

## Child and Family Services honors Lightfoot with *Voice for Children Award*



*Alycia Niolet (left), age 7, and Fantasia Brooks (right), age 5, help to present the Voice for Children award to Jack Lightfoot of Child and Family Services.*

Child and Family Services of New Hampshire presented Jack Lightfoot of Goffstown, NH, with the Voice for Children Award, an honor bestowed yearly to a New Hampshire citizen who has shown an outstanding commitment to and made a tremendous difference in the lives of children and families.

For 26 years, CFS has presented the Voice for Children Award to an advocate of note in the community. This is first time the award has been presented to one of its own. The award was presented at Lightfoot's retirement party, which was held on December 13 at the Kimball-Jenkins Estate in Concord. Over 160 people including legislators, advocates, philanthropists, educators, community leaders, social workers and many past and present CFS staff and board members, turned out to honor Lightfoot's legacy. In addition, CFS announced that going forward, the award will be named "The Jack Lightfoot Voice for Children Award."

A true champion of the cause, Lightfoot has served as the director of Child and Family Services' advocacy program, the NH Children's Lobby, for 37 years. In that time, he has advanced the well-being of children and families in many ways including, but not limited to the following: Revised child abuse and neglect laws, launched the Foster Care Health Project, co-founded NH CARES and the NH Children's Alliance, co-wrote the guardianship of minors law, promoted day care licensing, evolved a restorative juvenile justice model, revised action settlement laws to ensure availability and stability of critical services to children, shepherded every change in adoption laws since the laws were written, and fought tirelessly for CHINS (Children in Need of Services).

Lightfoot has served on the boards of several organizations including the Disability Rights Center, Manchester Mental Health Center, NH Association of Mental Health, NH Legal Assistance, and he served on the last "Action Committee for Foster Care" in the country. He also supervised the writing of the Guardian ad Litem Law and is the chair of the GAL board. In addition, he has served on the court improvement project and permanency planning task force.

Well respected in his field, Lightfoot has been recognized numerous times by local and national organizations including EEIN (Early Education and Intervention Network of NH), and the Child Welfare League of America, among others.

In his thank-you address to members of the CFS family, Lightfoot says, "It is indeed a high honor to receive the Voice for Children Award. I accept it, not as an individual, but I hope as a symbol of what can be accomplished when many people work together. Naming the award after me is just beyond my belief. In my mind, it puts me in the same category of other people who I hold up as heroes—particularly Bruce Friedman and Teddy Nardi and Major Wheelock. I never thought of myself in the same league as those three and I am moved beyond words by the thought that you think I am worthy."

Further, Lightfoot expressed his gratitude to the CFS organization for enabling him to engage for all these years, in work he cares deeply about, which is "protecting and promoting the health, safety and well-being of our children."

"I am honored to have been privileged to work with him and to learn from him," says Marilyn Mahoney, chair of the CFS board of trustees and of the advocacy committee. "His legacy will be enduring, and his name long will be recognized as that belonging to the best voice New Hampshire's children could have."

President and CEO of CFS, Mike Ostrowski calls Lightfoot a "quiet hero." And while children may never know Lightfoot's name, "their lives are so much safer and their well-being protected because of his 37 years as their advocate."

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