State Leaders Recognized for their Work on Behalf of Children and Youth

First for Kids Awards celebrate advocates for children

Connecticut individuals and organizations were recognized for their public leadership and advocacy on behalf of Connecticut’s children, youth and families when Connecticut Voices for Children hosted its 11th “First for Kids Awards” ceremony on Wednesday, October 17, 2012 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm at the Pond House Café in Elizabeth Park in West Hartford.

Through this event, Connecticut Voices for Children honored individuals in Connecticut whose work and commitment to the state’s young people serves as a model for all. The honorees:

- **Senator Martin Looney**, who represents New Haven and Hamden, received the Legislative Leadership Award for his advocacy on behalf a state Earned Income Tax Credit, raising the age of juvenile court jurisdiction, and many other policies supporting children and families.

- The late **Merva Jackson**, a former Hartford resident who was recognized posthumously, and **African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities** (AFCAMP) received the Citizen Advocacy Award. Ms. Jackson was recognized for founding and operating AFCAMP, and the organization will be honored for their training of parents on how to advocate for their children with disabilities, and for services designed to divert children from inappropriate involvement in the juvenile justice system.

- **Peter Arakas**, a Farmington resident, received Connecticut Voices for Children Founders’ Award for his service as a member and Chair of the CT Voices Board of Directors, and as a community volunteer working on behalf of youth at risk.

- **Barbara Edinberg**, Director of Research at the Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition, received the Community Advocacy Award for her years of research, coalition-building and advocacy on a wide array of children’s and community issues.

- The **Connecticut Mirror** received the Media Award for their high quality and thoughtful public policy journalism.
Each recipient was celebrated for making a difference in the quality of life of children in Connecticut and enriching our state. Previous honorees have included former Governor M. Jodi Rell, former Lieutenant Governor Kevin Sullivan, the Connecticut Health Foundation, and Yale Professor Edward Zigler.

Connecticut Voices for Children (www.ctvoices.org) is a research-based policy think tank that works to advance public policies that benefit the state’s children, youth and families.

Note to reporters: the program guide for the event, with profiles of the recipients, is attached and on the CT Voices website. Photos of the recipients can be found at:
http://www.ctvoices.org/URL

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