

Senate Resolution No. 1911

BY: Senator MAYER

COMMENDING the Westchester Children's Association of White Plains, New York, upon the occasion of celebrating its 110th Anniversary

WHEREAS, It is the custom of this Legislative Body to recognize and pay tribute to those organizations of high purpose and worthy accomplishment whose endeavors have faithfully served the welfare of the youth of the State of New York; and

WHEREAS, Attendant to such concern, and in full accord with its long-standing traditions, this Legislative Body is justly proud to commend the Westchester Children's Association upon the occasion of celebrating its 110th Anniversary to be celebrated on Wednesday, June 5, 2024; and

WHEREAS, On June 5, 1914, Westchester Children's Association (WCA) was established by a group of citizens, underwriting the salaries of Westchester's first six child welfare workers; and

WHEREAS, To this day, the mission of WCA has been to improve the lives of Westchester's young people by shaping policies and programs to meet their needs and by keeping their well-being at the top of the public agenda; and

WHEREAS, The vision of WCA is for every child to be healthy, safe, and prepared for life's challenges, regardless of race or zip code; and

WHEREAS, Westchester Children's Association is the leading independent voice for Westchester's youth, advocating for effective policies and programs for children since its inception; and

WHEREAS, From 1914 through the 1940s, WCA established the Children's Court in Westchester, the first in New York State; other advocacy for the youth, including remedial reading programs and guidance programs, were instituted in the county's public school system; a vocational guidance and placement service and a child guidance center were also inaugurated to provide assistance for the children and their families; and

WHEREAS, Throughout the following four decades, WCA pioneered advancements for the mental health of the children of the Westchester community, placing the first clinical psychologist in the county's public schools and establishing an early childhood counseling center in Mt. Vernon; and

WHEREAS, Additionally, Operations Crossroads, which connects children and their families with essential assistive services and programs related to issues addressed by the Family Court, was founded; presently operated by Children's Village, the county's first shelter for runaway and homeless youth was instituted; and

WHEREAS, Through the 1990s, Westchester Children's Association created several programs which championed the investment in state-sponsored health insurance, the supervised visitation with non-custodial parents, and the prevention of involvement in crime and delinquency of the county's children and youth; and

WHEREAS, To care for the children of court litigants, the Yonkers Family Court Children's Center was founded; two additional Centers were established in White Plains and New Rochelle; and

WHEREAS, The new millennium delivered increased public investments in early-childhood mental health, the coordination of government and community agencies to provide free or low-cost health insurance to children, the advocacy for improved pediatric emergency training for EMTs and ambulance volunteers, and the Child Health Advocacy Network (CHAN); and

WHEREAS, From 2010 until the present, Westchester Children's Association led a successful campaign to make children a priority for government spending, preserving more than \$7 million in county-funded services for the community's youth; and

WHEREAS, The WCA has provided opportunities for community outreach and overall personal development for young people and their families; and

WHEREAS, The success of the Westchester Children's Association is in direct correlation to the efforts of its members, whose involvement is, and always has been, characterized by an impressive commitment, an unbridled enthusiasm, and an uncompromising standard of excellence in all endeavors; and

WHEREAS, It is the sense of this Legislative Body that when individuals and organizations of such noble aims and accomplishments are brought to our attention, they should be celebrated and recognized by all the citizens of this great Empire State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to commend the Westchester Children's Association upon the occasion of celebrating its 110th Anniversary, and to honor its members, past and present, who have labored so conscientiously to secure and improve the quality of life for the youth of the community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the Westchester Children's Association.