This November, Arizona voters will elect a governor, a superintendent of public instruction, all 90 state legislators, a U.S. senator and eight representatives in Congress. The leaders we elect will make hundreds of decisions that will touch the lives of children and families every day. Their votes will shape Arizona’s future. And it is up to each of us to make sure that the candidates we vote for will champion the priorities we want for children and families in our communities.

The November election will also include a number of ballot initiatives where voters can make policy directly, including the value of the minimum wage for Arizona workers and access to quality care, education, and help for young children and their parents.

Will hardworking Arizona families be able to find good child care they can afford? Will our children get the education they need to succeed in tomorrow’s jobs? How can we fill the holes in our health care system so that families have protection to deal with medical problems? How will we combat the growing crisis of methamphetamine addiction and other substance abuse that drives up crime rates and destroys families?

Your votes will create the answers to these questions. And there are many ways you can help make kids number one this election season:

- Volunteer to help other people register to vote or to help a candidate or an initiative you support.
- Talk to the candidates directly through campaign events, emails, websites, or phone calls.
- Write letters on the issues you care about to your local newspaper so the candidates know what you’re thinking. Visit azchildren.org and click on Press Room to send letters electronically to newspapers around the state.
- Visit the elections section of www.azchildren.org for more ideas and tools to make your vote count for kids.

MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT FOR KIDS

BE A PART OF THE POLITICAL ACTION FOR AZ KIDS!

FREE Clean Elections Candidate Forums sponsored by Children’s Action Alliance
District 1 (Prescott, Sedona, Verde Valley)

Primary Election Forum Wednesday, August 2
General Election Forum Wednesday, September 20
5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
Prescott City Council Chambers, 201 S. Cortez Street.

District 26 (Marana, Oro Valley, Tucson):
Primary Election Forum
Thursday, August 3
General Election Forum Thursday, October 4
Both are held 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.
at the Marana Town Hall
13251 N. Lon Adams Road

We welcome your support!
To make a donation to Children’s Action Alliance, call 602-266-0707 or donate on-line at www.azchildren.org
The battle over the state budget is over. At a time when there were sufficient dollars to climb out of “good enough” thinking, legislative leadership passed a budget and tax cut that threaten the human services and education infrastructure that are essential to Arizona’s future and to our economic growth.

The headlines read “everyone wins.” Since when is it “winning” when child care subsidies that go to help working parents afford decent child care continue to be six years out of date? Since when is it “winning” when low-income working parents who are covered through the KidsCare program have their premiums increased by as much as 120% percent despite the fact that most of the money collected will go back to the federal government?

And, most important, since when is it “winning” when vaccines for uninsured children and adults are underfunded so that some will have to go without protection against measles, mumps, tetanus, influenza, and other serious diseases?

And, most important, since when is it “winning” when an irresponsible tax package was passed that will force us right back where we were just a year ago with a $1 billion shortfall and crisis budget cuts in the next two to three years?

If you believe that our state is doing enough to help kids come to school ready to succeed and learn; if you believe that we are doing all we can to ensure that abused and neglected kids have a place to call home; if you believe that it’s okay for Arizona to create barriers for eligible kids and their working parents to receive health care; if you believe that our K-12 and public university systems should not leap ahead; and if you believe that tax cuts are the answer to Arizona’s future, then Arizona’s legislative leadership is moving in the right direction.

However, if you believe as I do, that this direction is jeopardizing the fulfillment of Arizona’s promise of a glorious future for its citizens, then we are seriously off course. If you believe that Arizona will never be great unless we confront and solve critical problems facing huge numbers of our kids and their families: affordable child care and health care, permanent and loving homes for abused and neglected children, a world-class K-12 and public university system, then you and I must work to change this direction.

It is time for us to reclaim the Arizona spirit of courage, honor and dedication to the well-being of all of its children. It is time for Arizona’s business leaders to join hands with community groups all across the state and create a coalition of unprecedented scope—a coalition that is prepared to grapple with what a great state needs and is prepared to fight for it.

This would be a coalition that believes there is much that unites us: a profound commitment to fairness; to not putting politics and ideology ahead of the interests of people; and to doing whatever it takes to ensure that Arizona’s children and youth are the smartest, healthiest and most creative in the nation.

Carol Kamin is President/CEO of Children’s Action Alliance.

P.S. As David Bodney writes in his “message from the chair” on page three, I will be moving to Boston the end of December 2006 and will be retiring as President/CEO of Children’s Action Alliance at that time. I look forward to sharing my final commentary in CAA’s January 2007 newsletter.
Mark Lodato

CAA Board member Mark Lodato has been a part of many major public events as a television journalist. He worked for KNXV-TV in the Valley in the mid 1990s, covering such high profile stories as the Oklahoma City bombing and the criminal fraud trial of Governor Fife Symington. He also served as a Washington correspondent and reporter/anchor in Washington, D.C., covering a variety of stories of national significance, including the Clinton impeachment and the 9/11 terrorist attack at the Pentagon. Recently, Mark worked as an investigative reporter with CBS 5 News in Phoenix.

Mark greatly enjoys teaching his profession to college students. At the Merrill Journalism School at the University of Maryland he supervised the award-winning student production of the school’s nightly newscast – broadcast to more than 400,000 homes in suburban Washington, D.C.

Mark is now turning his attention to academia again. He has accepted an appointment as Television News Director and Professor of Practice at ASU’s Cronkite School of Journalism. This fall he’ll lead the School’s effort to develop a nightly newscast staffed by students.

Mark’s communication talents are a wonderful asset for CAA. He is helping us to craft and deliver messages about the issues affecting kids with the power to get noticed and move people to action.

“I’m proud to serve on CAA’s Board,” Mark said. “With two small children of my own, it’s a perfect way for me to lend a hand with an issue I’m passionate about: securing a promising future for all of Arizona’s children.”
More than 200 friends enjoyed a double celebration last March: the 18th birthday of Children’s Action Alliance and the presentation of Ginger Ward with the 2006 Champion for Children Award. The Champion for Children is awarded annually to a human services professional who has reached beyond the boundary of his or her job to speak out for Arizona’s children and families.

Ginger Ward stands up for young kids and families in Arizona with an energetic passion that inspires action and progress. She founded Southwest Human Development in 1981, serving 175 families with a staff of six. Twenty-five years later, Southwest has grown to over 500 staff members serving 50,000 families and children throughout Maricopa County. Ginger’s leadership has earned the agency a national reputation for excellence in early childhood education, mental health, family support, disability services, and training.

Ginger is innovative and creative, finding ways of applying theory to practice within real budgets and competing priorities. Children’s Action Alliance is very proud to honor her for her unending commitment to form new partnerships, test new projects, and share new ideas to bring quality care and education to young children and their families.

Coalition Succeeds in Keeping TABOR Out of AZ

Children’s Action Alliance helped bring together a broad based coalition of business leaders, seniors, health care providers, police and firefighters, education leaders, and community organizations to fight against TABOR – the deceptively-named “taxpayer bill of rights.”

The coalition, called Arizonans Against a Bad Idea, spread the word far and wide about the dangers of the TABOR constitutional amendment that would tie lawmakers’ budget decisions to an arbitrary and inflexible formula. The coalition was chaired by Dan Schweiker, founder and co-chair of China Mist Tea Corporation. Schweiker describes TABOR as “a formula for failure that threatens the state economy and creates crises in health care, education, and public safety.”

Thanks to the information and opposition generated by many coalition partners – and the leadership of many state representatives and senators – several versions of TABOR legislation were soundly defeated in legislative votes this session.

Coalition members will continue to work together to fend off future attempts to bring this bad idea to Arizona.

For more information, visit www.azbadidea.com or call Karen McLaughlin at 602-266-0707.

Covering Arizona Kids

250,000 Arizona kids currently lack the health coverage they need to succeed in school and grow up healthy. That’s 3,500 school busloads of kids. More than half of them likely qualify for KidsCare or AHCCCS health coverage. Unfortunately, many parents may be unaware that free or low-cost health insurance is available to them.

Children’s Action Alliance and its community partners are working to connect more kids with health coverage. With the generous financial support of the Legacy Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, efforts are gearing up to reach parents through the media and community events and organizations. This will complement school-based outreach efforts that CAA has been engaged in over the past year, with the support of the Nina Pulliam Charitable Trust.

Our first efforts will center on enrolling more children in health coverage as they go back to school. To learn more about how you or your school or business can assist in this effort, visit our website at www.azchildren.org and click on the Covering Arizona Kids logo or call Kim Van Pelt at 602-266-0707.
My Voice, My Life, My Future

My Voice, My Life, My Future – Mi Voz, Mi Vida, Mi Futuro focuses on the need to engage foster youth in the processes and decisions that profoundly impact their lives.

With funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts’ Home at Last initiative, Children’s Action Alliance is working with Arizona state agency and community partners to increase awareness of the challenges facing our nation’s foster care system and to focus on improving court oversight of the abused and neglected children in foster care.

During the months of May and June, art works and essays expressing the many voices and perspectives of foster children were exhibited at the State Capitol thanks to our coordinating partners, Free Arts of Arizona and Young Arts Ltd. At the opening reception, the Arizona Foster and Adoptive Parent Association presented each member of the Arizona legislature and the Governor a doll with a true story of a child’s life in Arizona’s foster care system.

While outcomes for many youth in foster care are positive, the artworks also express experiences that are far from optimal. Children’s Action Alliance is exploring strategies to pursue the recommendations of the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care to give children a direct voice in dependency court as well as effective legal representation.

In July, Children’s Action Alliance and the Arizona Department of Economic Security are sponsoring the 2006 Arizona Young Adult Conference – My Voice, My Life, My Future: Youth Involvement in Dependency Court.

This extraordinary conference will bring together 100 youth in foster care to brainstorm ideas and identify policy recommendations to improve the Arizona court system. Children’s Action Alliance looks forward to working with the Arizona courts to make sure foster youth voices will be heard.

For more information, please contact Beth Rosenberg at 602-266-0707 or brosenberg@azchildren.org.

Kids Count Report Shows Improvement for Arizona Kids

The 17th Annual KIDS COUNT Data Book, an annual state-by-state ranking of child well-being produced by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in Baltimore, ranks Arizona 37 among the 50 states – up from 41 last year. The KIDS COUNT study compares states on ten critical indicators of well-being. This is the first time in twelve years that Arizona does not rank among the bottom ten states.

Arizona made the most progress in the percent of children living in poverty. This improvement likely results from the state’s faster economic recovery from the recession than the nation as a whole.

“Arizona’s improved ranking reflects the benefit to families of a strong economy and job growth,” said Carol Kamin. “It’s wonderful to see that this economic growth pulled Arizona out of the bottom ten states. Now it’s up to us to build on this progress and help improve other conditions for Arizona kids.”

Despite improvement in 7 out of 10 indicators since 2000, Arizona kids have better conditions than the national average in only two indicators – the infant mortality rate and rate of low birth-weight babies.

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### ARIZONA RANKINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Rank</th>
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<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low birth-weight babies</td>
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<td>Teen death rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teen birth rate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rate of high school dropouts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children living w/unemployed parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children living in poverty</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent families</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Donors

The work of Children's Action Alliance is made possible through the support of hundreds of individuals, organizations, businesses and foundations. We gratefully acknowledge your contribution toward sustaining and strengthening the voice for Arizona's children. Listed below are those who have contributed $50 or more during 2012. Without you, there would be no voice.

Major Grants $50,000+

- Anne E. Casey Foundation
- Arizona Community Foundation
- Center on Budget & Policy Priorities
- Ford Foundation
- St. Luke’s Health Initiatives
- The Nina Mason Pulliam Trust
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Major Donors & Grants $10,000-$49,999

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- JW Keckhefer Foundation
- Margaret T. Morris Foundation
- Melody S. Robidoux Foundation
- Pew Charitable Trusts
- Salt River Project
- Stardust Foundation, Inc.
- The Arizona Republic/12 News Season for Sharing
- The Wallace Foundation

Champions for Children $1,000-$9,999

- Arizona Hospital & Healthcare Association
- Arizona Partnership for Children
- Arizona State University
- Bashara’s Charitable Fund
- Ronnie Bendheim
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EITC OUTREACH EFFORTS PAY OFF

Each year, thousands of working families in Arizona miss out on income tax refunds because they don’t apply for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) on their federal income tax returns. The EITC Task Force of Southern Arizona is working to change that. This year partners from the social services, faith, and business communities came together to run Volunteer Taxpayer Assistance sites that provide low and middle income people with free tax preparation assistance and filing. CAA is a leader in this outreach, training more than 250 people this year to help their clients receive tax credits.

The numbers tell the story of success: This year, southern Arizona taxpayers’ assistance sites helped families obtain EITC refunds totaling more than $2 million – a 60% increase over last year. In addition, this community effort saved families an estimated $1 million in tax preparations fees.

Congratulations to all the community leaders and volunteers!

For more information contact Penelope Jacks at 520-795-4199 or penelopejacks@alumni.grinnell.edu.

WILL ARIZONA KIDS BE BETTER OFF?

2006 Legislative Wrap-up.

Despite the fact that Arizona’s tax collections grew much more than projected and there was no budget deficit for the first time in several years, the session was just as angry and divided as ever. What happened for kids and families?

Confronting substance abuse – Lawmakers added $8 million to help fight addiction to methamphetamine and other drugs through a combination of prevention, treatment, and interdiction.

Limiting access to health care – Legislative leaders wanted to abolish health coverage for 14,000 working parents. As a compromise, the budget increases premiums for this coverage up to 120% which will push some parents out of coverage.

Catching up on child care – The state budget adds $400,000 to hire more inspectors so that licensed child care centers get the health and safety inspections required by law. The budget also increases the voucher amount for parents qualified to get help paying for child care. With this increase, the vouchers will only be six years out of date – instead of eight.

Protecting children from abuse and neglect – Thanks to leadership from Governor Napolitano, the budget adds $14 million for child protective services to keep up with the growing number of children needing help and to keep children safe in their own homes rather than foster care. Lawmakers narrowly defeated two bills that would have made it harder for foster children to be adopted and harder for CPS to move children out of dangerous homes (HB 2696 and SB 1430).

Strengthening K-12 Education – Governor Napolitano led the way to offer full-day Kindergarten statewide in the next two years and to increase teacher pay and benefits.

Creating future deficits – House Speaker Jim Weiers and Senate President Ken Bennett insisted on $535 million in tax cuts annually – including a permanent income tax cut of $335 million. What will legislators cut from the budget in a few years when the tax cuts collide with Arizona’s growing population and dig us back into the $1 billion deficit hole we just climbed out of? The future funding for today’s investments is already at risk.

For more information contact Dana Naimark at 602-266-0707 or dnaimark@azchildren.org.

FIRST THINGS FIRST HEADS TO BALLOT

Children’s Action Alliance proudly supports the First Things First ballot initiative to invest $150 million in tobacco tax dollars in young children and their families every year. Local councils who know the needs of children in their communities will distribute the funding for efforts such as high quality child care, health screenings, and training and certification for child care providers. You can be part of the First Things First initiative, along with organizations throughout the state such as East Valley Partnership, Chicanos Por la Causa, the Arizona Academy of Pediatrics, and United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona. With this initiative, Arizona voters can turn aspirations into action for quality early learning and care.

For information on how you can help, visit www.FirstThingsFirstAZ.com or call 602-266-5118.
Publications Available From Children’s Action Alliance

**NEW!** KidsCare Fees:  Cracks in the Arizona Health Care System – briefing paper describing how higher fees for KidsCare weaken Arizona’s health care system and leave children uninsured.

**NEW!** Real People, Real Stories – tells the true stories of Arizona families who got trapped into spiraling debt from the sky high fees of payday loans.

**NEW!** Who’s for Kids and Who’s Just Kidding – brochure with key facts about kids and families and questions to ask candidates running for office.

**UPDATED!** Healthcare Programs for Arizona’s Uninsured – resource manual with easy-to-use index to low-cost health insurance and health services available to adults and children.

**UPDATED!** KIDS COUNT 2006 Data Book – ranks Arizona compared to other states on ten indicators of conditions for children.

Compensation and Credentials:  A Survey of Arizona’s Early Education Workforce – describes the wages, benefits, and education levels of early childhood teachers and makes recommendations to strengthen the workforce and the education of young children.

Transitions: Building Better Lives for Youth Leaving Foster Care – examines the dramatic challenges facing abused and neglected youth on their own at age 18 and recommends action steps to give them a solid transition to adulthood.

For a complete list of publications or to order a publication, please visit our website at www.azchildren.org, or call us at 602-266-0707

Mark Your Calendar
for Through the Eyes of a Child annual gala Saturday, October 7.

Look for information soon about the 2006 Candidate Forum on Children’s Issues.

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