



Children's Defense Fund–Ohio

A strong, effective, independent voice for *all* children

Improving the Odds for Children



Ebi Reyes, Emily Wilcox, Renuka Mayadev, Executive Director CDF-Ohio, Darrius McLean, Linda Ransom and Journae' Morris

Celebrating Five Extraordinary Ohio High School Students and a Children's Champion

On Thursday, May 19, more than 200 supporters filled the Grand Ballroom of the Westin Columbus to honor five outstanding high school seniors at the 2016 Beat the Odds® Awards Ceremony. **Darrius McLean**, Columbus (Walnut Ridge High School), **Journae' Morris**, Garfield Heights (Garfield Heights High School), **Linda Ransom**, Columbus (Eastmoor Academy), **Ebi Reyes**, Dayton (Stivers School for the Arts), and **Emily Wilcox**, Ironton (Dawson Bryant High School) have overcome tremendous adversity to achieve academically and give back to their communities. [Hear the stories of our Beat the Odds winners.](#)

Each honoree receives a \$5,000 scholarship, a laptop computer, and event attire, thanks to the generosity of the Beat the Odds scholarship program supporters.

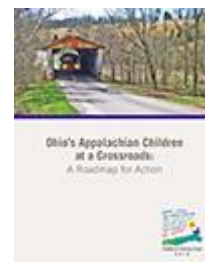
Children's Champion, Rachel Bloomekatz, was recognized as well for her tireless work improving the odds for all of our children through legal strategy and defending their rights. Most recently, she protected the voting rights of our Ohio youth to participate in November's election.

Join us in congratulating our 2016 Beat the Odds honorees as they prepare for college and beyond!

Little Improvement Seen Over 15 Years for Children in Ohio's Appalachian Region

A new report by CDF-Ohio paints a troubling picture of the health and well-being of the children in Appalachia Ohio. [Ohio's Appalachian Children at a Crossroads: A Roadmap for Action](#) comes 15 years after CDF-Ohio's [groundbreaking original report](#) on Ohio's Appalachian children. The new report notes

some positive change, but overall finds a stark contrast in the well-being of the Appalachian children compared to those in the rest of the state and much of the nation. Many health problems actually have worsened or newly emerged since the first report in 2001, and the percentage of children living in poverty in the region has increased. The report provides specific, actionable recommendations to improve the lives of children and the region overall.



Over the coming months, CDF-Ohio and our regional partners will take [Ohio's Appalachian Children at a Crossroads: A Roadmap for Action](#) on the road. Stay tuned for regional forum dates to learn more about the report and to share best practices to support Appalachian children and families.



CDF-Ohio staff, Ohio House Representatives Ryan Smith (93rd District, R-Bidwell) and Debbie Phillips (94th District, D-Albany), and regional partners at a May 4 press conference at the Ohio Statehouse.

Overall Well-Being of Ohio Children Drops Compared to Other States

The national 2016 [KIDS COUNT Data Book](#) released this week reveals what we know in Ohio--all of our children's basic needs are not being met. Ohio's rank in child well-being slipped to 26, the first time it has ranked in the bottom half of states since 2012. The national 2016 *Data Book* compares measures of child well-being state-by-state in four domains: economic well-being, education, health, and family and community.

There is good news to report. Despite growing up in the midst of challenging economic times, the [Data Book](#) finds that young people are positioning themselves for future success by meeting critical milestones. Nationally and in Ohio, the teen birth rate and the percentage of teens abusing alcohol and drugs have both fallen. We also see record lows in the percentage of teens not graduating on time. These improvements have occurred despite persistent poverty, skyrocketing higher education costs, and a lack of good-paying jobs. We must hold up our end of the bargain and do more to ensure this generation of teens can fulfill its potential.

Ohio Department of Medicaid Allocates Funding in Nine Ohio Communities to Combat Infant Mortality

Ohio continues to take positive steps in reducing infant mortality. The last state budget allocated \$26.8 million over two years to be spent on community-specific initiatives across the state. Earlier this month, the Ohio Department of Medicaid announced the awarding of those funds to nine communities, including Columbus, Cleveland, Cincinnati and Toledo. Columbus, for example, was awarded \$2.3 million to support five projects that would provide a range of services to combat infant mortality, such as prenatal care, maternal health care education programs, and treatment sessions for pregnant women addicted to drugs.

The state is also taking legislative action. In March, four members of the Ohio General Assembly released a [report](#) from the Ohio Commission on Infant Mortality with recommendations to combat infant mortality. Many of those recommendations are included in the recently introduced Senate Bill 332, which is currently before the Senate Health and Human Services Committee.



Truancy and School Discipline Legislation Passes Ohio House

CDF-Ohio has continued working to implement common sense reforms on truancy and school discipline to keep children in school. In May, the Ohio House overwhelmingly passed House Bill 410 with a vote of 92-1. The Ohio Senate's Education Committee has already held two hearings on the bill, and consideration by the Ohio Senate will resume after the summer recess.

Children's Defense Fund-Ohio in the News

[For student, homeless was not hopeless](#)

June 4, 2016, *The Columbus Dispatch*

[Stivers student beats odds, wins state award](#)

May 19, 2016, *Dayton Daily News*

[Overcoming hardship](#)

May 19, 2016, *Ironton Tribune*

[Report: Ohio's Appalachian children face continued struggles](#)

May 5, 2016, *Public News Service Ohio*

[Report: In Appalachian Ohio, kids falling farther behind](#)

May 4, 2016, *Cincinnati Enquirer*

[Report: 10 percent of Ohio children have a parent in prison, and they need more support](#)

April 25, 2016, *The Columbus Dispatch*

[End Summer Child Hunger Now!](#)

April 15, 2016, *The Huffington Post*

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