



# 2013 Annual Report



Our mission is to ensure the well-being of Alabama's children through research, public awareness, and advocacy.



## A Letter from VOICES for Alabama's Children's Executive Director

On behalf of VOICES for Alabama's Children, I extend my sincerest thanks and appreciation to our donors, organizational partners, and advocates for your support and commitment in 2013. Because of your partnership, we were able to impact the lives of children, reaching over one million Alabamians last year through public awareness campaigns and community presentations elevating key issues impacting children. In addition, our *Alabama Kids Count Data Book*, which serves as both a roadmap and benchmark for how children are doing, reached over 100,000 Alabamians and was used by over 500 individuals, organizations, and lawmakers to identify and address needs in communities throughout the state.

Not only did we make an impact through public awareness and research, but also through advocacy — the heart and soul of what we do. VOICES for Alabama's Children continues to be a proud partner and leader in the collaboration to advance early learning among children. In 2013, we helped secure \$9.4 million in additional funding for Alabama's high-quality, voluntary pre-k program, First Class. We also joined our partners to help ensure quality K-12 education for our students by protecting Alabama's College and Career Ready Standards.

Last year, Alabama ranked 44<sup>th</sup> nationally in child well-being according to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *KIDS COUNT® Data Book*. Although our best ranking to-date, we believe our children deserve better. In order to give them better, VOICES for Alabama's Children has consistently prioritized high-quality early learning and K-12 education, access to health care for all children, and policies to keep our roads, child care facilities, and schools safe. We will not rest until 44<sup>th</sup> is not good enough for our children, and will continue to champion these and other causes for years to come.

The children of today are Alabama's workforce, consumers and leaders of tomorrow. How we protect them speaks volumes about where we are as a state and most importantly where we are headed. Thank you for trusting us to be the voice for children since 1992 and we look forward to continuing the fight with your support and partnership.

Sincerely,



Melanie R. Bridgeforth, MSW  
Executive Director, VOICES for Alabama's Children



VOICES for Alabama's Children welcomed our new Executive Director, Melanie Bridgeforth, at the end of December 2013.

## THANK YOU to our 2013 corporate and foundational donors

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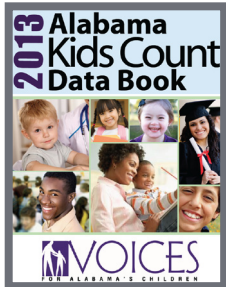
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## 2013 Highlights

Our mission is to ensure the well-being of Alabama's children through research, public awareness, and advocacy. Read on to see how we worked toward accomplishing our mission in 2013!



### RESEARCH

In 2013, VOICES for Alabama's Children published its annual *Alabama Kids Count Data Book*, **adding even more information**, including:

- An expanded *Education Profile By School System*
- A detailed overview of Alabama's First Class Pre-K Program
- The supplemental *What Would It Take* report revealing what it would take for each county to be No. 1 in the state in child well-being, plus a new national comparison to show how Alabama can be No. 1 in the nation
- Stories from organizations on how they are using the *Data Book* to make changes in their communities

The *Alabama Kids Count Data Book* is the only publication of its kind to document the well-being of children in each of Alabama's 67 counties. This critical tool **raises visibility of children's issues and informs decision-making at the state and local levels**. For over 20 years, organizations have used the information provided in the *Data Book* to identify needs in their communities and write and receive grants for millions of dollars in program support to address those needs.

### PUBLIC AWARENESS

By educating others and generating awareness of the issues impacting children and the policy options to address them, **we grow our advocacy network and are better able to facilitate change**. During 2013:

- We spoke to over 1,400 Alabamians on issues facing our children and provided training to child advocates.
- We hosted community meetings in five different regions in Alabama touching child advocates from all across the state.
- VOICES for Alabama's Children reached over 2 million Alabamians through TV, radio, print and online news, and social media, and revised its website, which is rich in information and resources to educate the public on various issues and policies affecting our children.



VOICES for Alabama's Children engaged communities from all across the state at regional meetings, bringing in several key speakers including the Alabama Teacher of the Year and Alternate Teacher of the Year (shown above), business leaders, and other child advocates.

### ADVOCACY

• VOICES for Alabama's Children and our partners successfully advocated a **\$9.4 million increase in pre-k funding**, expanding access from six to nine percent of four-year-olds. Getting children off to a good start in the early years of life can make a huge difference in their lifelong success. This is the central reason why our organization has fought for pre-k **since day one** and will continue to do so until **every** four-year-old has access.

• We helped protect Alabama's College and Career Ready Standards (CCRS). These critical standards, which are Alabama's K-12 academic goals designed to prepare students for life, have been under attack for years in the legislature. We advocated alongside Alabama parents, educators, business leaders and military officials to **successfully block the repeal of CCRS**.

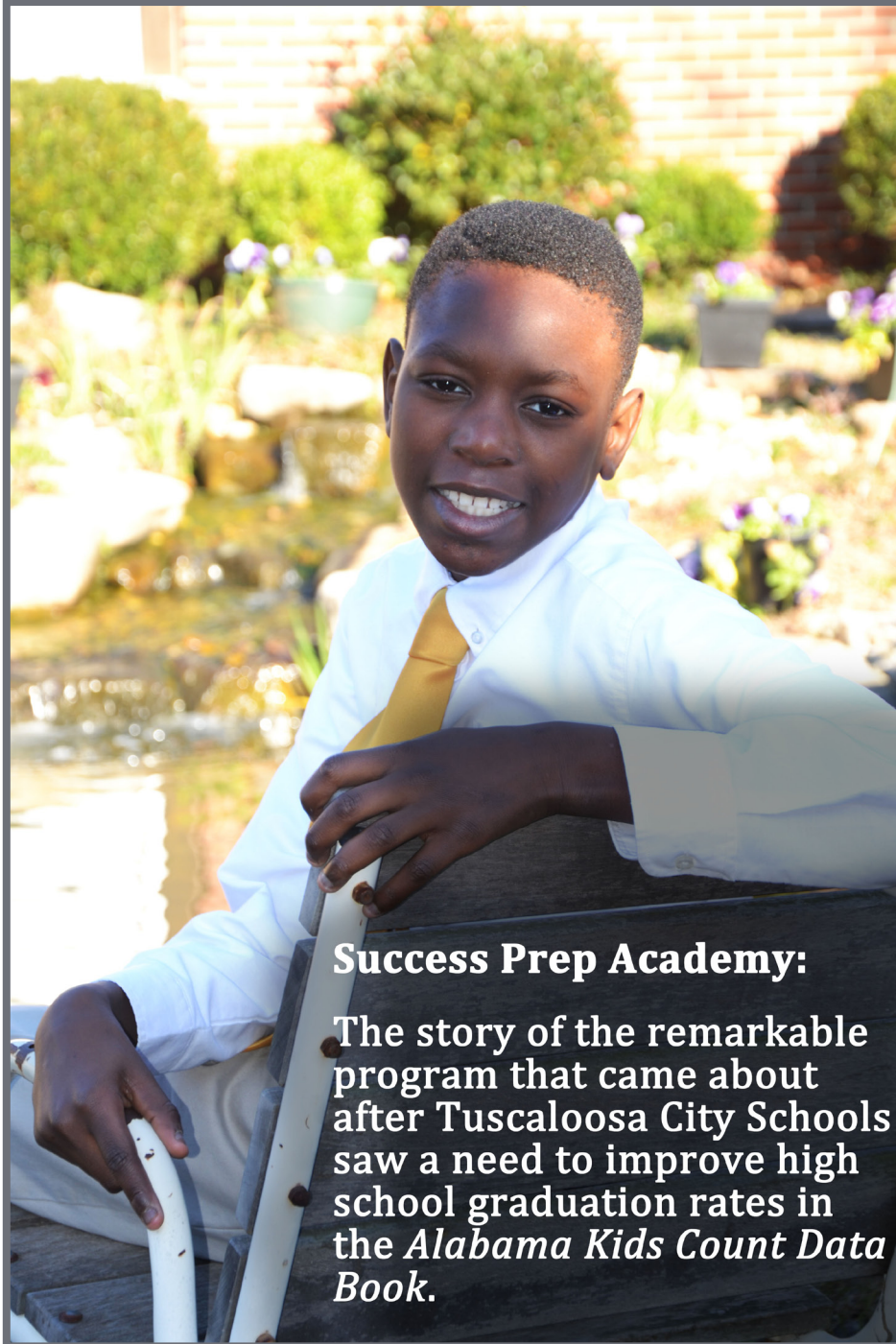
Our students deserve the best and can reach the goals the State Board of Education approved for them. Protecting these standards has proven to be a difficult battle, but we believe ensuring our children have access to high-quality education is worth the fight.

• We grew the VOICE of child advocates! We celebrate that in 2013, **we added over 700 new individuals, organizations, and businesses to our advocacy network**. Grassroots advocacy is crucial to our work. The more child advocates we have the better able we are to demonstrate our collective power to decision makers.



VOICES for Alabama's Children was proud to partner with other members of the Alabama School Readiness Alliance's Pre-K Task Force and state lawmakers to visit local First Class Pre-K sites and see the high-quality learning that takes place within these school walls. Engaging lawmakers and showing them programs that are working to improve child well-being is one important part in the process of ensuring our children are made a priority at the legislature.

## ***Data Book* helps Tuscaloosa City Schools realize need to help students at risk of dropping out of high school**



**Success Prep Academy:**  
The story of the remarkable program that came about after Tuscaloosa City Schools saw a need to improve high school graduation rates in the *Alabama Kids Count Data Book*.

Tuscaloosa City Schools adopted an innovative program specifically designed to help students get back on track to graduation. Success Prep Academy is a transformational alternative secondary program, serving students that are significantly behind academically; in many cases one to two grade levels.

Many of the students in this program are in danger of discontinuing their educational services. It is the program's mission to stop the trend of students dropping out and to create educational and career opportunities. This student population, if not served with specialized services, could potentially leave school due to a lack of credits or attendance issues or could have their services suspended due to excessive discipline infractions.

After an extensive review of the *Alabama Kids Count Data Book*, it became even clearer how the program would need to be designed to prevent the ongoing, increasing issues with high school dropout rates. The primary focus of the program is to improve student high school graduation rates and create post-career and graduation opportunities for students.

While at Success Prep Academy, students take part in a variety of motivational

activities, including Motivational Monday (featuring various speakers), Testify Tuesday (where students can share experiences), Mental Math Wednesday (a paperless math competition), Gold Tie Ceremony Thursday (where excellent behavior, academic performance and attendance are recognized), and Free Style Friday (where students share original songs, poetry, quotes, speeches, etc.). Success Prep students leave the Academy as empowered, confident learners or, better yet, high school graduates.



## Blount County Children's Center uses *Alabama Kids Count* to identify underserved Latino community



Jim Ed Clayton, Executive Director of the Blount County Children's Center, says that his organization uses the *Alabama Kids Count Data Book* as their "data Bible" when it comes to writing grants or building community support for their services.

When Mr. Clayton was hired two years ago, he began to study the demographic makeup of Blount County according to the *Data Book*, and compared that to the makeup of his organization's client base.

"It was clear that Hispanic children in Blount County were not being adequately served," Mr. Clayton said. "The *Alabama Kids Count Data Book* revealed that over 14 percent of our children in Blount County are Hispanic, yet less than 2 percent of our abuse allegations involve Hispanics."

So, they began investigating. From this investigation they encountered a number of people who mistakenly assumed that Hispanic children are not abused at the same rates as white and black children. They learned that the reason many child abuse and domestic violence incidences in the Hispanic community go unreported is because of misunderstanding or mistrust of the authorities. They also discovered that most independent and governmental agencies in Blount County do not

provide services in Spanish and that those that do, mostly do it via telephone — not in person.

Mr. Clayton presented this information to the Blount County Children's Center's board of directors. They were convinced that action must be taken. In the spring of 2013, they hired a Hispanic individual who is reaching out in creative ways to build trust and understanding within the Latino community, to let them know that the Blount County Children's Center is here to help them.

Mr. Clayton and his organization said he is looking forward to seeing the positive results from this newly-established program.

"Thanks to the *Alabama Kids Count Data Book*, we realized a need in our community and now we are taking action to address it."



Because powerless children need powerful voices



## THANK YOU to our 2013 organizational donors

100 Black Men of West Alabama  
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Alabama Association of Child Care Agencies AGAPE of North AL  
Alabama Association of County Directors of Human Resources  
Alabama Association of School Boards  
Alabama Family Child Care Association  
Alabama Hospital Association  
Alabama Outward Bound School  
Alabama Partnership for Children  
Alfred Saliba Family Services Center  
AltaPointe Health Systems  
Baldwin County Regional Juvenile Detention Center  
Better Basics  
Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Greater Birmingham  
Birmingham YMCA  
Blount County Children's Center  
Blount County Schools  
Boys & Girls Clubs of South Alabama  
Cahaba Center for Mental Health  
CAJA of Marshall County  
Camp Fire Alabama  
CARE House, Inc.  
CASA of Colbert County  
Center for Fair Housing, Inc.  
Central Alabama Community Foundation  
Cheaha Regional Head Start  
Child Abuse Prevention Services of Tuscaloosa  
Child Advocacy Center of East Alabama, Inc.  
Child Advocacy Center of Mobile  
Child Development Resources/University of Alabama  
Child Protect  
Childcare Resources  
Children First Foundation, Inc.  
Children's Aid Society  
Children's Policy Council of Jefferson County  
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Christian Services for Children in Alabama, Inc.  
Circle of Care Center for Families  
Community Action Partnership Huntsville/Madison & Limestone  
Community Action Partnership of North Alabama  
Community Service Programs of West Alabama  
Cumberland School of Law  
DCA—Department of Children's Affairs  
East Alabama Mental Health  
Escambia Regional Child Advocacy Center  
Envision 2020  
Family Guidance Center of Alabama  
Family Services Center of Calhoun County  
Family Success Center of Etowah County  
First United Methodist Church, Montgomery  
FOCAL—Federation of Child Care Centers of Alabama  
GASP  
Gateway  
Girl Scouts of North-Central Alabama  
Girls Inc. of Central Alabama  
Girls Incorporated of Dothan  
Head Start  
Healthy You, Inc.  
Heart Gallery Alabama  
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Mobile Area Education Foundation  
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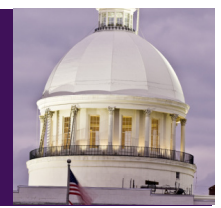
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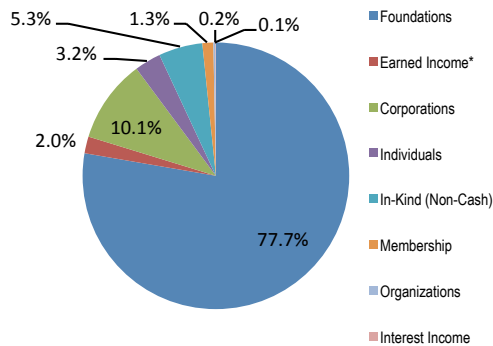
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## 2013 Financials

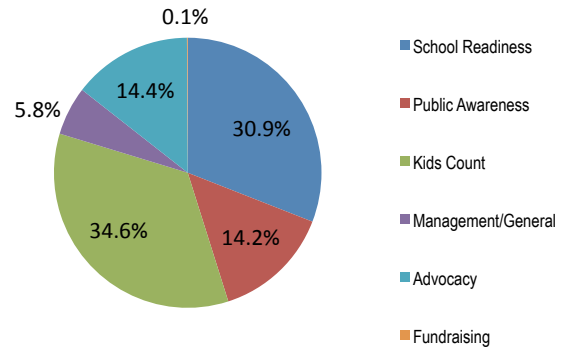
### Revenue



Foundations	\$350,250.00	77.7%
Earned Income*	\$9,170.00	2.0%
Corporations	\$45,500.00	10.1%
Individuals	\$14,436.00	3.2%
In-Kind (Non-Cash)	\$24,000.00	5.3%
Membership	\$5,957.00	1.3%
Organizations	\$1,100.00	0.2%
Interest Income	\$284.42	0.1%
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$450,697.42</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Grant Rec'd in '12 for '13	\$98,388.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$549,085.42</b>	

\*Fees for services, conferences, book sales, etc.

### Expenses



School Readiness	\$143,243.98	30.9%
Public Awareness	\$65,797.14	14.2%
Kids Count	\$160,315.71	34.6%
Management/General	\$27,076.72	5.8%
Advocacy	\$66,706.68	14.4%
Fundraising	\$441.38	0.1%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$463,581.61</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## 2013 Board of Directors

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