Each year Step Up for Kids brings together thousands of people across the country to show widespread support for investments in children and families. Participants include child advocates, politicians, parents and kids. Events held across the country raise awareness among voters and political candidates regarding the issues American children face such as access to early care and learning, after-school programs, poverty, child abuse and neglect, and health care. This year, events were organized throughout Nevada, with participation in Las Vegas, Elko, and Reno, allowing us to reach more children and families to spread the message of making children a priority!

LAS VEGAS

On Sunday, September 23, 2018, the Nevada Institute for Children’s Research and Policy and the Children’s Advocacy Alliance, hosted the 11th Annual Step Up for Kids event. For the fourth consecutive year, the event, was held at Springs Preserve on a Sunday afternoon from 11:00am to 2:00pm. This year’s event was a big success with over 1,000 attendees. Throughout the event, families had the opportunity to interact with over 33 community organizations that provided information about resources and activities for the kids. Families also enjoyed free food, ice cream, face painting, raffle prizes, a petting zoo, as well as a Farmer’s Market organized by University of Nevada Cooperative Extension with free fruit and vegetables donated by Get Fresh and Three Square Food Bank. The audience was also entertained throughout the event by live performances from The chickBAND, All4Kids Dance Activities, and Distrect Arts Dance Company.

In addition, the Strong Start for Children hosted the 2nd Clark County Kid Mayor election to engage children in the electoral process. Fourth and Fifth graders in Southern Nevada were given the opportunity to apply. Five finalists were selected to campaign at the event. Finalists, Elizabeth Garr, Gissel Gutierrez, Torren Wolf, Trey Young-Winfrey, and Vanessa Gutierrez created campaigns about an issue they were passionate about, displayed their campaign materials at the event, discussed their issues with attendees, and gave a 2-3 minute speech on their campaign issues. Since this election was for kids and by kids, only kids under the age of 18 could vote for their favorite candidate. The kids in attendance were able to register to vote, enter a voting booth, cast their ballot, and receive an “I Voted” sticker when they were finished. This year, 300 kids voted and the 2017 Kid Mayor, Katie Hollingshead, announced this year’s winner - Trey Young-Winfrey! Stay up to date on his activities by visiting www.strongstartnv.org.

Thank you to all of our 2018 Clark County Kid Mayor Candidates!

Raffle prizes promoting family activities and healthy habits donated by the Las Vegas Lights, Las Vegas Aces, and members of the Southern Nevada Early Childhood Advisory Council including Acelero Learning Head Start Clark County, Children’s Advocacy Alliance, Girl Scouts of Southern Nevada, Las Vegas Urban League, Prevent Child Abuse Nevada, & UNCE Partners in Parenting were awarded to attendees throughout the day.

ELKO

In Elko, the Nevada Association for the Education of Young Children (NevAEYC) - Rural Committee, in collaboration with members from Elko County Library, The Children's Cabinet, PACE Coalition, Nevada Early Intervention Service, and Great Basin College Child & Family Center, with support from the Nevada Institute for Children’s Research and Policy organized their 3rd Annual Step Up for Kids event on Saturday, September 29, 2018 at the Northeastern Nevada Museum from 10:00am to 12:00pm.

Local providers supplied educational materials to the parents attending the event. Each vendor provided a kid friendly activity that helped engage the children who were in attendance. Each child received a goody bag that included crayons, books, play dough, and other activities. Eight prizes were raffled off to families at the end of the event. The raffle prizes included games, toys, books, and educational kits. A special thank you to all the vendors for providing raffle prizes, and to Lakeshore Learning for providing the bags.

The event was very successful with about 117 in attendance. Parents enjoyed learning the information that was made available to them and families enjoyed touring the museum together and learning about Elko's history.

RENO

In Reno, The Children’s Cabinet and The Children’s Advocacy Alliance with support from the Nevada Institute for Children's Research and Policy worked together to put on the 2018 Step Up for Kids event. The event was held Sunday, October 1, 2018 at Ferrari Farms from 10:00am to 2:00pm. Ferrari Farms provided a farm style barn that housed 11 local organizations and nonprofits. The first 200 kids were given a free pumpkin, a hayride, and a stroll through the corn maze. They were also given a voucher for a free hamburger and chips. Overall the event was a big success with over 300 attendees!

Vendors set up throughout the barn, greeted parents and kids, and provided them with information about their services. The vendors included; Strong Start Nevada, Children’s Advocacy Alliance, Nevadans Together for Medicaid, The Children’s Cabinet, Nevada Department of Education - Office of Early Learning and Development, Sugar Shockers, University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, Prevent Child Abuse Nevada, Girls Scouts of Northern Nevada, Nevada Pep, Immunize Nevada, Community Health Alliance, and SilverSummit Health Plan.

Kids were also given the opportunity to understand and experience the electoral process first hand during the event. The kids who attended the Reno Step Up for Kids event in Northern Nevada had the opportunity to vote for the second Washoe County Kid Mayor. The Candidates included Treasure Hunt, Eleanor Davis, and Bella Bennet. Only kids ages 18 and under could vote for their favorite candidate. Over 130 kids registered to vote, cast their ballots for the election, and received an “I Voted” sticker once they were finished. Over 130 kids cast their vote and elected Treasure Hunt as the 2018 Washoe County Kid Mayor. Stay up to date on her activities by visiting www.strongstartnv.org.

Thank you to our 2018 Washoe County Kid Mayor Candidates!