

A photograph of two young children, likely toddlers, sitting on a blue and green play mat. The child on the left is wearing a blue and white striped shirt and is looking towards the other child. The child on the right is wearing a white tank top with small colorful patterns and is leaning forward, looking down at something in their hands. The background is slightly blurred, showing a white plastic storage bin.

Voices for Illinois Children

**BE A VOICE
FOR ILLINOIS CHILDREN**

2002 Annual Report

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND BOARD CHAIR

A preschooler can't ask for health insurance coverage.

A child living in poverty can't advance better state tax policy.

A high school student can't enact school funding reform.

That's why there's Voices for Illinois Children.

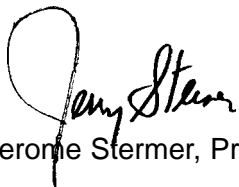
Our state's strengths and weaknesses are nowhere more evident than in the lives of its children and families. Illinois has more than 3 million children and while they have seen their quality of life improve in recent years, society must enable parents to do their job well. This requires making children a priority and making smart investments of public and private resources.

The process of creating and implementing public policy in Illinois is complex. Children's needs are often overlooked. They need someone who will be their voice in homes, in businesses, in communities and in the halls of state government.

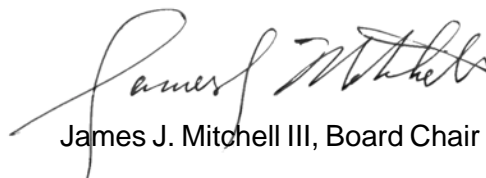
Voices for Illinois Children is a statewide group of caring and concerned men and women who believe Illinois can and must do better in meeting the needs of all children. We educate, engage and inspire people to take meaningful action towards improving the lives of children and their families. By examining conditions facing children, proposing thoughtful solutions, educating key groups and individuals and rallying public support, we are a catalyst for far-reaching, positive change.

The implementation of our new strategic plan will lead Voices for Illinois Children to the next stage in its evolution as a powerful force that works to improve the lives of all Illinois children and their families.

As you will see on the following pages, we are making a difference. Your continued support – as well as your dedication as child advocates – has made this possible. Thank you for being a voice for Illinois children.



Jerome Stermer, President



James J. Mitchell III, Board Chair



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VOICES IN ACTION

Voices for Illinois Children is a uniquely effective child advocacy organization because it is making a big and direct impact on children's lives. In 2002, we:

- Helped preserve critical children and family programs from harmful state budget cuts.
- Launched a new public awareness campaign on the importance of early education.
- Brought together voters and candidates for state office to discuss children's issues in a dozen communities across Illinois.
- Gave hundreds of people the skills and resources to allow them to be successful child advocates.
- Created a strategic plan that will build upon our strengths and create a truly statewide organization that has significant influence in Illinois.

Preserving Programs

After a contentious legislative session, the fiscal year 2003 state budget preserved funding for early childhood education and many other children's programs while filling a \$2 billion shortfall. Voices for Illinois Children worked hard to encourage lawmakers to enact some new revenues instead of making deep cuts to crucial programs.



Voices was a leader in the **Emergency Campaign for a Fair Budget**, a coalition of over 200 groups across Illinois that oppose reductions in state funding for critical education, health care, human services and public safety programs and support reasonable alternatives that will provide adequate revenue to fully fund needed services. The campaign held news conferences around the state in the spring and fall to oppose budget cuts and to release two special reports by Voices that detailed the human cost of state budget cuts.

Voices aired two radio ads in the spring opposing proposed cuts in spending for child care. The ads targeted major media markets: Chicago, Champaign, Peoria, the Quad Cities, Rockford and Springfield. Lawmakers ultimately spared low-income parents from an increase in the co-pay fees they pay for subsidized child care.

In 2002, Voices also was a leader in the **Children's Mental Health Task Force** and served as co-chair. This effort aims to create a comprehensive, strategic plan for addressing the mental health needs for children from birth through 18.

Increasing Awareness

Voices' longtime public awareness activities on the importance of early childhood education took a new direction in 2002 with the launch of the "**Early Learning Illinois: Access. Options. Opportunities**" campaign. Voices teamed up with the Day Care Action Council of Illinois and Ounce of Prevention Fund to make the improvement and expansion of early learning services for all children, starting at birth, a top priority for Illinois policymakers.

The campaign believes that all Illinois children should be healthy, eager to learn and ready to succeed by the time they enter school. Activities included:

- A voter-registration drive that signed up thousands of new voters who care about children's early learning needs.
- The creation and distribution of hundreds of videocassettes of a new short film on the need for quality early education in Illinois.
- More than 60 community meetings around the state.
- Working with organizations and networks throughout Illinois to encourage voter to send 15,000 postcards in support of early learning to the gubernatorial candidates.

Discussing Issues

The governor and all seats in the Legislature were up for election in 2002, making it a big year for electoral advocacy. Voices continued its tradition of hosting a gubernatorial candidate's forum on children's issues by drawing more than 200 people to Chicago's National-Louis University in October to hear from Republican candidate for governor Jim Ryan and Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor Pat Quinn. The packed crowd asked questions about early education, state funding priorities, support for working families and other topics.

Dialogues between residents and candidates for the Illinois Legislature took place in 11 other communities leading up to the November election: Champaign, Carterville, Chicago's Pilsen and Englewood neighborhoods, DuPage County, Freeport, Harvey, Lake County, Quincy, Rockford and Springfield. Voices also hosted three informational sessions on children's policy issues for legislative candidates prior to the March primary election, a new event.

Enabling Advocates

Voices increased the number, diversity and strength of the many people speaking out on behalf of children in 2002 by providing hundreds of people with the skills, resources and inspiration to take action.



Voices Web site is at www.voices4kids.org.

The annual Springfield and Chicago *Start Early: Learning Begins at Birth* conferences provided early childhood providers, educators, home visitors, health officials and others up-to-date information on policy issues affecting children and the simple steps they can take to speak out. Advocacy trainings by the *Start Early* team took place throughout the state.

Voices also launched a new feature on its Web site that allows people to send an email message directly to their lawmaker or the governor, using talking points suggested by Voices or creating their own. This feature – in conjunction with the regular Action Alerts – allowed hundreds of people to speak out on policy proposals and budget cuts that would affect children.

Thinking Strategically

Voices focused its future direction with the creation and adoption of a far-reaching strategic plan. The plan builds on four characteristics that distinguish Voices from other advocacy organizations:

- Voices for Illinois Children is a statewide, non-partisan, privately funded organization that advocates for a broad agenda of child and family well-being.
- Voices for Illinois Children has a proven core process that effectively mobilizes statewide support for legislative and administrative initiatives. This process links research and policy development; network development and coalition building; training; and communicating in an atmosphere of collaboration.
- Voices for Illinois Children has a statewide Board of Directors comprised of civic and community leaders who have a broad perspective on the needs of children and who shepherd Voices' agenda.
- Voices for Illinois Children has a successful track record of producing high-quality, effective, strategic messages and communications campaigns. In collaborative projects, Voices often is the leader in communications efforts.

In the coming year, the strategic goals will build on Voices' successful core advocacy processes, increase the number, diversity and strength of the voices speaking out on behalf of children and ultimately allow Voices to make a bigger impact on the well-being of Illinois children and their families. We are, of course, only limited in what we can accomplish by the amount of human and financial resources we can gather each year in support of our efforts. The following list of foundation and corporate donors were joined by hundreds of individual donors who contributed generously in 2002.

Foundation & Corporate Support

Voices for Illinois Children is a tax-exempt corporation under Internal Revenue Service code section 501(c)(3) and is not classified as a private foundation.

We wish to acknowledge the following foundations and corporations for their generosity in 2002. (Individuals are recognized in our *Voices* newsletter).

FOUNDATIONS

Albert J. Speh, Jr. and Claire R. Speh Foundation
Alphawood Foundation
Arie & Ida Crown Memorial
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
Donald Learner Family Foundation
Education Trust, Inc. (Pew Charitable Trusts)
Ford Foundation
Francis Beidler Charitable Trust
Kenneth and Harle Montgomery Foundation
Lloyd A. Fry Foundation
Prince Charitable Trusts
Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation
The Annie E. Casey Foundation
The Chicago Community Trust
The Harris Foundation
Steans Family Foundation
W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation

CORPORATIONS

Advocate Health Care
Alphagraphics
American Family Insurance
Aon Corporation
Ariel Capital Management
Attorneys' Title Guaranty Fund, Inc.
AT&T
Bank of America Illinois
BCS Financial Corporation
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Nicor Inc.
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Winston & Strawn
WLS-TV ABC7

The above list does not include corporations who made in-kind contributions toward our special events. If you are not listed and believe you should be or are listed incorrectly, please accept our apologies and send a note of correction to our Development Department. Corrections will appear in subsequent publications.

Contributions to Voices for Illinois Children may be made in cash or in the form of securities, real estate or other property. Donors may restrict gifts to specific programs or to our General Endowment Fund, or may make contributions for general purposes.

For those wishing to help us meet our future needs, bequests of money, securities or property are tax-deductible under federal estate laws. For further information on ways to support our work or to receive a copy of the complete financial statement, please contact:

Jim Perry
Director of Development
Voices for Illinois Children
208 S. LaSalle Street - Suite 1490 - Chicago, IL 60604-1103
312.516.5552 or by email at jperry@voices4kids.org

Financial Statements

Statement of Support, Revenue, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance for the year ending December 31, 2002.

Support and Revenue

2002

Contributions:	
Foundations	1,452,688
Corporations	54,676
Other Grants	466,645
Individuals	70,792
Directors	9,223
Special Events	220,326
Other Revenue:	
Interest and Investment Income	15,159
Miscellaneous	14,706

Total Contributed Support and Revenue

2,304,215

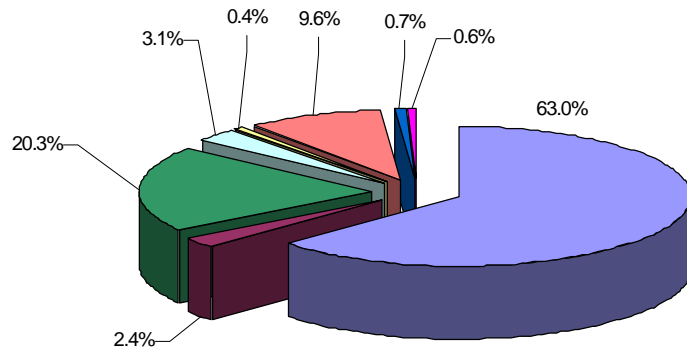
Expenses

General and Administrative	140,883
Fund Raising	267,596
Program Services	1,924,615
Total Expenses	2,333,094
NET EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF INCOME OVER EXPENSES (28,879)	

Support and Revenue

2002 Income

Foundations	63.0%
Corporations	2.4%
Other Grants	20.3%
Individuals	3.1%
Directors	0.4%
Special Events	9.6%
Interest and Investment Income	0.7%
Miscellaneous	0.6%



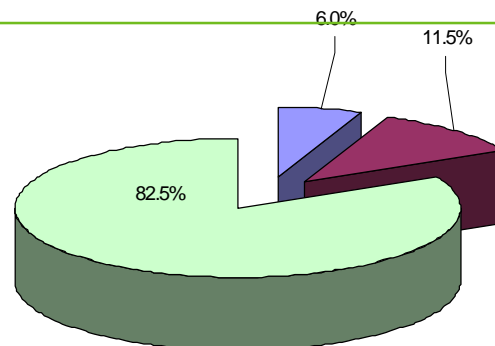
Total 100.0%

Expenses

2002 Expenses

General and Administrative	6.0%
Fund Raising	11.5%
Program Services	82.5%

Total 100.0%



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