



# Happy 4th of July!

July 2011

*Kids Voting Buncombe County is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to securing the future of democracy by educating and involving youth in the election process today. Our goal is to educate students in Grades K-12 on the rights and responsibilities of voting to stimulate the critical thinking skills necessary for making informed decisions as voters.*



**Dear Kids Voting Supporter,**

**Happy 4th of July!** from Kids Voting Buncombe County. As you celebrate our nation's birthday please take advantage of this opportune time to talk with the young people in your life about the important rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities they enjoy as American citizens. One of the most important of these rights is the right to cast a ballot and help make decisions as informed voters and active community members.

During your 4th of July festivities, we encourage families to discuss the upcoming election with its issues and potential candidates. You might hold a mock election to vote for your picnic items. Have students create slogans and signs and campaign for their favorite candidates (hotdogs vs. hamburgers; ice cream vs watermelon etc.) then cast their ballot to determine the menu.

This year Kids Voting BC celebrates our **12th year of service** to the students of Buncombe County. This newsletter has a **12 for 12 theme** and contains news of our **expanded board**, our **Programming for 2011 (our 12th election)**, our **12 for 12 Fundraising Campaign** and the **12 Summer Civic Activities for Families and Friends**.

Please help us "spread the word" about **Kids Voting BC** by forwarding this e-news to everyone you think might be interested.

We appreciate the continued support of our volunteers and donors. If you would like to help or have questions please contact us at 828-775-5673 or [info@kidsvotingbc.org](mailto:info@kidsvotingbc.org).

And remember . . . **Take your Student and Vote Together!**

**Trena Parker and the Kids Voting BC Board of Directors**



## **Election 2011:**

This year, Kids Voting BC will expand our existing programming by facilitating the use of our civics curriculum and "real life" voting experience in summer camps, after-school programs and other youth focused activities.

We will continue to encourage area educators to use our resources in public, private and home school settings. Students will be able to vote on-line or with a paper ballot at home, in school, in after-school programs or with the adults in their lives at polling locations during the Early Voting period October 28 - November 5, 2011.

Kids Voting Day on Saturday, November 5th, will be the culminating event for our Election 2011 "real life" balloting experience. Early Voting locations will be staffed with Kids Voting volunteers, many of whom are high school students, who will assist our young voters as they practice exercising their rights and responsibilities as informed American citizens.



## **What folks say about Kids Voting BC:**

**A KVBC Parent:** *"When she gets older, she'll be a participant - there won't be this big mystery about what voting is all about. She'll say, 'Oh, I'll take time to do that.'"*

**A KVBC Voter:** *"I will vote so I can be part of making the decisions."*

**A KVBC Student Volunteer:** *"It teaches kids how to voice their opinions so that they'll voice them."*

From 10/31/10 [Citizen -Times Article](#)

## **12 for 12 Campaign**

**During the summer, we ask for a show of your support through the donation of \$12 (or larger if you prefer) to help defray our programming costs for 2011.**

**\$12**

**\* for our 12 years of service**

**\* for the 12 grades we serve**

**\* for the 12 months of the year that our**

**resources are available and invaluable**

**\* for the 12 Summer Civic Activities for Families**

**\* for 2012, the upcoming Presidential election year**

**It's simple and easy: either on-line or by mail.**

**We sincerely appreciate your support of our work!**

*Kids Voting Buncombe County is a 501(c)(3) organization as determined by the Internal Revenue Service. Gifts are tax deductible as allowed by law. Please consult your tax advisor for more information.*

## **Board News**

In February, longtime volunteer Kathi Ballard stepped down from the board to become our part-time staff person. In May, our Board of Directors elected officers for two-year terms. Trena Parker is our new chair, Polly Johnson, our vice-chair and Jewel Tavener, our secretary/treasurer. Lastly, in June, the board welcomed new members Marvin Baldwin, Pat Griffin and Samantha Gallman while Sophia Pilos-Narron and Katherine Calhoun were elected as student board members.

### **A Legacy of Citizenship**

During the past 12 years, our civics curriculum and "real life" voting experience have impacted countless students in Buncombe County. Two of our board members reflect this lifelong impact, this "legacy of citizenship".

Our treasurer, Jewel Tavener, is the daughter of founding board member Jennie Eblen. Not only did Jewel vote in Kids Voting elections as a student she also chose the Kids Voting Buncombe County program as the topic of her college Capstone Project.

New student board member, Sophia Pilos-Narron is the daughter of our first executive director, Maria Pilos-Narron. Introduced to Kids Voting at an early age, she now takes a leadership role as we plan our future.

*The Kids Voting BC website has numerous resources available for students and families to enrich your Election 2011 research. The following list (borrowed with permission from Democracy-NC.org) contains fun activities that provide many opportunities for meaningful discussions with the students in your lives.*

## **12 Summer Civic Activities for Families & Friends**

1. **Attend local festivals** and check out the tents maintained by political parties, non-profit groups and political action committees. Take the opportunity to point out that people have different priorities and opinions - and that in a democracy, people respect other people's opinions, even if they don't agree with them.
2. **Help your child take photographs of your town** for an on-line or printed book about "Our Freedoms" or

"The Citizens of [Your Town]." Use the book to discuss diversity, equality, poverty and related issues.

3. **Take a driving tour of different neighborhoods in your town** and use the trip as a chance to discuss the idea that people are often different in how they look, where they come from, that they may have different incomes - and different opportunities as a result - and that they may have different needs, depending on their age. Then explain that, regardless of these differences, they all have equal rights as citizens.
4. **Attend city council meetings, county commissioner meetings**, school board meetings, zoning board meetings and court sessions with your child. Make sure they understand that ordinary people are standing up to speak vs. other people in the room who have been elected to be leaders.
5. **Visit historical museums, monuments, and/or national parks** and discuss what part in democracy each place played.
6. **Take a tax tour as you drive around** and have your child guess what services and facilities are being paid for by tax dollars. Use this opportunity to explain to your child what taxes are, why people pay them and what benefits they receive in return. Be sure to include the library, police and fire services, public schools, prisons, roads, garbage pick-up, city parks, etc.
7. **Use a driving tour to play a game** based on guessing whether a building or other facility is owned by the public (paid for by taxes) or is a private property (owned by an individual or groups of individuals). Use this distinction as a basis to discuss how people quite naturally act in their own best interests but that government is different: it is supposed to act in the public good and do what's best for all the people.
8. **Sponsor a local candidate reception at your house** and have your child help you plan the event and invite neighbors to come. Let your child introduce the candidate to others.
9. **Schedule a field trip** to one or more of the following: the Mayor's office, your congressional representative's office, the Board of Elections, County Commissioners Chambers, District Court, City Hall or the Chamber of Commerce.
10. **Create an imaginary town budget.** Once you learn about basic government services, give your child a set amount to spend on these services and help them divide the money up. Create a pie chart to show their spending priorities.
11. **Hold a family referendum or election**, even on something as simple as whether to order pizza or fried

chicken for dinner. Prepare ballots and use a special Family Voting Box and hold an election to determine what the family will do. Use this technique to illustrate that people vote on policies as well as candidates.

12. **Have your child choose a local issue important to them** and help them decide what they think should be done about it. Have them write a letter to the editor of the local newspaper. Be sure they sign their age with their name as that may encourage the editor to print it. Send the letter in. Use checking for the letter as an excuse for reading more letters to the editor and discussing the idea of different viewpoints and opinions.

**Kids Voting Buncombe County** relies on the dedicated support and invaluable efforts of our many volunteers:

School Officials and Liaisons, Precinct Captains, Poll Workers, High School Forum members, election officials and board members.

On behalf of the students we serve

**THANK YOU!**



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