

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 7, 2013

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State Leaders Recognized for Their Accomplishments on Behalf of Children and Youth

Four 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 12th "First for Kids Awards" ceremony on Wednesday evening, November 6, at the Pond House Café in West Hartford's Elizabeth Park.

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

- **David Nee**, a Fairfield resident, received the Lifetime Achievement Award for his more than 20 years of service as Executive Director of the Graustein Memorial Fund, and for his collaborative work to bring together diverse stakeholders to improve the state's early care and education system. Mr. Nee was introduced by Governor Dannel Malloy.
- **Commissioner Joette Katz**, a resident of Fairfield, was acknowledged with the State Policy Leadership Award for her leadership of the Department of Children and Families and for reforms that have kept more children with their families and reduced reliance on institutional and group care settings.
- **State Representative Jason Rojas**, who represents East Hartford and Manchester, received the Legislative Leadership Award for his advocacy on behalf of early literacy programs and improving educational quality.
- **United Way of Connecticut/2-1-1**, a statewide organization based in Rocky Hill, received the Public Service Award for the HUSKY Infoline service, which has helped over 1.6 million state residents over the last 15 years with signing up for and accessing the HUSKY health insurance program.

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 event program guide, which includes profiles of the recipients, and electronic photos of award recipients are available at <http://www.ctvoices.org/node/3131>.

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