



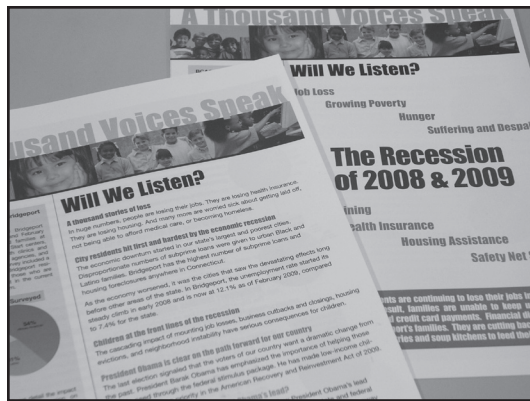
2009 ANNUAL REPORT

A Voice for Bridgeport Children

Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition continued its unrelenting advocacy and action in 2009. As the economy made its impact felt more deeply in the lives of Bridgeport’s children and families, BCAC responded more vigorously than ever.

Parents’ voices echo

BCAC surveyed more than 2,000 residents in the first four months of 2009 to assess the impact of the economy on families’ lives. The effects of the downturn were brutally evident. We listened to stories of loss – loss of jobs, loss of health insurance, loss of housing, and loss of hope. We heard from families who, for the first time in their lives, had turned to public assistance. We listened to parents who said, “I have no income at all; absolutely none.”



BCAC took these voices to a broader audience. We distributed two reports in our series, “A Thousand Voices Speak—Will We Listen?” to key Hartford decision-makers as they negotiated the state budget. We generated extensive front-page coverage, two editorials, and a commentary in the *Connecticut Post*, and conveyed the stories of parents in radio interviews and programs on WNPR and WVOF.

National figure delivers keynote



Donna Brazile delivered the keynote address, “Temperature of the Times,” at BCAC’s sell-out 2009 Annual Breakfast Conference, a partnership with Casey Family Services. Brazile is committed to encouraging and inspiring the American people, especially women, minorities, and young people, to make their voices heard.

Nearly 450 people came to the Bridgeport Holiday Inn to hear Brazile’s inspiring story, delivered with the trademark wit and style that have made her a nationally-known commentator on public radio and television. She praised BCAC, saying, “I was a child who grew up poor. We needed people to advocate for us. An organization like Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition on the side of children makes a difference.”

At the Breakfast Conference, Brian Langdon was given BCAC’s special Lifetime Achievement Award for his years of service to the families of Bridgeport.



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Parents join national conversation

In February, Public Broadcasting's *NewsHour* with *Jim Lehrer* asked BCAC's help in organizing a feature on health care and the recession. We identified four parents who had recently lost their jobs and their health insurance. In speaking about their circumstances, the parents helped put a face on the economy's impact and gave voice to the worries of thousands.

"The lack of health care overwhelms you. It takes over your life, that worry."

- Dee Brassell

"You know, one morning you wake up, and all these years that I worked very hard, it just goes down the drain."

- Donny Djurkovic



The Burroughs Community Center's 2nd floor Conference Room was turned into a studio with lights and equipment everywhere. Rosita is getting a microphone pinned on for recording.

Victory for health coverage in Connecticut



BCAC was an active member of the major statewide campaign, *healthcare4every1*. Small business owners, parents, clergy, and others met with legislators, wrote letters to the editor, signed postcards, and made their voices heard for comprehensive, affordable health coverage in Connecticut. With powerful data to demonstrate the

numbers of uninsured and underinsured in Bridgeport and major cities in Fairfield County, we

- involved more than 160 small businesses in the campaign
- made more than 20 presentations, reaching over 650 residents, community leaders, and business owners
- generated more than 40 newspaper articles, features, editorials, letters to the editor, and radio and TV features or interviews
- mobilized nearly 900 advocates throughout Fairfield County. Their advocacy helped to generate public discussion and debate, and put the health care issue on the radar screen.

The result? The state legislature overrode the governor's veto and approved the *SustiNet* Bill for affordable, accessible health care coverage in Connecticut.

BCAC responds to job losses

BCAC stepped up our outreach efforts as more parents lost their jobs. We helped 185 families sign up for *HUSKY*, Connecticut's health insurance program for low-income children and parents. We also organized three training programs on up-to-date *HUSKY* policies for community outreach workers from Bridgeport, Norwalk, and Stamford.

A Voice for Bridgeport Children

BCAC names Honor Roll schools

In September, BCAC released its latest education report, "Five Bridgeport Schools Rise to the Challenge." Schools that overcame tremendous hurdles to achieve substantial improvement gains during the past five years were named to BCAC's Honor Roll. Congratulations to Columbus, Beardsley, Hall, Hallen, and Winthrop!

BCAC also looked at the schools' specific strategies for success. "Teamwork proved to be a critical and common element in the five schools," said Hernan Illingworth, District PAC President and BCAC Education and Early Care Task Force Co-chair.

This report, the first of its kind for Bridgeport public schools, received statewide recognition for demonstrating possibilities for educational gains.

BCAC persists with Leave No City Behind education campaign

BCAC worked with the Superintendent of Schools to organize key community and business leaders in developing a legislative agenda for Bridgeport schools. To continue the campaign for equitable funding for Bridgeport schools, we

- produced and widely distributed Fact Sheets on the need for school repairs
- organized more than 60 parents and community leaders to meet with new Congressman Jim Himes and seek his support. Congressman Himes then arranged a tour of schools in desperate need of repairs, with news reporters in tow.

The result? The City included \$100 million for school repair projects in its infrastructure plan for stimulus funding.

Advocating for jobs and job training

BCAC's advocacy for a Jobs Funnel program, which matches unemployed and underemployed Bridgeport residents with construction jobs, finally came to fruition this year. The WorkPlace got a state grant and matched it with its own funding to start the program in Bridgeport.



Table Conversations with Legislators

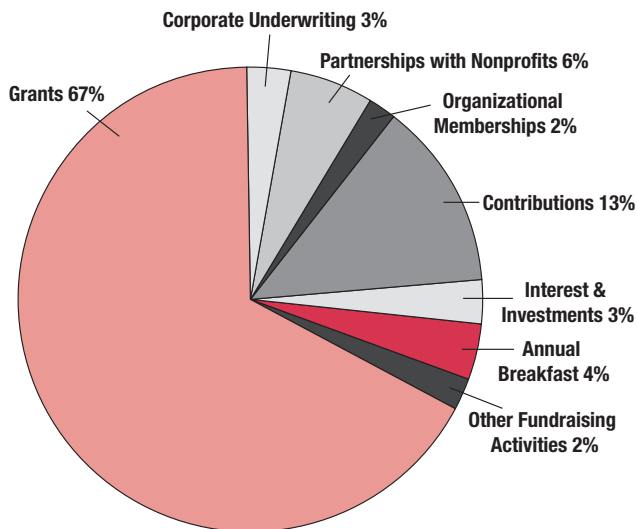
Bridgeport legislators connected with their constituents at the annual Children's Issues Forum in December 2008. The forum gave legislators an opportunity to hear firsthand from parents and community leaders what families are facing and how they are coping. BCAC got strong commitments of support from the five legislators present for a state budget that does the least possible harm to children. State Senators Edwin Gomes and Anthony Musto, and State Representatives Andres Ayala, Chris Caruso, and Auden Grogins participated.

BCAC report shines light on children

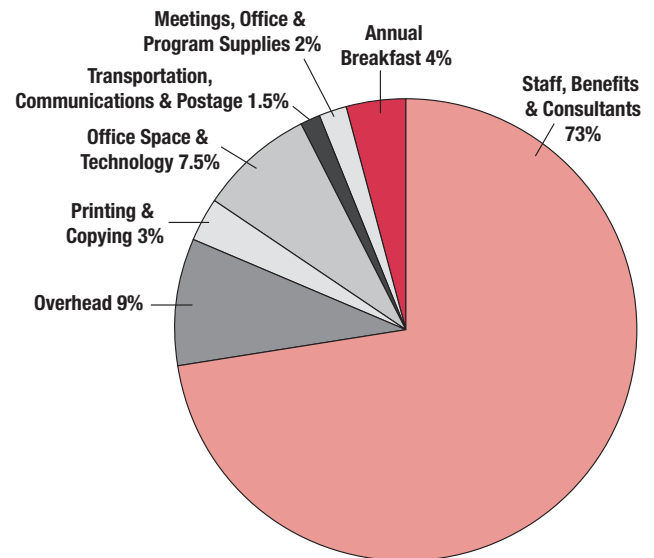
BCAC published its signature report, *State of the Child in Bridgeport*. The report included its annual Report Card on the Well-Being of Bridgeport Children. In 2008, the Report Card showed that Bridgeport had not been able to sustain many of the gains made in the previous year. The report was widely distributed in Bridgeport and beyond.

BCAC Budget 2008-2009

INCOME 2008-09



EXPENSES 2008-09



BCAC tightens budget to weather recession

BCAC faced the same economic pressures as our constituents and donors. In response, we reduced our budget during the last six months of our fiscal year, cutting expenses to the bone. We turned our Annual Breakfast Conference into a fundraiser, reduced consultant costs, and froze a vacant staff position. Staff took furloughs. These measures allowed BCAC to end the year in a strong position for ever greater advocacy for Bridgeport's children.

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Pastor Tyrone P. Jones, IV	Helen B. Wasserman
Karen King	Scott K. Wilderman
Brian J. Langdon	Katherine S. Yacavone

Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition, BCAC, is a coalition of organizations, parents, and other concerned individuals committed to improving the well-being of Bridgeport's children through research, advocacy, community education, and mobilization.

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