



**Children's Advocates
for Change**

Championing the Well-Being of Illinois' Children
www.childrensadvocates.org

June/July Newsletter



Message from the President Dr. Tasha Green Cruzat

When the week began, I was ready to email you about Juneteenth, the Fourth of July, and ensuring that every child has the resources he or she needs to be free and independent and to thrive. I was going to tell you that for many of our children that path is thwarted by poverty, poor schools, inadequate housing, and lack of access to high-quality health care. I was going to point out just a few data points regarding Illinois children that show clear racial and ethnic inequities in economic well-being, infant mortality, and proficiency in math. I was going to point out that in providing the keys to unlock any constraint our children face, allowing them to be independent and free to pursue their dreams, we could all benefit in countless ways.

Then the mass shooting in Highland Park occurred. Seven individuals watching the community's Fourth of July parade are now dead and nearly 40 people injured.

Our hearts go out to the victims and their families as well as all the other residents of the community traumatized by the event. Such violence and trauma is, unfortunately, not unique to Highland Park.

According to the website www.gunviolencearchive.org, as of July 5th, there have been 322 mass shootings and 15 mass murders in just 2022. July 5th was the 186th day of the year. So, that's 1.7 mass shootings per day in 2022. Of all tracked U.S. shootings, there have been 870 individuals under the age of 18 killed. Keep in mind that the organization notes these are just the number of verified deaths.

And let's not ignore the gun violence that pervades many of our African-American and Latinx neighborhoods. A Chicago Sun-Times analysis of law enforcement and county medical examiner data, shows as of July 7th there have been 31 individuals under the age of 18 who were killed in Chicago shootings in 2022 (328 for all ages) and of that number 25 were African-American, two Hispanic, one white, and three of unknown race or ethnicity.

Let's just be blunt. Non-military and non-public safety individuals do not need high-powered assault rifles. The U.S. formally adopted the second amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1791. It says: A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed. We can debate all the possible interpretations and implications of that language at a later time. For now, I will just point out that in 1791 the most common type of guns were muskets and flintlock pistols...not AR-15 or M&P15 semiautomatic rifles.

There is another statistic from the past two weeks to keep in mind. While the numbers are not official yet, it appears the statewide voter turnout rate in Illinois' June 28th election primary was around 20%. That means eight in ten eligible Illinois voters chose not to cast a ballot. Perhaps, just a few contested races in their communities didn't motivate them. Yet, this is the starting point for deciding who will eventually hold the offices that in large part decide how we address crime, what social services we fund, and what type of education our children may receive.

Over the remaining weeks and months of 2022, Children's Advocates for Change will be putting forward questions we believe you should ask any official running for office in November. What steps does that individual propose to see that no child is hungry, homeless, uneducated or lacking health care and is free of an environment of crime and violence? Without the proper resources, our children cannot be truly free and independent. Join us as we work to achieve that goal.

Meet Our New Staff Members

We have several new staff members joining us for this summer and fall.



Sarah Stolarski-Galla

Intern

Sarah is currently completing her master's degree in social work at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in holistic nutrition. Sarah is also a certified yoga instructor and holds a Certificate in Nonprofit Management. She has worked in market research and the nonprofit sector, and currently serves on the Board of Trustees of the Arlington Heights Memorial Library.



Lillian Wynne Platten

Helen R. Weigle Fellow

Lillian received an M.A. in sociology at Loyola University Chicago. Her research interests are in social psychology, families, organizations, life-course development, education, and health care. Lillian has also worked as a Graduate Research Fellow at the Center for Urban Research and Learning at Loyola University Chicago and will begin the sociology doctoral program at Loyola University Chicago this fall.



Chloe Jackson

Youth Advocate Intern

Chloe will be starting her junior year at Walter Payton College Prep this fall. She has been a member of the school's varsity volleyball team and hopes to continue playing volleyball at the collegiate level. During the pandemic, she volunteered through Connecting Chicago to provide free virtual tutoring to Chicago-area students regardless of household income.

Donate Today!

We are proud to be working to improve the lives of our children. Yet, carrying on that mission also requires adequate financial resources. In these important times, when our children face a wide range of challenges and inequities, we ask you to please consider a contribution to Children's Advocates for Change. Your contributions help support our advocacy across the state to see that every child - regardless of that child's race, ethnicity, or zip code - has the necessary resources to thrive. Please go to our website www.childrensadvocates.org/donate today to make your contribution.

Thank you!



Click [Here](#) to View This Video on Children's Advocates for Change.



Children's Advocates for Change, 2022. All rights reserved.

Our mailing address is:

125 S. Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60603