

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Community Foundation Media Contact:
Edwin Prugh - NEVIN Communications
eprugh@nevincom.com 703-577-2776

The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia, in partnership with *Voices for Virginia's Children*, releases the first-ever Child and Youth Needs Assessment examining the critical needs of 530,000 children in Northern Virginia.

McLean, Va. (May 10, 2010) – The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia, in partnership with Voices for Virginia’s Children, releases their first-ever child and youth needs assessment – “*A Portrait of Children in Northern Virginia*”. The study summarizes the needs of more than 530,000 children ages 0-18 living in Northern Virginia. This research was conducted by the Health Systems Agency of Northern Virginia led by Dean Montgomery and his staff.

Children must have access to basic needs such as nutritious food, appropriate shelter, healthcare and education so they can reach their full potential. The study highlights demographic, economic and social trends that impact children and youth in the Northern Virginia region. It includes the most current data available from U.S. Census Reports, the American Community Survey, Virginia Vital Statistics, the Annie E. Casey Kids Count Data, and other sources.

The study finds that overall the region’s children have relatively positive well-being. Yet the study also highlights “pockets of poverty” in the region, where large numbers of children are exposed to multiple risk factors that threaten their development and functioning. Key findings include:

- More than 14% of children living in Northern Virginia participate in the free and reduced price school lunch programs.
- After a decade of population shifts, 36% of children in Northern Virginia reside in the outer suburbs of Loudoun and Prince William Counties.
- 5.7% of children in Northern Virginia live below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), defined as \$22,500 for a family of four in 2009.

PRESS RELEASE

- Approximately 43% of the children in Northern Virginia live in immigrant families, which is twice the National and Virginia State averages.
- The infant mortality rates in the region increased by 20% between 2000 and 2007.
- High school dropout rates in Northern Virginia are disproportionately high among Hispanic and Black high school populations.

The full report can be downloaded at www.communityfoundationnova.org and at www.vakids.org.

“Some of the most serious issues children, youth and families face in our region are especially concentrated in specific geographic areas, or “pockets of poverty,” said Eileen Ellsworth, President of the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia. “These pockets of poverty are where low-income families, larger number of dropouts, and larger numbers of expectant mothers who do not obtain adequate prenatal care are concentrated. Now that we have this data, the task before us is to share it with the region and help grow philanthropic and public investments to meet the most critical needs of our children and youth.”

About the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia:

The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia works to assess critical community needs and to grow philanthropy to meet those needs. During FY 2010, the Community Foundation will:

- Award \$4 million in grants to nonprofits, interfaith groups and schools addressing critical community needs
- Award \$130,000 in scholarships to graduating high school seniors in our region
- Report approximately \$30 million in philanthropic funds established by individual and corporate donors.

Visit www.communityfoundationnova.org to learn more about the Community Foundation and the benefits of establishing a donor advised fund, scholarship fund, or field of interest fund with them.

About Voices for Virginia’s Children:

Voices for Virginia’s Children is a statewide, non-partisan research and advocacy organization that champions public policies to improve the lives of Virginia’s children. We are the independent voice advocating for children, especially those who are disadvantaged and often go unheard in the public policy arena. Using our Kids Count system, we track multiple indicators of the well-being of Virginia’s children and use that information to identify unmet needs and shape data-based policy recommendations. Through vigorous advocacy, we inspire Virginia’s leaders and citizens to make children a public policy priority. For more information on Voices for Virginia’s Children visit www.vakids.org.

###