Advisory Board, the Local Juvenile Justice Collaborative, Early Childhood Alliance, etc.) as well as some new alliances with partner groups working in the Shoreline communities of Middlesex County.

The most visible work of the Director has been to design, plan and host monthly public meetings on children's issues. These have been extremely successful, attendance has increased since last year and they have grown as a strategic tool for building relationships with our legislative delegation, as well as an informed constituency. Each month, the director prepares a multi-page resource guide to inform attendees and our broader coalition about the issue of focus. These have been very widely targeted to our community and have been well received, as well as shared in other meetings and forums. Topics have ranged from the new Office of Early Childhood to Childhood Hunger to reducing School-Based Arrests, among others.

In place of the March meeting, the Coalition ran a successful Legislative Breakfast, which had record-breaking attendance, a significant portion of our legislative delegation, and offered new, coordinated materials and marketing, and an improved legislative handbook. The breakfast served to galvanize the Coalition's stance on many relevant issues that were pending in the session and continued an important dialogue with our representatives.

Additionally, the director has staffed the Board of Directors, the Board Steering/Transition Committee, the Coalition's Advocates Committee, the Childhood Hunger Task Force, and the Family Support Committee and supervises a 10-hour per week work-study student. We have added a new AmeriCorps VISTA, Sasha Rosen-Buell, whose work is shared between the North End Action Team, Opportunity Knocks and the Coalition. He will focus on Youth Organizing and Food Justice in Middletown.

A major component that the new director added to the Coalition was a social media and web presence, as well as a marketing strategy to raise the public profile of the Coalition. The Director has secured local press coverage of most events, and the Coalition has been in the newspaper monthly, on average, since October.

Significant social media progress includes establishing:

- 1) A website (www.middlesexchildren.org)
- 2) A Facebook page (facebook.com/middlesexchildren)
- 3) A Twitter page (@mxchildren)
- 4) A new email system (Vertical Response) that allows tracking and more efficient email data management
- 5) A new (Salesforce) database system that allows us to both manage members and track attendance
- 6) A new logo/brand identity (Graphic Design donated by Elena Grossman, a Middletown designer and professor)
- 7) A unique and agency-specific email address system (@middlesexchildren.org) through Google Apps for Non-profits.

*All of these new resources have been secured as donations, with no cost to the Coalition.

Public Meetings

The Coalition had 9 scheduled Public Meetings, one was canceled because of snow. Below is the list of topics, speakers and attendance.

September: “What’s New” Annual Open Mic on new developments in children’s services.

Attendance: 50

October: Conversation About DCF’s Proposed girl’s secured treatment center at the Former Riverview Hospital

Bill Rosenbeck (Superintendent of CJTS)
Allon Kalisher (DCF Region 3 Regional Administrator)
Dante Bartolomeo: State Senator

Also in Attendance to support the conversation:

Joette Katz: DCF Commissioner
Abby Anderson: Executive Director, Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance

Attendance: 80

November: New Office of Early Childhood/ Race to the Top Grant Application

Myra Jones-Taylor Executive Director
Maggie Adair- Director of Government and Community Relations
Mary Farnsworth- Strategic Planning Manager & Race to the Top Project Manager

Attendance: 50

December: School Reform & the Common Core

Dante Bartolomeo- CGA Chair of Children and Education Committee
Patricia Charles- Superintendent of Middletown Public Schools
Vincent Loffredo-Director of Government and Political Relations, CT Educations Association and Middletown Board of Ed Member

Attendance: 70

January: Juvenile Justice & School Based Arrest Reduction Legislation

Justin Carbonella- Director of Middletown Youth Services Director; Chair of Middletown Area
Paul Doyle- State Senator, Vice Chair of Judiciary Committee
Gary Holder-Winfield- State Representative, Member of Judiciary Committee
Lara Herscovitch- Deputy Director, CT Juvenile Justice Alliance

Attendance:50

February: Canceled due to snow

March: Legislative Breakfast

Bartolomeo, Doyle, Lesser, Linares, Miller, Serra, Vicino, Ziobron

Attendance: 100

April: Childhood Nutrition (rescheduled from February)

Monica Belyea- Coordinator, Opportunity Knocks Collaborative
Matt Lesser- Member of Appropriations Committee
Dawn Crayco- Deputy Director of End Hunger CT!
Phil Miller –Vice Chair of Public Health Committee

Attendance: 40

May: Grand Rounds: Co-Management of Adolescent Behavioral Health

Attendance: 60

Average Attendance for Public Meetings: 65

This year, the Coalition took on the task of developing a social media presence. We had to develop a logo and brand identity, a website, facebook page and twitter page. Our reach was impressive for a first time venture.

Our Website (which is more of a blog format) has 41 posts which included resource guides, legislative information, our legislative handbook, a calendar and news and announcements, as well as links to our state-wide partners. It had 2587 page views since it went live in November, 2013

Our Twitter page was created in May 2013 and has 114 Followers, 127 Tweets and is following 136 other members. Our followers include a wide variety of Foundations, Advocates, Partners, Parents, Press, and Politicians

Our twitter reach is wide. Our tweets have been shared by: The Graustein Memorial Fund, Middletown Safe Schools/Healthy Students Grant, YSB, State Rep. Matt Lesser, Community Party (a CT Racial Justice Group), CT Voices for Children, State Rep. Melissa Ziobron, CT Early Childhood Alliance, Dante Bartolomeo, The Middletown Press, Wholesome Wave, Shawn Beals, Kevin Wilhelm, and the CT Office of Early Childhood, among others. Each of these “retweets” have a very wide following, exponentially spreading our information beyond our direct followers.

Our Facebook page went live in late June, 2013. We have 159 total Likes and our highest reach is 667 in one day. The most visits in one day was 24 and the most posts on our page in one day was 9. It seems that the highest reach posts are action alerts and posts about monthly meetings.

67% of fans are women and 23.4% of fans are women 35-44 years old.

Fans are from Middletown, Hartford, Cromwell, Old Saybrook, Portland, Mansfield Center, Wallingford, Deep River, Meriden, Windsor, Ivoryton, Branford, New Haven, West Hartford, Kensington, Old Lyme, Southington, Vernon, Higganum, Middlefield, Wethersfield, Glastonbury, Hamden as well as many other states in the USA

Our Email System through Vertical Response has 1251 emails in the database, 20 different, interest-specific mailing lists, and sent 50 emails (announcements, meeting reminders, etc...) to 24,808 (non-unique) people

Our Database System through Salesforce contains 187 people (separate from our email system). While this isn't a huge number of people, it's difficult to collect information other than email, so it's a slow process. We have begun to track attendance at meetings, so we know how frequently members are attending meetings and which ones they go to.

For a first time effort, the social media reach has communicated to a wide variety of people in a wide-variety of ways from all over the state and beyond. Our goal has been to share information specific to Middletown and Middlesex County, but also state-wide action alerts, information from our partners, articles, studies and research that is relevant to anyone interested in children's justice and equality.

Long-Range Goals

Goals: *Most of the goals of the Coalition are extremely long-range and it is hard to measure efficacy on a year-to-year basis. The most important jobs of the Coalition are to maintain excellent relationships with child-serving programs and agencies and with our legislative delegation and to ensure that our coalition members are as informed as possible about emerging issues related to children. This has happened.*

1) Goal: Identify barriers to local children's success and the most promising strategies to overcome them.

Long-range Outcome: better informed, more sophisticated policy debate on children's issues.

2013-14 Outcome: this is an ongoing effort. The director worked with all committees, partners and legislators to be responsive to immediate needs, as they have come up. The director has been engaged in strategy sessions, and our coalition has made progress.

2) Goal: Raise awareness of problems and mobilize community support for solutions.

Outcome: a growing corps of people actively working to improve children's lives in Middlesex County, and more sympathizers and supporters.

2013-14 Outcome: This work has mostly happened in conjunction with #1 and at our monthly public and committee meetings, as well as through email alerts.

3) Goal: Advocate effectively for solutions with local, state and national governments.

Outcome: Governments will provide greater resources to support increasingly effective programs in Middlesex County.

2013-14 Outcome: Members advocated for increased funding for a host of programs, many of which have been expanded or implemented. The greatest successes have been in nutrition programs. Our members expanded Summer lunch and breakfast sites all across the county, and worked to add supper sites at two Middletown schools (beginning in April, 2014). In August 2014, an AmeriCorps VISTA Food Justice worker (40 hours per week) will be working with Opportunity Knocks, NEAT and the Coalition on issues around parent mobilization and childhood hunger. We have also worked to increase School Readiness, Child First and Kindergarten Kickstart, among other programs

4) Goal: Provide leadership and structure to help local agencies innovate and collaborate.

Outcomes: fewer duplicative and overlapping programs; more focus on child outcomes, less on internal agency concerns; more agency accountability.

2013-14 Outcome: this is the one area that was held back by the change in leadership. There are so many programs in the county, it has taken the full year (and may take more) for the new director to fully understand the ways in which they are interrelated and can work cooperatively. That said, the director has been involved in areas where she had existing knowledge, especially in participation with college readiness planning and Right Response/ School Safety Grant partnership with the Middletown public Schools, Juvenile Justice issues, and Childhood Hunger Issues, among others.

5) Goal: Measure success by tracking child outcomes, either directly or by publicizing Middlesex County data compiled by other organizations.

Outcomes: greater ability to distinguish between effective and ineffective strategies and programs; more responsiveness to broad economic changes (recession, export of jobs, etc).

2013-14 Outcome: Data and information has been shared both through the creation of monthly resource guides and also through social media and the website.

Co-Sponsorships and Committees

The Coalition co-sponsored a few great events in our community:

The Color of Justice: This forum model was created by the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance. CTJJA initiated partners to run local conversations all over the state. Ours was successful in that it brought in around 200 people, and sparked a beginning conversation about racial disparity in the Juvenile Justice system. Since then, we have worked with a group of parents to start a local, parent-led *Color of Justice* working group. The group has only just begun to meet, but it seems as though it will spark some very interesting and useful conversation.

DCF Provider Fair: was held at Middlesex Community College and hosted approximately 30 different providers from all over the state. Many people who work with DCF involved children participated and attended in the fair.

Kindergarten Kickstart: will be held in the summer of 2014. This is the third year of a successful program which provides 5 weeks of “preschool” experience before kindergarten for children who has no or little to no preschool experience. The program is designed to create both the social/emotional connections and academic experience to help the children succeed in kindergarten.

Legislative Breakfast: The Coalition’s Legislative Breakfast, held in March, 2014, was extremely well received. We received many compliments about organization of the event, the efficiency of Q & A with the legislators, the seemingly easy conversation, the important issues that were covered, and the attention to detail. Some changes this year include:

- Sign-in happening at the tables instead of in the hallway
- Videography being handled by the very professional Center for New Media at Middlesex Community College
- Asking questions of the legislators in advance and learning which issues they feel most passionately about
- Making “packets” for each table that can be reused next year
- Making a hanging sign for the podium that shows up in all pictures
- Using social media to publicize the event in advance and in-person (next year we will have an event-specific #hashtag)
- Tailoring the Legislative Breakfast to be a follow-up conversation with legislators about the topics that were covered in the issue-specific monthly meetings that they participated in, propelling and deepening the conversation about the issues that we care most about in a particular year
- Allowing legislators to bring up legislation that is important to them, regardless of our Coalition’s history with the bill
- Using a smaller space at the college, which makes the room seem more intimate

Coalition-led Committee Work (this does not include all committees that we participate in):

Family Support: The family support committee met every other month this year and had many interesting conversations. The one conversation that seems most relevant to members and that has received the most interest has been *housing*. Questions that have been raised are: how much subsidized housing is there in our county, how does the housing authority manage its programs, who is eligible for what, how do we navigate the shelter system, and many more. We are planning to initiate a series of workshops around housing issues for the fall, as well as strengthen our connection to the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness and the Middlesex County Committee on Housing and Homelessness.

Childhood Hunger Task Force: The Childhood Hunger Task Force has met every other month this year and did most of its work on school meals. New meals and backpack programs were initiated in 12 communities or districts in Middlesex County (see more detail in the Childhood Nutrition Handout from the April 2014 public meeting)

Advisory Board Sphere of Influence

In the Spring of 2014, the board was surveyed to assess its sphere of influence. 17 members responded and the results are impressive! We are involved in a wide variety of committees, boards, task forces, and programs that truly affect children in Middletown and Middlesex County.

The list of committee participation includes:

Russell Library Trustee; chair of Strategic Planning Committee, Middletown Housing Authority: Treasurer, Nehemiah Housing Board Member, Middlesex Community College Regional Advisory Council, Oddfellows Playhouse Bookkeeper, Shoreline Soup Kitchen Basic Needs Task Force, DCF Regional Advisory Board, LIST, Opportunity Knocks Behavioral Health Work Group, Nurturing Families Advisory Board, Board of Ed Facilities Committee, Member of Middletown Board of Education, Board's Budget Committee, Chair the Board's of Ed Facility Committee, Board's representative to ACES and the community representative to ACES Middlesex County Early Head Start Partnership, City's Charter Revision Committee, Member of Middletown Democratic Town Committee, Work for the Connecticut Education Association (CEA) as Director of Government and Political Relations, Registered Lobbyist, Community Foundation of Middlesex County as the Senior Director of Programs & Operations, MAIC, Opportunity Knocks, Middlesex County Coalition on Housing and Homelessness; Connecticut Council for Philanthropy and its Program Work Group and Funds for Women & Girls Work Group, Middlesex Community College RAC; Essex Rotary; Governance committee; CT Council for Philanthropy CEO network, United Way Education Team and Community Impact Council, CT Early Childhood Alliance, Advocacy Committee and Steering Committee, Safe Schools, Healthy Students Community Management Team, Family Resource Center Advisory Board, Hunger Task Force, Family Support Committee, Opportunity Knocks Steering Committee and Behavioral Health Committee, School Readiness Council, Early Literacy Collaborative, PreK-K Alignment Committee, Provider's Council, Case Consultation, Middlesex Community College Early Childhood Advisory Board, Middletown School District Leadership Team, PLTI Advisory Board, Middletown Early Childhood Network, Superintendent, Middletown Public Schools, Middlesex Community College Regional Advisory Board, United Way Board, MARC, Middlesex Chamber of Commerce, CT After School Network - Advisory Committee, CT Council for Philanthropy - Program Committee Member, Jewish Federation of Greater Hartford - Co-Chair of Community Trustees, NEAT Board Member - schools committee, personnel committee, Farm Hill Governance Council, Neighborhood Preschool Board - secretary, Center for Community Partnerships Advisory Board - chair, CAUSE (Community and University in Service of Education) - chair, HOT (Higher Order Thinking) Schools Advisory Board, Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce Board, Middlesex Community College RAC, Chair, Middlesex Coalition on Housing and Homelessness, Leadership Council co-chair, Middletown Rotary, Board and Scholarship Chair, Liberty Bank incorporator, Middlesex Hospital incorporator, MARC President's Council, Community Health Center Advisory council, Chamber Board, State of CT YMCA Alliance, the CT After School Network, Middletown Schools Central Office Cabinet, District Leadership Team, District Data Team, Co-Chair of District Climate Committee, Parent Leadership Design Team Chair & Project Manager, Family School Connection Bielefeld Project Manager & Advisory Committee, United Way Healthy Youth Committee member, Coalition Advocacy group member, Coalition family support committee member, School Readiness Board, Opportunity Knocks member, MSAAPC Member, MAIC Board, MSA - advisor, Russell Library Company Member, Family Advocacy Advisory Committee, ICARE Advisory, FRC Advisory Committee, SSHS CMT, Liaison to School Governance Councils, One Book One Middletown Committee member, NAACP member, Middlesex County Revitalization Commission - Chamber of Commerce Rep., City of Middletown Clean Energy Task Force, Nutmeg State Games Board of Directors, Connecticut Sports and Convention Bureau Board of Directors (Beginning July 1, 2014), Middlesex County Youth Service Bureaus Connecticut Youth Services Assoc, After School Alliance, First Congregational Church Portland, at present on Women's Fellowship Board and choir, Director, Liberty Bank Foundation, Community Foundation of Middlesex County Grants committee, Governance and Nominating Committee, Community Collaborative for Children with Mental Health Issues, Co-Chair, Opportunity Knocks, iCare, Director, Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Citizen Committee, President Pine Grove Cemetery, Middlesex United Way Impact Committee for Early Childhood Education, Corporator Middlesex Hospital, Justice of the Peace, Connecticut Valley Hospital Advisory Committee, MAIC, Middlesex Community Care Team, OK collaborative, CHC Advisory board, Middlesex United Way Young Leaders, Old Saybrook Board of Education, Old Saybrook BOE Policy Committee Chair, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education-(CABE), Old Saybrook Democratic Town Committee, President- Tracy Art Center, Old Saybrook, Education and Consultant for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Professor at the University of New Haven- Department of Criminal Justice.

Sphere of Influence

Our board members were represented in towns across the county.

Town	Number of members working there
Chester	8
Clinton	9
Cromwell	11
Deep River	8
Durham	10
East Haddam	9
East Hampton	10
Essex	9
Haddam	9
Killingworth	8
Middlefield	10
Middletown	15
Old Saybrook	11
Portland	12
Westbrook	9
Other	2







Board members participated in a variety of activities:

Activity	Number of Members Participating
Statewide Advocacy	10
Local Advocacy	15
Direct Service	6
Program Administration/Oversight	11
Other	5

2013-2014 Board of Directors











Daniel Drew, Willard McRae, Eileen Baker, Justin Carbonella, Patricia Charles, Terri DiPietro, Alice Ellovich, Christine Fahey, Jayne Gary, Allon Kalisher, Cathy Lechowicz, Vincent Loffredo, Donna Marino, Adrienne Maslin, Mary Pont, Jeffrey Pugliese, Michelle Rulnick, Thayer Talbott, Lisa Sedlock-Reider, Betty Sugerman Weintraub, Kevin Wilhelm
Izzi Greenberg: Staff

Our Coalition Members worked hard to establish good relationships with our legislative delegation. The following grid shows how each member of our delegation voted on the bills that were most important to our mission. As you can see, many of the bills that we were following were never called for a vote, and some were merged into other bills, renamed or renumbered.

Bills of Interest	 Altobello (D)	 Bartolomeo (D)	 Candelora (R)	 Carpino (R)	 Doyle (D)	 Fasano (R)
Anti-Hunger/Anti-Poverty						
SB 48: Nutrition Standards for Child Care Settings		C				
SB 32: Working Families' Wages	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N
Early Childhood						
HB 5562: OEC/Smartstart	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
SB 25: Office of Early Childhood	Y	C; Y	N	N	Y	Y
SB 26: Expanding Opportunities for Early Childhood						
Education						
SB 340: Two-Generational School Readiness Plan						
HB 5005: Increasing ECS Aid to Compensate for Magnet School Tuition						
HB 5078: Moratorium on Implementation of Common Core Standards			C			
Human Services						
SB 106: Improving Employment Opportunities Through Education	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Juvenile Justice						
SB 5221: Lengthy Sentences for Crimes Committed by a Child or Youth	Y		Y	N		
HB 5040: Protection of Children	Y	C; Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
SB 54: Collaboration between Boards of Education and Law Enforcement						
SB 366: Erasure of Records in Delinquency and Family with Service Needs						
HB 5357: Chronic Absenteeism	Y		N	N		
Public Health						
SB 46: Pesticides on School Grounds		C				

2013-2014 Legislative Voting Record

- Y: Yes
- N: No
- A: Absent/ No Voting Record
- Passed
- Not called for a final vote in both the House and Senate
- C: Co-Sponsor of Bill

 Giuliano (R)	 Kokoruda (R)	 Lesser (D)	 Linares (R)	 Meyer (D)	 Miller (D)	 Serra (D)	 Stillman (D)	 Vicino (D)	 Ziobron (R)
N	N	C; Y	N	Y	Y	C; Y	Y	C; Y	N
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y
N	N	Y	Y	C; Y	C; Y	C; A	Y	Y	N
				C	C				
C									C
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y
Y	Y	Y		C	C; Y	Y		Y	Y
Y	C; Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y
N	Y	Y			Y	Y		Y	N
					C				

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