

Appleseed This Week

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A nonprofit network of 16 public interest justice centers in the U.S. and Mexico, Appleseed is dedicated to building a society in which opportunities are genuine, access to justice is universal and equal, and government advances the public interest.

SAVE THE DATE!

On Thursday, March 25, 2010, Appleseed and Chicago Appleseed will proudly host our annual joint fundraising event, *Organizing for Change in Chicago*, at the Art Institute of Chicago.

At the event, we will honor an outstanding

Budget Cuts Hurt Child Welfare

SC Appleseed Report Shows Impact of Reduced Services

Sparking outrage and condemnation nationwide, South Carolina Lt. Gov. Andre Bauer this week compared government assistance programs to "feeding stray animals" in an attempt to justify limiting access to free and reduced-price school meals, one of many vital child support programs suffering heavy cutbacks this year.

Bauer's comment unfortunately echoes a larger trend both in South Carolina and many other states around the country: agencies and programs that provide children with crucial health care, education, and protection services are severely underfunded, leaving an increasing number of needy children without a lifeline.

"South Carolina has suffered declines in state revenue and has responded by reducing services at a time when they're most needed," said Sue Berkowitz, Director of SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center. "But we can't continue to starve state agencies that provide for children's basic needs without tragic and expensive long-term consequences."

The alarming extent of current budget cuts and shortfalls, as well as their devastating impact on the lives of the poor, is documented in "The Children's Budget Behind the Numbers," a new report published by SC Appleseed under its "Focus on Kids" initiative. [Click here to view a PDF version.](#)

The report translates the state's declining allocations for various child services into a detailed portrait of real-life fallout. With 53 percent of South Carolina's children living in low-income households, and 10 percent living in extreme poverty, lack of child welfare programs will exacerbate an already dire situation. Among the most sobering statistics published in the report:

individual, law firm, and corporate leader for their commitment to pro bono.

Roger Pascal
Schiff Hardin LLP

Kirkland & Ellis LLP

William Von Hoene
Exelon Corporation

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- State appropriations for the Dept. of Education have fallen \$75 million since FY 2006-2007, with a 50 percent reduction in funding for the division that provides students' meals, transportation, and health services.
- Funding for the Dept. of Social Services has fallen by almost \$20 million over the last four fiscal years.
- The Dept. of Health and Human Services has enrolled only 16,000 of a possible 70,000 children eligible for the Children's Health Insurance Program, reflecting an effort on the agency's part to suppress enrollment as a cost-saving measure.

Such short-sighted cuts around the country will only perpetuate the cycle of poverty, preventing children from achieving healthier, more productive lives. In response, Appleseed and Appleseed Centers around the country are examining various means by which to ensure that all children are provided genuine educational opportunity and that low-income families are well-supported in their efforts to attain financial security.

For more on "Focus on Kids" and other projects, visit SC Appleseed's website at <http://www.scjustice.org/index.html>.