



October 2010

STEP UP FOR KIDS

IN REVIEW



This year marked the third annual **Step Up for Kids** event, a national advocacy effort organized by **Every Child Matters**. Child advocates across the states raised awareness among voters and political candidates regarding the issues American children face including early childcare, after-school programs, poverty, child abuse and neglect, and health care. Local events varied from rallies and family-friendly festivals, to candidate breakfasts and forums. With the support of eleven national co-sponsors — including NASW, Voices, NACCRRRA, and the PEW Charitable Trusts — tens of thousands of people came out in the 25 states that participated.



Step Up for Kids events took place in 25 states thanks to the help of ECM's national co-sponsors and volunteers. Here is a brief summary of some of these events:

Voices for **Alabama's** Children brought the Step Up campaign to Kid's Day at the Alabama State Fair, exposing almost 15,000 fair goers with information on kids' issues.

ECM in **Colorado** led a rally on the Capitol steps that garnered both national and state press; featured speakers included the president of the Colorado Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and a member of the local school board.

Coinciding with the last day of voter registration in the state, Voices for **Georgia's** Children brought together legislators, philanthropists, community leaders and more than 60 concerned citizens in a rally focusing on the high stakes for children in the 2010 statewide election.

Hawaii's NASW chapter incorporated the Step Up for Kids message and materials into their annual, statewide Children and Youth events that reach tens of thousands of Hawaiians every October.

Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI) of **Illinois** brought together more than 100 parents and grandparents to discuss state funding for low-income families in and around Chicago and to develop a letter-writing campaign to their state candidates.

The Children's Coalition of **Indiana**, made up of 26 agencies and associations across the state, created a candidate video that was used for advocacy training leading up to the election.

ECM in **Iowa** conducted electoral advocacy training seminars in five different cities around the state.

Kentucky Youth Advocates hosted a Step Up for Kids conference where a panel of state legislators answered questions regarding children's issues; the event was broadcast on a public radio show across the state.

The **Louisiana** Equal Voice Institute teamed up with the Afterschool Alliance in New Orleans to coincide the Step Up agenda with the Lights On After School campaign.



In **Minnesota**, approximately 1000 people turned out to the State Capitol where a youth-led march and rally put children and youth issues on the election agenda. All around the crowd, informational booths were set up containing fact sheets, visuals, and interactive displays pertaining to various issues affecting children.

ECM in **Nevada** hosted educational breakfasts in Las Vegas and Reno at which political candidates had the opportunity to listen to policy- and issue-focused presentations by local organizations and child advocacy groups.

ECM in **New Hampshire** hosted an advocacy training day, which featured speakers, workshops, and a simulated rally. Following the training was a Candidate Bus Tour where political candidates visited child care centers in Concord and Manchester.

Voices for **Ohio's** Children and MyCom hosted the "Get Out To Vote – Step Up For Kids Rally" on October 12. They invited families, children, and youth to learn more about the electoral advocacy process, issues regarding America's youth and voter rights and responsibility.

Girls Inc. of Greater Austin in **Texas** organized an event on the Capitol steps, urging elected officials and candidates to make kids a priority in the state and federal budgets. Approximately 100 parents, grandparents, and child advocates showed up to support the cause.

Voices for **Virginia's** Children participated for the third year in a row, educating and entertaining voters with a rally at the State Capitol Building in Richmond that garnered televised press around the state.