

October 5-10, 2009

Step Up for Kids!

For the second year in a row, America stepped up for kids. The week of October 5 was designated “Step Up for Kids” week, and child advocates, politicians, parents, and kids joined together across the country to rally for children’s issues. Among the issues discussed were health care, children living in poverty, early childhood education, and child care programs. Spearheaded by Every Child Matters in Washington, D.C., this was the second annual Step Up event with events taking place in more than 30 states.

Like the state groups’ efforts, ECM and other DC organizations held an event on Wednesday, October 7, to call attention to the needs of our most vulnerable citizens.

The news conference took place at Mary’s Center for Maternal and Child Care. Speakers from the children’s community and DC government talked about issues confronting kids and their families back-lit by Mary’s Center, a one-stop shop offering education, health, and social services to some of the city’s neediest residents. The Center is a model program presenting a break in the cycle of negative outcomes

associated with poverty. Mary’s Center pre-school kids offered entertainment along with producer/songwriter Kyonte. ECM was happy to welcome Kyonte back for as his musical talent was a hit at the 2008 DC event. Speakers included Maria Gomez, president and ceo of Mary’s Center; Michael Brown, DC council member; Dr. Roque Gerald, director of DC Child and Family Services; and Michael Petit, president of Every Child Matters.

Below: ECM President and Founder, Michael Petit, spoke to the group of parents and children at Mary’s Center for Maternal and Child Care along with Mary’s Center CEO, Maria Gomez and DC council member, Michael Brown.



In LOUISIANA...

On Wednesday, October 7, former New Orleans Saints Pro Bowl Punt Return Specialist, Michael Lewis, and Q93 FM radio personality, Juggie, stepped up for Louisiana's kids. Lewis and Juggie made guest appearances at Kingsley House in New Orleans to speak to Kingsley House Head Start students about the importance of education and healthcare.

In addition to the day's event, the students took part in a drawing campaign to show president Obama why kids matter. Many of the drawings read, "Yes, I Matter, don't You?"

Before leaving, Lewis and Juggie signed autographs and played catch with the children.



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In INDIANA...

Kicking off Step Up for Kids week on Monday, October 5, the Children's Coalition in Indiana, led by the efforts of Kristin Clements-Effner, held a press conference and march to the city center of Indianapolis. In addition, five to ten communities across the state held events and/or submitted letters to the editors of local media outlets. The Children's Coalition concluded the event on Saturday, October 10 with a community fair. There they encouraged families to sign up for

volunteer opportunities, registered voters, and had attendees complete comment cards that were later sent to legislators.

In VIRGINIA...

Mary Dunne Stewart of Voices for Virginia's Children led the effort in Richmond for the second year in a row. Her group held a rally as a way to raise awareness of children's issues during Virginia's

election and budget cycle. The goal was to show widespread public support for a shift in spending priorities towards children and families. . First Lady Anne Holton and Attorney General Bill Mims and our Executive Director John Morgan were featured speakers. Attendance was even higher than last year's and press was supportive. Participants included children's advocates, service providers, parents, grandparents, children, foster parents, legislators, public officials, and media.



Left and bottom left: Voices for Virginia's Children hosted a rally for the "Step Up for Kids" effort. Speakers included VA first lady Anne Holton and attorney general Bill Mims. Below: The Children's Coalition of Indiana held a press conference and marched through Indianapolis.

