

# mobilizing matters



## MOBILIZING MATTERS FOR BRIDGEPORT'S CHILDREN.

**Why? More than one out of four Bridgeport children lives in poverty.**

**Children in poverty are more likely to suffer poor health, receive inadequate preventive care, experience poor housing and nutrition, and face exposure to environmental hazards.**

Mobilizing matters - That's why BCAC has over 80 member organizations and 350 volunteers.

Today, even more than at its founding, the children of Bridgeport need the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition's voice. BCAC continues to speak and advocate for our youngest citizens. And what a powerful voice it is!

Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition is the leader in mobilizing our community and surrounding suburban supporters to become advocates on critical children's needs. For more than 20 years, BCAC has been effective in bringing people together and **achieving results!** We do this with your support. Without you, we would not be able to mobilize for change.

We are so glad you are with us – you recognize that ***mobilizing matters!***

Yours truly,

*Edith B. Cassidy*  
Edith Cassidy, Board Chair

*Marilyn Ondrasik*  
Marilyn Ondrasik, Executive Director



## ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

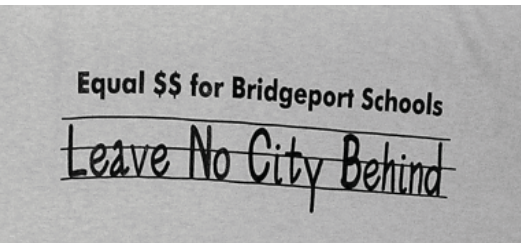
- Bridgeport's children of teen moms receive improved quality child care at high schools where their moms are staying in school and graduating.
- Bridgeport's schools are granted an additional \$10.2 million from the state.
- The supply of affordable housing for very low income families has increased.
- Social service providers and civic volunteers have connected to women coming out of prison to ease their way back into the community.
- The annual *State of the Child in Bridgeport* report is widely praised by business leaders, child advocates, and elected officials at the local and state level.

# mobilizing matters to our Task Forces

BCAC works through six different Task Forces to advocate for the needs of children. Each Task Force is a collaborative of parents, community leaders, clergy, service providers, and government representatives. More than 350 people mobilize through BCAC Task Forces each year.



The **Early Childhood Task Force** mobilized to improve the quality of child care offered at Bridgeport's two high schools. Members raised \$4000 to purchase educational toys and worked with the school district to implement best practices for school-based childcare. The Task Force also organized four highly successful trainings for over 100 service providers on how to work with parents with cognitive limitations. We are proud that Bridgeport has received state recognition for its extensive training of providers to ensure better services for this difficult, high-risk population.



Our **Education Task Force** mobilized around its **Leave No City Behind Campaign** for equitable state education funding for Bridgeport schools. Members led a rally of 200 parents and students in Hartford and marched through the Legislative Office Building in green shirts reading, "Equal \$\$ for Bridgeport Schools, Leave No City Behind." Members engaged in weekly activities throughout the legislative session. Their efforts paid off with \$10.2 million in new state education funding for Bridgeport.



The **Health Task Force** mobilized over 600 parents and community residents to advocate for expanded access to health care. Members organized the largest public Forum for Gubernatorial Candidates in the state. The Task Force collected and sent 450+ postcards to key legislative leaders urging support for expanded health care and mobilized more than 150 Bridgeport parents to attend the statewide rally. The Task Force also organized training on early childhood nutrition for home day care providers to combat childhood obesity.



The **Public Policy Task Force** successfully mobilized to advocate for changes by the Bridgeport Housing Authority that increased the supply of affordable housing for very low income families by reducing vacant units and waiting times. Members mobilized repeatedly to urge City officials to support more affordable housing. This busy Task Force also issued a follow-up report on Bridgeport's affordable housing crisis, "City Response to Bridgeport's Affordable Housing Crisis: Housing ... But for Whom?"

Additionally, the Task Force organized Children's Issues Forums that brought together hundreds of concerned citizens to meet with nine regional legislators to discuss critical children's issues.

## Mobilizing Matters at Events and in the Media

The **Substance-Abusing Women and Their Children Task Force** organized Bridgeport Day at York Women's Prison to connect women coming out of the corrections system to community services. Members brought 15 Bridgeport social service providers to the prison to meet with 50 women prior to their release, worked with the Junior League of Eastern Fairfield County to prepare 50 "welcome home" bags of personal care items, and printed and distributed 1000 resource booklets on services for women in Bridgeport.

The **Violence Prevention Task Force** mobilized to work with the school district to focus on bullying. The Task Force monitored implementation of the district's School Safety Plan that incorporated many past Task Force recommendations. Members monitored preliminary outcomes of the Academies established during non-school hours for students with behavior problems. BCAC also worked with the Bridgeport After-School Network to develop discounted group purchasing for bus transportation.

### Mobilizing Matters to Those Who Supports Us

BCAC is supported by our member organizations, contributors, and private foundations. In a recent survey, funders said they highly value BCAC's research and community mobilization. BCAC's funders believe that our mobilization sets BCAC apart.

**The stakes are high for Bridgeport's children.**

**That's why mobilizing matters.**

We welcomed Juan Figueroa, President, Universal Health Care Foundation of Connecticut, at our Annual Breakfast Conference, Access to Health Care: Can You Afford to be Sick? We mobilized the 350 participants to send postcards to legislative leaders urging support for universal health care. The Breakfast, held in partnership with Casey Family Services, was sponsored by AT&T, Bank of New York/Putnam Trust Division, Bridgeport Hospital Foundation, The Community's Bank, Community Health Network of Connecticut, GE, Greater Bridgeport Area Foundation, O & G Industries, People's United Bank, Santa Energy, Southern Connecticut Gas, WellCare, and Graustein Memorial Fund.

We mobilized 150 parents to participate in a statewide rally on health care in Hartford and received media coverage from *WDJZ*, *WSHU*, and *WICC*. Laidlaw Bus Company and Optimus Health Care donated the buses and Messiah Baptist Church volunteers prepared lunches for all 150 people.

That's how much mobilizing matters!

BCAC partnered with other organizations to bring out more than 300 participants for the Bridgeport Gubernatorial Candidates Forum. Media coverage by the *Connecticut Post*, *WICC* and *WDJZ* helped raise awareness among voters on critical children's health, education, and after-school issues.

The Rays of Light campaign to showcase luminaries in Bridgeport and surrounding communities during the holiday season is a mini-mobilization – we spread the word about who we are and why mobilizing for children matters. Over 400 luminaries were lit across our city and region.

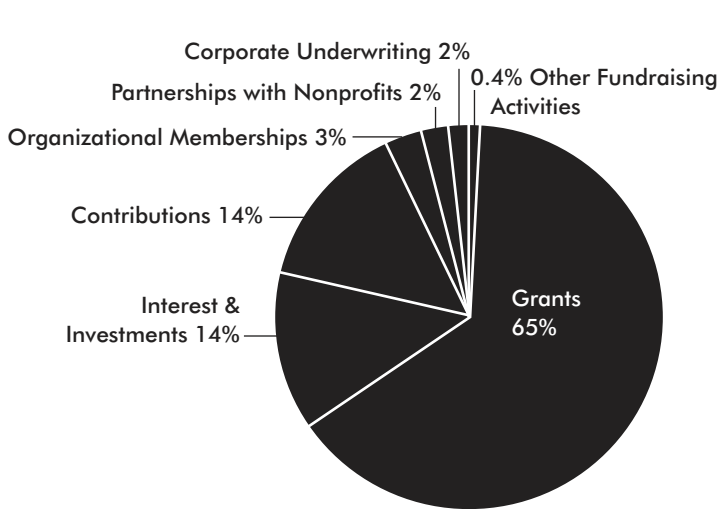
The Public Policy Task Force organized our Bridgeport and Fairfield Children's Issues Forums with over 230 participants. Eleven of fourteen state legislators participated and supported our legislative priorities. Media coverage came from the *Bridgeport News*, *WDJZ*, and *Fairfield Minuteman*.

The State of the Child in Bridgeport report received coverage in the *Connecticut Post*, *Bridgeport News*, and *WICC*, alerting citizens to critical children's issues. This benchmark study is credited with raising awareness of children's issues in Bridgeport, across Connecticut, and in our state capitol.

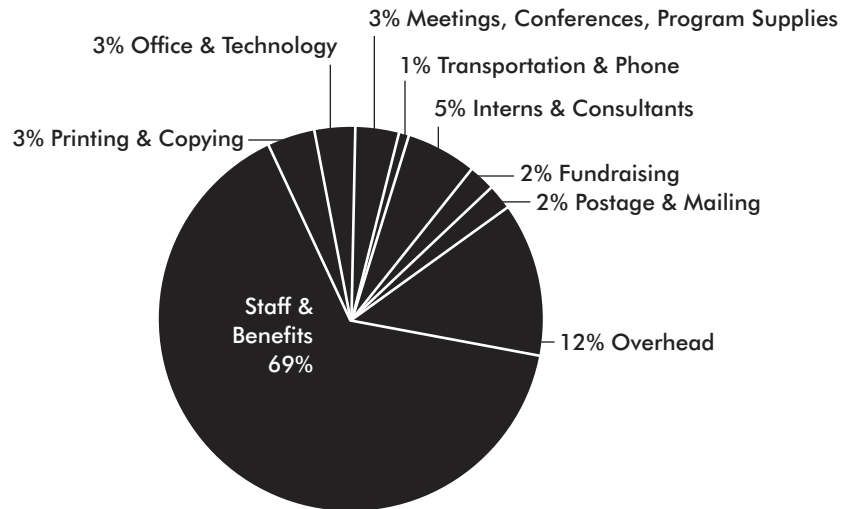
Bringing change in policies, actions, and attitudes is not a short-term activity. Many of our achievements have been years in the making!

# BCAC BUDGET 2006-07

\$714,671



**INCOME**



**EXPENSES**

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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.