



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 nearly 40 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

MAC's Advocacy Highlights in 2008 (through November 15)

All our advocacy work is done in partnership with others, such as non-profits, parents, educators, legislators, legal aid and law firms, advocates or universities. We thank them all, and our funders, for their vital contributions to these successes that benefit so many children.

- Two of MAC's priority special education bills were enacted this year: H391, an Act to Provide Access to Information to Parents' Evaluators, ensuring that parents and independent evaluators have access necessary to observe special education programs, providing critical information needed to participate in the special education decision making process; and S. 286, an Act to Maintain Transition Age Requirements, requiring school districts to initiate transition planning and services for students with disabilities at age 14 rather than waiting to age 16 as now permitted under federal special education law.
- MAC successfully led intensive advocacy efforts to double the budget for the **Children's Autism Medicaid Waiver** to \$4 million, so that 160 low-income children with autism spectrum disorder can receive intensive home and community based services.
- Support for the **Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment (ICE)** grant program for students age 18-22 with severe disabilities continues to grow. Through the advocacy efforts we led with the Special Education Collaborative, the budget line-item was fully funded for a third year, it was incorporated in the Governor's long-term education plan; and the Board of Higher Education along with college administrators and school officials affirmed their support for the program.
- The **Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI)** has taken a leadership role in statewide policy efforts to create collaborations and linkages between mental health and schools as a participant in the Children's Mental Health Campaign. The governor signed the **Children Mental Health bill** ("Yolanda's Bill") this summer containing Section 19 which sets up a task force to create a shared agreement and infrastructure for linking schools with mental health, including services ordered by the court for Medicaid-eligible children in the "**Rosie D.**" lawsuit. TLPI actively advocated for Section 19.
- TLPI has actively supported the **Quincy** and **Brockton** school districts to plan for the implementation of **trauma-sensitive schools**, by providing training and technical assistance.
- Demand for *Helping Traumatized Children Learn* continues to be strong- it is now in its 5th printing, as over **19,000 copies** have been distributed since its publication in October 2005.
- Our **Boston School Reform project** has achieved the following:
 - Provided technical assistance for the newly revived Special Education Parents Advisory Council;
 - Successfully advocated for the city to commit \$10 million from its reserve accounts to help meet the school department projected deficit;
 - Helped a number of Haitian community service organizations to establish a network focused on education issues for Haitian students and to rejuvenate the Boston Haitian-American Parents Association (BHAPA); and
 - Successfully advocated for the expansion of the Newcomers Assessment Center commitment to a Newcomers Academy, and training and expansion of ESL teaching staff.

MAC's Advocacy Highlights in 2008 (through November 15)

- MAC's **Autism Center** staff successfully engaged in intensive litigation efforts on behalf of four low-income Latino children with autism in the *Lawrence Public Schools*, who are now thriving in their new special education programs. We have also been providing intensive training to these and other parents who have committed to lead systemic change efforts and help other families of children with autism in Lawrence.
- MAC responded to nearly 800 parents and others through our Children's Law Support Project **Helpline**, providing advice, referrals, technical assistance, and in some cases, full representation.

Organizational News

Massachusetts Advocates for Children is turning 40!.... We are in the early planning stages to commemorate 40 years of child advocacy. **Hubie Jones**, board member emeritus, is co-chairing the 40th Anniversary celebrations and **Marian Wright Edelman**, one of our esteemed honorees, will be joining us. In 1969, **Hubie Jones** formed the Task Force on Children out of School to investigate the scandalous exclusion of thousands of children from the Boston Public Schools. After issuing its scathing report in 1970 that eventually led to groundbreaking, first-in-the-nation state laws securing educational rights for children with disabilities and children with limited English, the Task Force incorporated as the Massachusetts Advocacy Center. Since then, MAC has been a leader in the state advocating for the educational and legal rights of children. At its formation, MAC's report served as a model for the first report of what became the Children's Defense Fund, founded by **Marian Wright Edelman**. We are pleased to be honoring Ms. Wright Edelman at our **Gala planned for Friday, November 13th, 2009**. Other events are in the planning stages -- Stay tuned!

New Website and Logo... Thanks to a capacity-building grant from the BNY Mellon Charitable Giving Program through the generosity of the Eugene F. Fay Trust, MAC has hired **Leverett Media** to design a new website in time for our 40th anniversary year in 2009. Watch for it soon. We are also launching a new logo that we will unveil next year.

Autism Fundraising... MAC has formed a special fundraising committee for the Autism Special Education Legal Support Center. Led by fundraising consultants, **Lisa Marie Noke-Kearney** and **Marcy Wenning**, our planning is beginning to come to fruition. We are very touched that a number of young people have gravitated to our cause. A local rock band from Framingham named, Griffon, chose the Autism Center as the first beneficiary of its fundraising efforts through the sale of bracelets at its concerts. Students at Providence College just held a special bowling fundraiser for the Autism Center. *All MAC friends will be able to support the Autism Center by making purchases at Barnes and Noble on Thursday, December 11th, 2008 (see insert).* More fundraising events are being planned for 2009.

Board of Directors... We are pleased to announce three new board members: **Yvonne Atkins** and **Jen Rivera** as parent members, and **Matt Iverson** of DLA Piper, as an attorney member. Our sincerest thanks to former members **Marylou Batt** and **Marjorie Suisman** for their years of service and deep commitment to MAC and the children for whom we advocate.

New MAC staff... In order to support our fundraising, website and other communications, MAC welcomes **Daryl Cox**, formerly of the Whittier St. Health Center, as special assistant for development and communications. Daryl is working closely with Lisa Marie and Marcy, as well as **Mary-Jo Adams**, our 40th anniversary development consultant. Please contact Daryl at 617-357-8431, x242 or dcox@massadvocates.org, if you would like to contribute in any way to MAC's 40th anniversary or autism fundraising efforts.

