

# MASSACHUSETTS ADVOCATES for CHILDREN



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



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**Hubie Jones** speaking at MAC's Tribute in his honor, April 30 at the Westin Hotel. (See more inside.)

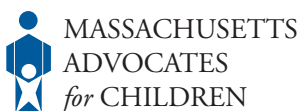
## MAC'S Mission

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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*Board Co-chairs*

Jerry Mogul  
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## Trauma and Learning Policy Project Takes Off

**D**uring school hours Raymond, age 6, worried a lot about his mother. They had moved to the shelter to leave his abusive father who terrified and traumatized Raymond by beating his mother right in front of his eyes. Raymond's school had no understanding of what was going on and lost sympathy for his constant crying. School staff would call his mother and simply ask her to take Raymond home. Over time Raymond realized that he could get to go home earlier if he kicked or punched other children. By the time MAC was asked to represent Raymond, he had been sent home or suspended from kindergarten almost 80 days...

Since 1998, MAC has been at the forefront in highlighting the link between trauma and learning for children exposed to domestic violence. In its role coordinating the Children's Law Support Project for the state legal services system, MAC organized an inter-disciplinary Task Force on Children Affected by Domestic Violence which has made an impact on this issue through presenting research, conducting trainings, publishing articles, conducting case advocacy, and supporting legislation to provide funding for pilot innovative school-wide responses.

Now MAC is poised to make a greater impact and take this project to scale. Through a new partnership with Harvard Law School and initial funding for this planning stage from Partners HealthCare, Gardiner Howland Shaw Foundation, the Mellon Financial Corporation Fund, and Fleet National Bank, a Bank of America Company and Trustee of the Alfred E. Chase Charity Foundation, MAC has launched the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative.

The goal of the project is for schools to adopt "trauma-sensitive" frameworks with individual supports that enable traumatized children to focus, learn and behave. To achieve the goal, the Project will employ three interrelated strategies:

- Developing and implementing a public policy agenda,
- Piloting school-wide frameworks at individual schools and school districts, and
- Working with mental health professionals, parents, educators and attorneys to advocate for state-of-the-art special and regular education supports for individual children that effectively address the trauma they have experienced.

MAC is taking the following steps to pursue these strategies::

- Partnering with Harvard Law School's Legal Services Center to represent victims of domestic violence in special education cases;
- Convening mental health professionals to develop protocols for independent evaluations that take trauma into account;
- Conducting outreach to domestic violence shelters to educate and support parents to better advocate for their children;
- Writing *Helping Traumatized Children Learn*, a report to be published in the fall that provides a blueprint to schools for creating a trauma-sensitive framework; and
- Convening stakeholders to support a legislative, public policy agenda that will fund and support school-based initiatives.

MAC continues to seek resources for the long-term implementation of this important initiative.

*For further information, contact Susan Cole, Project Director, at x223 or [scole@massadvocates.org](mailto:scole@massadvocates.org).*

## MAC Pays Tribute to Its Founder

On Friday, April 30, over 800 friends, family and fans gathered to pay tribute to Hubie Jones, a man who has shaped the civic landscape in Boston like few others over the past 40 years. Deeply committed to advocacy and social change, Hubie has that rare combination of vision and pragmatism. He has spent decades starting, building and supporting over 30 organizations and institutions in the fields of education, social work, human services, business, urban planning and higher education.

As the founder of MAC in 1969, Hubie has remained steadfast in his commitment to children and to MAC as an organization. This event provided a unique opportunity to raise funds both for MAC and for the creation of a new "Hubie Fund," a donor-advised fund at the Boston Foundation that will enable him to give to the causes he cares about well into the future.

The Tribute was a spectacular night, featuring songs from the Boston Children's Chorus, the newest organization that Hubie has founded and is supporting. Hubie was surprised when some of his closest colleagues, joined by Peter Mehegan and Marjorie Arons-Barron, roasted him in a take-off of Five-on-5, a public affairs show on Channel 5 that Hubie was a panelist on for about 20 years. Attendees were treated to video clips of the show, highlighting the "best of Hubie," where he took on any and all controversial issues of the day.

Over \$420,000 was raised, with the net proceeds to be divided equally between MAC and the Hubie Fund. See [www.massadvocates.org](http://www.massadvocates.org) for more about the Tribute and pictures from the event.

"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



**Clockwise from top left:** Hubie receives award from current MAC director, Jerry Mogul, and MAC's first director, Larry Brown; Keith Motley, Tripp Jones and Willie Rodriguez roast Hubie as "Five-on-5" panelists; Children from the Boston Children's Chorus sing at the event; Hubie and Kathy Jones enjoying the festivities. Photos by Don West.



## MAC at Work: Notes from the Field

**The Boston School Reform Initiative (BSRI)** is playing a leadership role through the Latino Education Action Network in forming a coalition and addressing concerns for poor and immigrant families regarding the Boston Public Schools' new policy on residency requirements for all students.

The BSRI continues to play a lead role in advocating for quality schools and parental choice in the BPS school assignment process. (See MAC website for statement of principles.)

Through continual pressure by MAC and the Black Ministerial Alliance, the percentage of BPS students failing MCAS who have a legally-mandated Individual Success Student Plan jumped from 22% to 68% between February and April.

**The Autism Project** developed a new training curriculum for medical professionals and educators working with children on the autism spectrum. It also produced an informational brochure describing the project and listing statewide resources.

The Project has successfully secured appropriate school placements for three children through litigation. In one case the student had been in a grossly inappropriate school placement for nearly two years and then remained at home for six months. As a result of MAC's intervention, that student is now attending a full day, full year program that meets his needs. One other student was placed in three different inappropriate placements within his school district in a one year period, and then was forced to remain at home until project staff successfully secured an appropriate placement. The last student was facing the fourth year in the same inappropriate classroom due to procedural violations. The student is now assigned to an appropriate classroom, and project staff are advocating for changes in policy and practice to remedy the system-wide violations so that children in similar situations across the state can benefit.

**The Somerville Project**, with its community partners and parents, has been working with the school district to address the three concerns raised in a state monitoring report of Somerville's special education programs—lack of translation, excessive delays and insufficient authority vested in the IEP teams.

**MAC worked with legislators** in the House and Senate to include language in an education bill that passed the conference committee, was reinstated after the governor's initial veto and is one step away from final approval. It provides funding for a grant program to school districts to develop programs and services for regular education students who are suffering from the traumatic effects of exposure to violence and whose behavior interferes with learning. (See article on page 1.)

**MAC has produced a handbook** titled, *Children Affected by Domestic Violence and Homelessness: Helping Children Stay Safe and Succeed in School*, that has been distributed by the Department of Education to all school liaisons. MAC will next turn it into an advocate's manual.

**Since January 1**, MAC has helped over 200 families with information, legal advice or representation on concerns about their child's education.

Also in 2004 so far, MAC has conducted 39 trainings reaching 934 parents and professionals in such topics as autism, basic special education, discipline, MCAS, and trauma and learning.

### Emerging Issue

#### The New Gender Gap: The Educational Crisis for Boys

A recent *Boston Globe* article (June 6) pointing out that 80% of high school valedictorians in Boston schools were girls is only the most recent illustration of a growing body of research and concern that boys are at increasing risk not only for lower levels of educational achievement than girls but also for educational failure, especially in low income families and communities of color.

The concern extends from K through 12. National data assembled by Child Trends show that as early as kindergarten, boys are twice as likely as girls to be in the most vulnerable category of children who lag behind in health, cognitive and social/emotional measures. In elementary school, boys are at much greater risk for an emergency mental health intervention and for placement in special education, particularly for a learning disability or behavioral disorder. As they get older, boys are more likely to get suspended or expelled, or drop out of school. Finally, even for those students who graduate high school, data from Boston show a higher percentage of females than males attending college. In MAC's own intake, calls with concerns about boys outnumber girls by a 2:1 or even 3:1 margin.

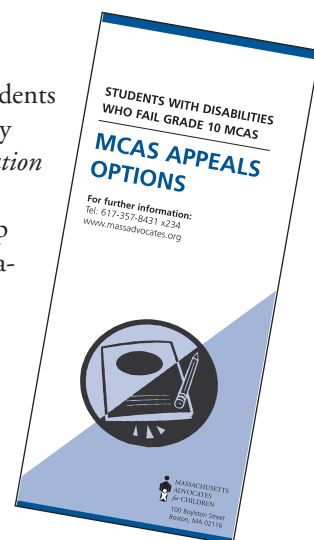
This issue has been percolating in the popular press and among a handful of academics, but it has not reached the critical mass of research, funding and programs that has responded to the crisis in education for girls over the past 20-30 years.

MAC has begun conducting a literature review on this issue and hopes to continue that work, along with identifying stakeholders to convene for a more formal assessment of the problem, resources and potential solutions.

*For further information, contact Jerry Mogul, Executive Director, x231.*

## MCAS Support for Students With Disabilities

**M**AC just completed a set of informational brochures as part of its educational campaign to help students with disabilities who fail Grade 10 MCAS understand their options. The brochures address five key areas: *MCAS Appeals*, *MCAS Retest*, *Remediation and Instructional Opportunities*, *GED*, and *Special Education Service Options After 12<sup>th</sup> Grade*. The brochures were developed in part through a grant from the Massachusetts Development Disabilities Commission (MDDC). MAC worked with a broad-based group in developing the information materials, including parent and disability organizations, as well as organizations representing school administrators, teachers, private schools, collaboratives, state agencies and post-secondary institutions. The brochures are now available to these groups to distribute to their own constituencies which will help to ensure widespread dissemination. The response to the brochures has been uniformly positive. MDDC staff distributed them both to their counterparts in states around the country, who are interested because of the No Child Left Behind law, and to the Mass. congressional delegation. The brochures are available in English and Spanish and can be downloaded from MAC's website— [www.massadvocates.org/mcas\\_brochures](http://www.massadvocates.org/mcas_brochures). *For further information, contact Johanne Pino at MAC, x234.*



### MAC Board and Staff Changes

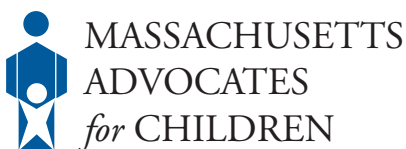
**S**teve Rosenfeld will be stepping down as board chair after 10 years of dedicated service, leading MAC to the prominent child advocacy role it plays today. He will remain on the board and will be replaced as chair by **Ron Eskin** and **Edie Howe**, who will serve as co-chairs for a one year term.

MAC welcomes new board members **Ana Aparicio**, professor of anthropology at UMass Boston, **Zakiya Alake**, community activist and entrepreneur in Boston, **Aden Hussein**, parent of a child with disabilities, and **Bob Fallon**, a financial and management consultant, who joins as MAC's new treasurer. MAC bids a fond farewell to departing board members **Larry Kotin**, after over 30 years on the board, **Rob Restuccia** and **Kathy Ryan**, all of whom served with distinction and dedication.

MAC greets new staff members **Colby Brunt**, a staff attorney for our Autism Project and **Samuel Hurtado**, coordinator of the Latino Education Action Network. At the same time, we say farewell to **Lisa Martin**, attorney on the Somerville project, and **Nilda Rodriguez**, our Gordon Fellow staff attorney.

### Support Child Advocacy

MAC relies on private funds to be an independent voice for children. When we advocate to change laws or policies, as in special education, it can help all children in the Commonwealth, regardless of income level. Help us keep up the work by giving generously. Visit "Donate" at [www.massadvocates.org](http://www.massadvocates.org) for more information.



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