



**CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE**

*A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families*

**For Immediate Release**

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## **2009 Voices for Children Award Winners Announced**

(May 7, 2009)—At its annual luncheon, the Children's Alliance will present five awards honoring child advocates whose work has improved the lives of Washington children. These diverse activists have spoken up for children, youth and families—they have demanded healthcare for all Washington children, pressed for the rights of birth parents within the child welfare system, secured funding for early learning programs for the children most at risk of being left behind. All have sought to protect the most vulnerable and make the voiceless heard.

The Voices for Children Awards were established by the Children's Alliance to recognize those who have dedicated extraordinary amounts of time and energy to making Washington a better place for kids. Awardees are those who have dedicated volunteer hours or gone above and beyond mere job descriptions to ensure that laws, policies and programs serve children.

The awards will be presented at the **Children's Alliance's Voices for Children Awards Luncheon**, June 4 at 11:30 a.m., at Fisher Pavilion in Seattle Center. The keynote will be offered by the Pacific Northwest director of U.S. programs for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, David Bley. The event is open to the public (see reservation details below).

The following awardees will be honored:

- **Kimberly Mays**, who works in the Pierce County Juvenile Court's Parent-to-Parent Program and serves on the governor's Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee. She has channeled personal tragedy into highly effective advocacy for birth parents and against racial disproportionality in the child welfare system.
- **Laura Wells**, a long-time child advocate and founder of the Washington state chapter of Fight Crime Invest in Kids. She has worked successfully in the midst of a state budget crisis to protect funding for home-visiting programs that have been proven to prevent child abuse.
- **Vicky McIntyre**, who turned her struggle to secure health care for her daughter into advocacy on behalf of health care for all Washington children. Her work helped protect Apple Health for Kids and ensure that all children have access to it.

- **Jean Colman**, former executive director of the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition, which from 1984 to 2008 worked to add the voice of welfare recipients and low-wage workers to the decision-making processes affecting their lives.
- **Our Kids, Our Business**, a media and community campaign to raise public awareness of and support for prevention of child abuse and neglect. Accepting the award will be **Mary Ann Murphy**, founder and executive director of Partners with Families and Children in Spokane, and **Stacey Cowles**, publisher of the *Spokane Spokesman-Review*. Supported by an array of media and community organizations, Murphy and Cowles conceived and initiated the campaign. As director of Partners, Mary Ann Murphy works to reunite and heal families where abuse has taken place. Under Stacey Cowles' leadership, the *Spokesman-Review* has given unprecedented coverage to child abuse and neglect prevention as part of the Our Kids, Our Business campaign.

To attend the Voices for Children Awards Luncheon, please contact: Deborah Bowler at [deborah@childrensalliance.org](mailto:deborah@childrensalliance.org) or register online at <http://www.childrenshub.org/calliance/events/voices/details.tcl>. Individual tickets are \$60. All guests will be asked to make a donation to support the work of the Children's Alliance. A minimum gift of \$150 is suggested.

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*The Children's Alliance is a statewide public policy advocacy organization that works at the local, state and federal level to ensure that all children have the things they need to thrive. Current campaigns focus on health care for all Washington children, childhood hunger, racial disproportionality in foster care, and early learning. Our membership includes 128 organizations and more than 7,500 individuals statewide. To learn more about the Children's Alliance, go to [www.childrensalliance.org](http://www.childrensalliance.org)*