

1 **RESOLUTION B**

2 Resolution Concerning our Commitment to the Education and Wellbeing of Children & Youth
3 throughout the Diocese of Rochester
4 Submitted by: Diocesan Council

5
6 *Given that:*

7
8 The 74th General Convention of the Episcopal Church affirmed that all young people are created in
9 the image of God. Recognizing that much of our culture and policies obscure this image of God in them,
10 rendering children and youth vulnerable.¹

11
12 The 76th General Convention of the Episcopal Church urged each Episcopal congregation to develop a
13 partnership with a local school; each Episcopalian to give 40 hours a year participating in educational
14 support.²

15
16 **RESOLVED,**

17 That this 83rd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester affirms that all our children, their
18 education, and general wellbeing is a priority for our churches.

19
20 **RESOLVED,**

21 That each congregation make a commitment in 2015 to support at least one parish-based initiative in
22 their community or an existing program within the Diocese (i.e. Public School Tutoring Programs, The
23 Right on School, Nazareth Elementary, Kids' Club, Freedom Kids' Camp, Creation Camp, Community
24 Arts Academy, etc...) through prayer, volunteers and financial resources.

25
26 **RESOLVED,**

27 Each congregation will commit to working together as a Diocese by designating a Sunday, preferably
28 the third Sunday in October as "Children's Weekend" in collaboration with "Children's Interfaith
29 Weekend", to raise awareness of the inequality and economic disparities that leave some children more
30 vulnerable in our respective communities.

31
32 *Explanation:*

33
34 "... Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the
35 kingdom of heaven belongs.' (Matthew 19:14)

36
37 **How are the Children of the Eight Counties of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester?**³

38 A review of the indicators of wellbeing included in the attached chart shows differing outcomes for
39 children and youth across the 8 counties of the Episcopal Diocese, with some bright spots and other
40 areas of great concern.

41 For example:

- 42 • All counties but Livingston have a portion of youth (under age 18) without health insurance that
43 is higher than the child/youth uninsured rate in New York State as a whole. Yates, Steuben and
44 Schuyler counties how a particularly high rate. NOTE: These data do not reflect implementation
45 of the Affordable Care Act.
- 46 • All counties but Monroe and Livingston have higher rates of involvement in child abuse and
47 maltreatment cases than New York State as a whole, with particularly alarming rates in Schuyler
48 and Yates counties.

¹ *The Acts of General Convention: 2003-A128 "Reaffirm Commitment to Educational Support of Young People"*

² *The Acts of General Convention: 2009-B025 "Support Equity and Participation in Public Education"*

³ *"How are the Children of the Eight Counties of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester?"* October 2014;
Information compiled by The Children's Agenda, 1 S. Washington St., Suite 400, Rochester, NY 14614 (585)
256-2620 <http://thechildrensagenda.org>

- 49 • Lead poisoning and overweight/obesity rates are troubling, both in the state as a whole and in the
50 8 counties of the diocese.

51 It's important to note that while the 8 counties' child poverty rates range from 10% to 26%, all of them
52 are too high. The U.S. has a child poverty rate of 21%, putting it in a disgraceful position compared to
53 other nations. The Academic Pediatric Association's Task Force on Childhood Poverty reported in
54 August 2013 that the average childhood poverty rate of OECD nations is 12%, with many European
55 nations having childhood poverty rates well under 10%.

56
57 Research shows that poverty is linked to every indicator in the attached chart. Lifting families out of
58 poverty and reversing the effects of poverty on children has a far-reaching impact on the child, family
59 and community in terms of improved school performance, better adult health outcomes, lower demands
60 for public services, decreased special education and criminal justices costs, and more.

61 62 *Rochester and Monroe County*

63 Data about children in Monroe County and Rochester are readily available, and because Monroe County
64 has a population that far exceeds the other 7 counties combined, the status of its young residents
65 substantially impacts the overall numbers for the diocese.

66
67 A December 2013 report on poverty published by the Rochester Area Community Foundation looked
68 closely at poverty in the city of Rochester as well as a 9-county area that has 5 overlapping counties with
69 the diocese. It found:

- 70 • Rochester has the 5th highest rate in the U.S. among the 75 largest metro areas; *NOTE:*
71 More recent Census data place Rochester as the 2nd poorest city in the nation.
- 72 • The Rochester City School District (RCSD) is the poorest school district in upstate NY and the
73 poorest large urban school district in New York State
- 74 • Rochester has a very high concentration of poverty (#3 among the top 100 metropolitan areas in
75 U.S.)
- 76 • Most (60%) of the region's poor are white and exurban; 41,000 people live in poverty in Monroe
77 County suburbs.
- 78 • The subpopulation most likely to be poor is children.
- 79 • RCSD students' academic performance is the poorest of any large urban district in New York
80 State.
- 81 • Reports of child abuse/neglect increased by 22% from 2006 – 2013 in Monroe County.
- 82 • Monroe County's infant mortality rate is worse than that of most industrialized nations, NY State
83 and the U.S. national rate.
- 84 • Child care availability: The Center for Governmental Research and The Children's Agenda
85 estimate that 78% of the low-income working families who are eligible for child care subsidies
86 receive them. Childcare assistance is persistently underfunded, and Monroe County has lost
87 7,200 subsidy slots since 2000.