



STEP UP FOR KIDS

2011

The fourth annual **Step Up for Kids** event, a national advocacy effort led by **Every Child Matters**, took place this past October. Child advocates across the country raised awareness among parents, voters, and political candidates regarding issues American children face. Speakers addressed early childcare, after-school programs, poverty, child abuse, and health care. Events varied from state house rallies and fall harvest festivals, to advocacy training programs and press conferences.





Step Up for Kids events took place in 17 states, including the District of Columbia, thanks to the help of ECM's national co-sponsors and volunteers. Here is a brief summary of some of these events:

As part of Step Up for Kids, Thread **Alaska**, a children's organization, distributed over 40 donated strollers to people at the local mall. In addition, they handed out materials and bumper stickers to voters and parents, educating them on the initiatives supporting children's issues in the state.

ECM in **Colorado** led a rally on the Capitol steps as well as a press conference in an effort to ask voters to Step Up for Kids and VOTE YES on Proposition 103, a ballot initiative to increase taxes to prevent four years of devastating cuts to the Colorado Public School System.

As part of the Step Up for Kids national effort, Every Child Matters in **Iowa** orchestrated advocacy training sessions throughout the state between October 3-7. Events in Burlington, Dubuque, Ames, Council Bluffs, and Carroll reached out to hundreds of child advocates, teaching methods in electoral advocacy and urging attendees to participate in upcoming elections in an effort to promote child-friendly investments from the government.

The Children's Coalition of **Indiana** – a group consisting of dozens of children's advocacy organizations from around the state – organized a successful rally outside the Indianapolis State House on October 15. Between 80 and 100 child advocates, parents, and children gathered to show support for children's programs and childhood education. Games and cartoon mascots entertained kids, while parents and attendees discussed the needs of children in the state.

On Saturday October 15, 2011 Every Child Matters in **Nevada**, the UNLV Nevada Institute for Children's

Research and Policy, and the Courts Catalyzing Change Initiative hosted a Kids Zone and Press Conference at the Annual Heart Walk organized by the American Heart Association. With a turnout of well over 1000 people at the event, over 20 community serving organizations distributed information at the Kids Zone and hosted educational activities for the children.

Every Child Matters in **New Hampshire** orchestrated a family-friendly event and picnic at Beech Hill Farm in Hopkinton on Saturday, October 15 as part of the national Step Up for Kids Day. Children enjoyed corn mazes, crafts, a magic show, face painting and more, while parents and attendees listened to child advocates spoke about children's issues and programs in the state.

On Saturday, October 8th, Voices for **Virginia's** Children and the Fairfax County Reston YMCA teamed up to host a table at the 3rd annual Anthem Great Pumpkin 5k Run at the Reston Towne Center where over 2500 runners participated. Then, on October 27, the YMCA in Reston held a family-friendly Halloween event. Step Up for Kids materials were passed out and YMCA Volunteer Coordinator, Kimberly Gutzler, spoke about children's issues with the 300+ parents and kids that came out.

Around 100 people turned out in Casper for the annual Step Up for Kids Day event in **Wyoming**. Speakers addressing those in attendance included Mayor Paul Bertoglio, former state legislator Ann Robinson, Casper College's Gear Up program coordinator Chelsea DePaolo, University of Wyoming Social Work instructor Bethany Cutts, and teen coordinator for the Boys and Girls Club of Central Wyoming Julia McCarthy. Student musicians from the local high school performed. Several press stations reported on the event including the Casper Star-Tribune and Wyoming Public Radio.

