

MASSACHUSETTS ADVOCATES for CHILDREN



Issue #7 • Summer 2007

Changing conditions for many . . . Helping one at a time.

MAC's Mission

MAC's mission is to be an independent and effective voice for children who face significant barriers to equal educational and life opportunities. MAC works to overcome these barriers by changing conditions for many children, while also helping one child at a time. For over 30 years, MAC has responded to the needs of children who are vulnerable because of race, poverty, disability or limited English.

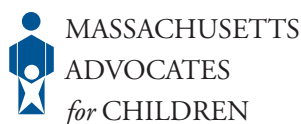


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"We do not merely have a social responsibility to assure that our children and youth have decent life chances and prosper. We have a sacred obligation to do so."

—Hubie Jones, MAC Founder

Helping Non-English-Speaking and Low-Income Families of Children with Autism

While the diagnosis of autism in a child knows no class, race or ethnic distinction, the prognosis unfortunately does. As emotionally and financially draining it can be for a family with access to good schools, quality health care, and legal counsel, it can be that much more difficult for a low-income family that may face language and cultural barriers as well.

According to **Ann Guay**, a parent of a child with autism and a volunteer attorney at MAC, "If it is hard for well-educated, upper middle-class parents to navigate the system, imagine what it must be like for a single mom or a family where English is a second language. Last year I got a call from a mom in Lawrence who has a child with autism. She had gotten my name from someone and called for advice. At the end of our conversation, she told me I was lucky to live in a town where the laws are so good. I tried to explain that the laws in Lawrence were the same as Bedford. It was as if we lived in different countries."

Help support children with autism while you shop at Whole Foods Market. See back page for details.

Ann is a member of the staff team of the MAC's Autism Special Education Legal Support Center, along with **Leslie Hughes, Johanne Pino, Beth Simon, Alexandra Peredo-Carrión, and Julia Landau**, its director. The Autism Center has made a commitment to reach parents in communities that are underserved because of language and cultural barriers through individual and systemic advocacy. The Center is focusing its outreach and representation in two such communities: the Haitian community in the Boston area and the Latino community in Lawrence.

The mother from Lawrence who called Ann for advice is a step ahead of many of her peers who might not reach out because they don't speak English, they feel a sense of shame due to the stigma in their culture about hidden disabilities such as autism, or they are afraid to stand up for their rights if their native country was politically repressive. As a result of being so isolated, their children will be less likely to get the level of services required as soon as a diagnosis is made (which in itself is frequently delayed for children

without good access to health care). Research has shown that providing intensive, coordinated services at the early stages of development for a child with autism increases the likelihood of improved outcomes and substantial progress in areas of social skills, language acquisition, nonverbal communication, and reductions in challenging behavior.

In Boston, MAC's Center is partnering with the Haitian American Public Health Initiative (HA-PHI) to reach parents of children with autism. We have been providing group and individual support, including training, legal advice, and legal representation. MAC recently designed culturally and linguistically-appropriate training sessions, and these have been well attended and enthusiastically received, as parents have learned about the evaluation process, obtaining independent evaluations, communication, augmentative alternative communication, and development of IEPs.

In Lawrence, the Center has been teaming with the ARC of Greater Lawrence which runs a support group for Latino families of children with autism. Over time, we have conducted trainings, provided legal representation, and identified systemic non-compliance issues in the Lawrence Public Schools. We worked closely with the parents to develop a survey for Spanish-speaking parents throughout the school district whose children have autism. We then provided the results to the Massachusetts Department of Education which is in the process of monitoring the Lawrence school system for compliance with special education law.

These families, as well as other low income families across the state, may be eligible for the new Children's Autism Medicaid Waiver, which will initially provide 80 eligible children with autism \$25,000 worth of intensive in-home behavioral and other services necessary to support them in their home and community. MAC provided key leadership necessary to enact the legislation which led to this new waiver program, and we

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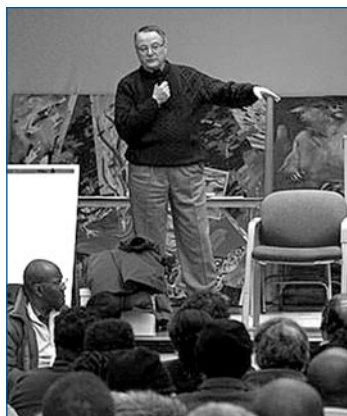
Strong Voice for Community in Search for a New Boston Superintendent

Three days after **Manuel Rivera** stunned the city of Boston by precipitously abandoning his appointment as the new school superintendent, over 300 parents, students, residents, activists and others packed the Freedom House auditorium in Roxbury on a cold Saturday morning in January to attend a community forum on the Achievement Gaps, organized by a broad-based community coalition, including MAC's Boston School Reform project. **Mayor Menino** had to elbow his way through to address the crowd and certainly took note of the tremendous interest by community members in improving schools in Boston in order to close the achievement gaps affecting children of color, children with disabilities and English language learners.

Shortly thereafter, Community Partners for a New Superintendent (which MAC helped to organize in 2005 and presently serves in a staff role) developed a list of recommendations for the new search process and presented them to the mayor. He was receptive to the suggestions and appointed three individuals recommended by Community Partners to the seven-person search committee, including **Rev. Dr. Gregory A. Groover**, chair of Community Partners, as the search committee's co-chair. While the search process was proceeding, Community Partners decided to take responsibility for following through on a number of the recommendations in the following issue areas from the report of the **Hubie Jones**-chaired Citizen Commission on Academic Success for Boston Children: family and community engagement, literacy and math (for schools in need of improvement), BPS leadership and organizational structure, and human resources (i.e., recruitment, hiring, retention, development and assessment of teachers and administrators).

When **Dr. Carol Johnson** came to Boston in June for the announcement of her selection as the new superintendent, the very first group that she met with immediately following the press conference was Community Partners. MAC will continue to work with Community Partners to form an advocacy relationship with Dr. Johnson that can help her as she takes on the institutional challenges needed to bring educational success to the many children in Boston who are still being left behind.

On Tuesday, September 25, 2007, at 7:30 pm, at the Trinity Church in Copley Square, incoming Boston Public Schools Superintendent, **Dr. Carol Johnson**, will be welcomed by the Boston Children's Chorus, in collaboration with Trinity Boston Foundation, Boston Symphony Orchestra and City Year Boston, for *An Evening of Inspiration, Commitment and Community: Raising our Voices in Song*. This citywide event is free and open to the public. For further information, visit www.bostonchildrenschorus.org



Left: Superintendent Michael Contompasis addressing the audience at Freedom House on the Achievement Gap reduction strategy planned by BPS.

Right: Theresa Perry, professor at Simmons College and member of Community Partners for a New Superintendent, addresses the mayor at the Achievement Gap forum at Freedom House.



Alberto Peña

More Advocacy Successes in the Boston Schools

Over the course of the past year, the Boston School Reform project and its many allies worked hard to make administrative changes in BPS in the areas of family and community engagement, English-language learners, and human resources. Among the successful outcomes were the following:

- 14 more school-based Family and Community Outreach Coordinators have been funded by BPS, bringing the total number of positions to 31 in the coming school year.
- BPS agreed to and then published a multi-lingual brochure for parents on English Language Learner programs.
- The superintendent's office made a commitment and funding available to provide training for School-Site Councils and for school-based Personnel Sub-committees.
- BPS added the "recruitment and timely hiring of teachers" as one of BPS's "Essentials for Whole School Improvement" for which school principals will be held accountable.
- A community representative was appointed to the screening committee for the position of Director of the Office of English Language Learning and Support Services.

The project was also involved in advocacy to strengthen community involvement in school reform matters, by helping to secure a Carnegie Foundation grant of \$175,000 to support Freedom House to engage Black parents and students in BPS's High School Renewal initiative. In addition, Boston School Reform has committed to take what it has learned from its work in the Latino community and expand leadership development activities in the Haitian community to broaden the base of community leaders engaged in school reform efforts.

Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative Advances Cause

The Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative continues to gather momentum to achieve its policy ends. This past year saw a number of activities that demonstrated the strength and appeal of this cutting-edge initiative to ensure that children traumatized by family and other forms of violence succeed in school.

TLPI held a legislative briefing, *Building Trauma-Sensitive Schools: Meeting the Educational Needs of Children Affected by Violence*, on March 19, 2007. Co-sponsored by the chairs of the Education Committee, **Representative Patricia Haddad** and **Senator Robert Antonioni**, and by **Representative Alice Wolf**, the event drew approximately 300 legislators, educators, trauma experts and other stakeholders to the State House. After a stimulating keynote address by national trauma expert **Dr. Glenn Saxe**, representatives from two of the 23 grantee schools funded by the Department of Education's Safe and Supportive Learning Environment's grant program (which MAC advocated for in 2004) spoke at the conference about the trauma-sensitive environments they have created within their schools.

Principal **Brett Bishop** from the East Street School in Ludlow, a first year grantee, shared with the audience the steps he has taken to lead his school in addressing emotional barriers to help students achieve academic success. He described how he has adapted the framework set out in what he dubbed the "purple book" (*Helping Traumatized Children Learn*). Teacher **Laura Goldman** from Framingham spoke of her 5th grade class, which achieved the "most improved math scores" in the district, a success she directly relates to her trauma-sensitive approach to teaching. Representatives from the 23 school districts that are pioneering the work of creating trauma-sensitive environments for their students were honored with citations from their legislators. The event was a catalyst for the project's legislative advocacy campaign to support funding for the Safe and Supportive Learning Environments grant program during the current budget season. Articles appeared in over 12 newspapers across the state. The governor, the house and the senate have proposed that funding continue for this work which will result in the addition of several new schools receiving grants during FY08.



Sen. Robert Antonioni (Leominster), Co-Chair of the Education Committee, addresses the audience at TLPI's legislative briefing, with Rep. Patricia Haddad (Somerset), Co-Chair of the Education Committee (behind him) and Rep. Alice Wolf (Cambridge), Vice Chair of the Committee on Public Health (to his right).



Rep. Thomas Petrolati (Ludlow), Speaker Pro-Tempore, presents a citation to educators from the East Street Elementary School in Ludlow, MA. (From left to right: Chris Cassela, 1st grade teacher; Rep. Petrolati; Brett Bishop, Principal; Carolyn Romano, Compass Consulting)

TLPI's groundbreaking publication, *Helping Traumatized Children Learn (HTCL)*, continues to be the catalyst for statewide and national interest in this work. To date, TLPI has disseminated approximately 14,500 copies of *HTCL*, which has just gone into its fourth printing. Links to *HTCL* also appear on 27 websites. Many school systems are ordering the books in bulk quantity. Schools in the South Shore Educational Collaborative have distributed 2,000 books to educators in Quincy, Randolph, Weymouth, and Hull in addition to educators in the Collaborative programs. Some schools have gone beyond trainings and formed study groups using *HTCL* and other material in order to develop their own school-wide plan to create a trauma-sensitive environment for their students.

It is exciting that some of the grantee schools have begun to develop their own identity within their communities as leaders in the work of addressing the educational needs of children affected by trauma. For example, the grantee school in Fitchburg has been invited to join a community-wide effort to apply for a \$4 million dollar grant to establish a Trauma Center in central Massachusetts to make services more accessible for families living there.

TLPI continues to garner national attention, receiving invitations to make presentations at conferences that draw educators and policy makers from across the country. The project's director presented a mini-plenary session titled "Obtaining Services for Traumatized Children" at the American Bar Association's 12th National Conference on Children and the Law and a full plenary session at the Harvard Graduate School of Education's "Critical Issues in Urban Special Education," a summer institute for education leaders. In recognition of the project's leadership in the arena of policy and education, she delivered the keynote address at *From Hurt to Hope: Moving Children Past Trauma*, a conference in Tacoma, Washington for educators, community service providers, policy makers and other key stakeholders. Massachusetts is the only state to date that has achieved this level of practice and policy in addressing the educational needs of children affected by traumatic experiences.

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Honoring Child Advocates

On November 30, 2006, MAC held its 3rd annual “Thanks for Giving” Appreciation Event at the stately John Adams Courthouse in Boston. **Keith Jones**, president and CEO of SoulTouchin’ Experiences, gave an entertaining and heart-felt keynote address on the personal challenges he faced in school of overcoming low expectations of teachers and administrators who did not see his potential and his gifts but only his disability.

A number of individuals were honored for their record of achievement in advocating for children: **State Senator Robert A. Antonioni**, Chairman of the Education Committee, for his incredible commitment to children with disabilities in sponsoring and supporting key legislation to improve special education supports and services; the **Reverend Dr. Gregory G. Groover, Sr.**, for his extensive citywide education advocacy to improve the Boston Public Schools; and **Ron Eskin** and **Jeannette Atkinson**, for their service to the MAC board of directors and their own professional commitment to the well-being of children and families.

Mel King received a lifetime achievement award from MAC for his steadfast commitment to empower young people and for his strong advocacy with schools and educators to raise their expectations for young people, to provide them with challenging curricula and to treat them with respect. It was fitting that a group of teens from Teen Empowerment attended the event to honor Mel, but more important, participated in a series of seminars with him prior to the event to learn from history about the various neighborhood, citywide and national issues he confronted throughout his career.

Thanks to the event’s many sponsors and to **Robin Jones**, who served as event chair. See sponsor list on MAC’s website, www.massadvocates.org.



Mel King receives award from Zakiya Alake, MAC board member



Rev. Dr. Gregory G. Groover, Sr. and Mrs. Barbara A. Groover at the reception.

Helping Non-English-Speaking and Low-Income Families of Children with Autism

(continued from the cover)

have continued to advocate intensely with the state’s Department of Mental Retardation and Executive Office of Health and Human Services for its implementation.

Removing the barriers to equal educational opportunities for children with autism from low-income and culturally and linguistically diverse communities is a long-term advocacy commitment. We are confident that we have made a good start.

2006 Financial Report

	2006	2005
Annual Operating Revenue	\$1,061,324	\$1,008,315
Annual Operating Expenses	1,021,168	996,695
Changes in Unrestricted Net Assets	40,156	11,620
Unrestricted Net Assets, End of Year	128,087	87,931
Total Net Assets, End of Year	506,082	586,939

(from MAC’s independent audit, Edelstein & Company LLP)

Organizational Changes

Over the past year, there have been a few organizational changes at MAC. We said good-bye to **Jeannette Atkinson** and **Ron Eskin**, longstanding champions of MAC, from our board, and welcomed new board members **Faith Peters** of The Bank of New York Mellon Public Affairs, **Ruth-Ann Rasbold**, a disability specialist with the Head Start Quality Initiative, and **Miren Uriarte**, director of the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy at UMass Boston.

On our staff, we bade farewell to **Kyla McSweeney**, CLSP coordinator, and **Beth Ross**, autism project attorney, and greeted **Anne Eisner**, as the new coordinator of the TLPI, **Alexandra Peredo-Carrión** as a staff attorney, and two MAC “returnees”: **Tom Mela**, who was with MAC from 1975-87 and is now our CLSP director and managing attorney, and **Beth Simon**, previously with MAC in 2002-04, and now is a staff attorney. We have also just hired **Stephany Melton** to be MAC’s first development manager.

Amy Martell, **Kristin Brandt** and **Christina Greenberg** have served with distinction as law students in our office. And we are pleased to have contracted the expert services of **Jim Forsythe** and **Germaine Wong** of SBHN, who have strengthened our technology infrastructure and provide us with invaluable IT support.

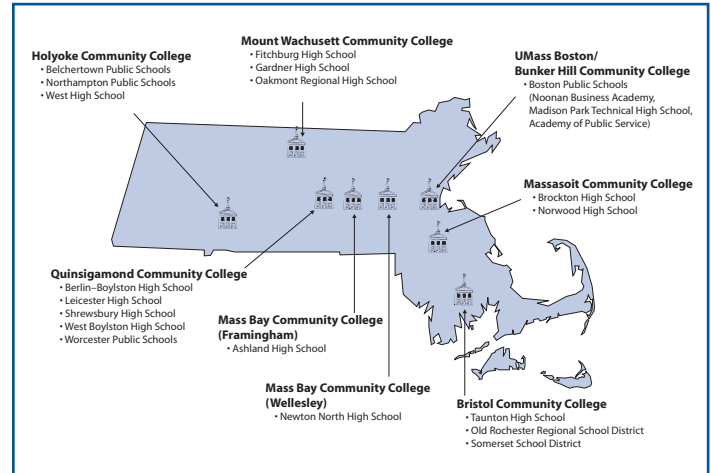
Young Adults with Disabilities Benefit from New Concurrent Enrollment Program

MAC provided key leadership working to implement the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment for Students with Disabilities pilot program, enacted by the legislature last year with the advocacy of MAC and the Special Education Collaborative it convenes. Nine state colleges and 19 school districts formed partnerships to enable over 100 high school students with severe disabilities, age 18-22, enrolled in special education to participate in inclusive college courses. The broad range of school districts and state public institutions of higher education participating represents urban, rural, and suburban sites throughout the Commonwealth (see map).

As with any new initiative, it has been critical to identify both successes and barriers in this first phase. MAC has been working closely with the Collaborative, the Department of Education, the Board of Higher Education and the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI), which is providing technical assistance and evaluation, to make the program stronger going into its second year.

ICI preliminarily identified some of the ways in which students already benefited from the grant program in just one semester, including significant improvements in self esteem, life skills development, self-advocacy skills; more confidence in helping others; and learning to travel independently (some students utilized public transit for the first time in their lives). The program opened new vistas of college attendance after high school for those individuals who had believed post-secondary education was not within the realm of possibility. Some students gained enough confidence that they are now applying for jobs in areas they did not consider before, and one student interested in computers secured an internship in the community college's Information Technology department.

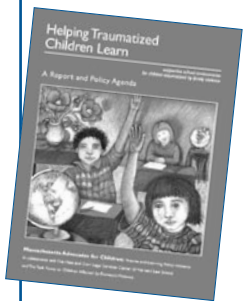
Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Partnership Programs for Students with Disabilities



On the other hand, as would be expected in the first year of a new program, bureaucratic and other barriers were identified which will require additional time to resolve. The project worked closely this spring with legislative leaders and officials in the Patrick administration, advocating to continue funding for the program and to strengthen this unique partnership between public school districts and higher education. With the strong support of lead sponsors, **Rep. Tom Sannicandro** and **Sen. Robert Antonioni**, the result was successful, with a new \$1.575 million appropriated for FY08 and amendments that will enable the program to address some of the barriers identified during the first year.

Reports Available on MAC Website

Visit MAC's web site at www.massadvocates.org to purchase or download these reports.



MAC's *Helping Traumatized Children Learn*

MAC's *The Educational Rights of Children Affected by Homelessness and/or Domestic Violence: An Advocates Manual*



The Citizen Commission on the Academic Success for Boston Children's *Transforming the Boston Public Schools: A Roadmap for the New Superintendent*

Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative Advances Cause

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Other policy areas in which MAC has made progress this past year include the following:

- TLPI developed a “checklist for a trauma-sensitive school” that is being adapted by the Department of Education and leading researchers to help evaluate the trauma-sensitive schools grant program.
- TLPI continues its partnership with Lesley University's Center for Special Education. A convening of over 100 university and public school educators and trauma experts resulted in a white paper titled, “What do educators need to know?” about trauma's impact on learning. TLPI is working closely with Lesley to plan a summer institute on trauma's impact on learning as well as a professional development course.
- MAC/TLPI is convening an outstanding group of experts (in neuropsychology, speech, language, etc.) to develop the next major publication that will focus on supporting individual children, “Guidelines for Trauma-Sensitive Evaluations.”

Legal Community Steps Up to Support Children

The private bar plays a vital role in MAC's advocacy efforts, both by taking pro bono cases to help low-income children who otherwise wouldn't receive legal representation and by partnering with us on administrative advocacy and/or impact litigation. With our Helpline receiving more calls than ever, we were very pleased this past year to receive new interest in taking pro bono cases from over 20 attorneys and three law firms. Thanks to **Kate Landry** of the Suffolk University Law School, who organized a five-part special education training for private attorneys in January and February, 20 attorneys took advantage of a discount in the fee if they would take one pro bono case for MAC. We have already begun to follow through with a number of these attorneys.

Attorneys at DLA Piper, at Conn, Kavanaugh, and at Leboeuf, Lamb attended trainings at DLA Piper and the Boston Bar Association so that they could learn about taking a special education case. We have already handed off one case to each law firm and are providing mentoring support. The Boston Bar Association training

attracted ten additional attorneys whom we hope to include in our pro bono panel.

In our role leading the Children's Law Support Project, MAC has responsibilities to coordinate pro bono assistance statewide. We have conducted trainings for private bar attorneys in the southeast region in conjunction with New Center for Legal Advocacy and have worked out a referral agreement to coordinate intake calls that come to MAC from that region. We are in discussions with the Massachusetts Justice Project to do similarly in the central and western parts of the state.

The law firm of Conn Kavanaugh Rosenthal Peisch & Ford, LLP agreed to serve as pro bono co-counsel in litigation representing low-income children with autism. The firm conducted substantial research and drafted pleadings. Fortunately, the case was ultimately resolved short of litigation, and the firm has generously agreed to remain available to serve as co-counsel in the future.

Helpline Advice:

Empowering Parents to Advocate for their Children

MAC has a Helpline that parents call when they have not been able to resolve impasses with school administrators about the well-being of their children. Often they call out of tremendous frustration that their child is suffering in school, academically, socially or both. Our very skilled Helpline coordinator, **Leslie Lockhart**, combines her professional expertise with personal experience as a parent of a grown child with a disability to help parents become better advocates for their children. (If a caller requires further legal assistance, Leslie will refer to an attorney, appropriate to the income level of the parent.)

Here is one story that exemplifies how Leslie's advice can help parents overcome the odds and help their children succeed.

David is a five year old boy with attention deficit disorder who had significant behavior problems at school but no issues at home. Although he had an IEP, he did not get the support he needed to make progress in school and finally was unable to attend school at all. His kindergarten class had 22 students with one teacher. The boy would become very

frustrated in the class and would shout and kick the other students. When he misbehaved, he was sent to a separate class of non-verbal children where he did not receive any help. Frequently the school called the parents to take him home, and often he was sent to the principal's office. At the IEP meeting in the middle of the year, the teachers agreed

In March, the principal told the parents to keep David at home until the problem was solved because she was "tired of babysitting him."

that he wasn't learning. In March, the principal told the parents to keep David at home until the problem was solved because she was "tired of babysitting him." He wasn't suspended – the parents were just told to keep him out of school.

When the mother called MAC, he had been out of school for seven weeks, and she didn't know that he had a right to attend school and get help for his unique needs. Leslie advised the parents to request an evaluation from the school in writing, to request all of his school records, and to request an appropriate school and class where he could learn and make progress. Within a month, he was moved to another school and placed in a smaller class appropriate for him; his behavior improved, and he was able to learn.

From the Director

The Way We Advocate

by Jerry Mogul

Four years after the Task Force on Children out of School formed in 1969, the Massachusetts Advocacy Center, as it became known, received its first major national foundation grant. During that brief time, the Task Force's report on school exclusion in Boston, *The Way We Go to School*, led to extraordinary success at helping to get major legislation passed, such as the first special education and bilingual education laws in the nation. But we had little time to rest on our laurels, as we then encountered the hard reality described by our first director, **Larry Brown**, as "the disparity between legislative mandate and administrative reality" due to such causes as bureaucratic inertia, incompetence or outright resistance.

That focus of our child advocacy was enshrined in our mission statement through the 1980s, "the Center acts to strengthen progressive legislative mandates and to close the gap between those requirements and actual service delivery..." Today, that remains a central feature of MAC's advocacy, from negotiating with or litigating against school districts to comply with the special education law in individual cases, to pressing the Department of Mental Retardation to follow the new Children's Autism Medicaid Waiver law passed by the legislature and apply for the waiver with the federal government.

We have learned over time to respond in a nuanced manner to a variety of bureaucratic responses to legislation we have supported. For example, we are supportive and work side-by-side with officials from the Department of Education who oversee the homelessness, alternative education and trauma-sensitive programs when they are committed to implementing those legislative mandates. We act similarly in support of the Department of Education in its implementation of the concurrent enrollment program for students with disabilities. Our credibility is such, though, that education officials know we will not be co-opted but will instead calibrate our advocacy strategy as necessary to assure that implementation occurs.

But it is not just the legislative gap that we contend with. Similar disparities crop up in budgets and policies. Our advocacy with the Boston Public Schools is a prime example. Without the commitment and expertise devoted to implementation by school officials, budget and policy decisions can go unheeded. The 2005 budget item for 15 newly-created school-based family and community outreach coordinators (FCOCs) required our presence with other advocates to both pressure and work alongside school officials to make sure that good job descriptions were developed, jurisdictional issues were resolved, schools were recruited, hiring done in a timely manner, and an independent evaluation was conducted.

The superintendent's office has made a strong commitment to closing the achievement gap, appointing an internal committee, developing a plan, and hiring a director. The plan says all the right words and embraces the right concepts – "cultural competence," "differentiated instruction," etc. – but making it so is extraordinarily far from the day-to-day reality for students of color in the classroom. The recent Citizen Commission on the Academic Success for Boston Children, headed by **Hubie Jones**, saw time and again in its study that reform plans at BPS were stymied by numerous institutional barriers.

The task before the new superintendent, **Dr. Carol Johnson**, is daunting. As advocates, and in partnership with community leaders, we will be there, calling attention to the gaps and offering help to fill them so that in the end, all the good aspirations and mandates become fulfilled in the lives of children.

In Memoriam

Child Advocate Stalwart, Michael J. Daly



Bob Gaudet

The special education and bi-lingual education worlds lost one of their warriors, **Michael Daly**, who passed away on in early June. Daly, as a state representative from Brighton and chair of the Education Committee, was one of the authors of the

Special Education Reform Act (a.k.a., Chapter 766) in 1972 and the Transitional Bilingual Education Act in 1971, both destined to become national trailblazers. He had been a member of the Task Force on Children out of School, which became the Massachusetts Advocacy Center and now Massachusetts Advocates for Children, and so embodied the direct link between that 1970 Task Force report on children with disabilities and limited English systematically excluded from school in Boston and these two important pieces of legislation just a few years later.

Robert Crabtree, special education attorney at Kotin, Crabtree & Strong LLP who was House Education Committee research director at the time, had this to say in remembrance:

Mike could not have succeeded in this work without the information that had been gathered by the Task Force standing as an undeniable rebuke to the system. ... There were a number of legislative models suggested by various legal scholars and activists to remedy these problems, but it took Mike's political genius to make it happen. His approach was to build support from the ground up rather than to impose a great detailed response from above. In the cases of both {bills}, Mike had copies of first drafts of legislation sent out to every person and organization that might be affected by the legislation, inviting them to the State House for a series of meetings and, at those meetings, working line by line through several successive drafts until key points of contention had been resolved by consensus or by compromise. By that means, potentially controversial legislative schemes gathered strength over the months until, when public hearings were scheduled, the bills were unstoppable.

MAC can take pride in having been, in its earlier incarnation, not just a source of information on the populations that were excluded from school but a powerful organizing force that inspired Mike to take that information and transform it into a comprehensive legislative response.


DATES TO REMEMBER

October 16, 2007 – 5% Day – Support children with autism while you shop! Go to any of the 12 **Whole Foods Markets** stores on Tuesday, October 16 and the store will donate 5% of your shopping bill to MAC's Autism Special Education Legal Support Center. *It doesn't cost you an extra penny.* Pass the word on to your friends; better yet, organize a shopping party! Thank you to the following participating stores:



Bedford	Framingham
Bellingham	Hingham
Cambridge-Fresh Pond	Newton
	Newtonville
Cambridge-Prospect St.	Swampscott
	Wayland
Cambridge-River St.	Wellesley

November 29, 2007 – Join MAC at its 4th Annual "Thanks for Giving" Appreciation Event. This event is growing into a tradition of celebrating our work, thanking our supporters and stakeholders, and honoring a number of individuals who have made a significant advocacy contribution to the well-being of children. This year we will have an exceptional program. We will be honoring, among others, **J. Keith Motley**, Chancellor of UMass Boston, for his deep commitment and dedication to the well-being of at-risk children and youth in the Boston area. Our keynote speaker will be **Dr. Miren Uriarte**, director of the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, who will address the educational needs of immigrant children. We will provide good food, musical entertainment and an opportunity to network among those individuals who are committed to improving the lives of children in the Commonwealth. The event will be held at 5-7 PM at City Year, 287 Columbus Ave. in Boston. There is no charge to attend.



Because MAC is an independent advocacy organization, we do not accept any public funds that will compromise our ability to advocate effectively on behalf of children or families.

Therefore, we rely very much on private donors—individuals and foundations—to support our high quality advocacy work. Your contribution will help us continue the work described in this newsletter. Visit www.massadvocates.org/donate to learn ways in which you can contribute to MAC.

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