

News

Sandbox Party Joins with Michigan's Children and Focuses on Making Children's Issues Top Priorities

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 2014

With a critical Michigan election season upon us, the Michigan Sandbox Party has joined forces with Michigan's Children to raise awareness and make children and family issues top priorities in state political campaigns.

Michigan's Children is the only statewide, multi-issue advocacy organization focused solely on public policy in the best interest of children, from cradle to career, and their families.

Founded in 2010 as the action arm of Michigan's early childhood community, the Sandbox Party – which will now become a project of Michigan's Children – has expanded its advocacy to children of all ages with early childhood issues remaining an important focus. The Sandbox Party has also redesigned its outreach and website at www.michigansandboxparty.org to an election-year focus in order to help generate excitement around children's concerns and drive turnout in the upcoming primaries.

"Together, we are creating a powerful network to mobilize greater numbers of constituents around the 2014 races and help educate voters about what's at stake for children and families," said Matt Gillard, President & CEO of Michigan's Children. This election year holds races for top jobs in Lansing and Washington D.C., including the Governor's office, every House and Senate district in Michigan, U.S. Congressional and a pivotal U.S. Senate seat.

"Our goal is to engage more Michiganians, encourage them to learn about the candidates in their communities, get involved in the election process, and speak up for children's issues, Gillard said.

"The Sandbox Party will add strength to Michigan's Children's already existing network of localized partners connected to programs that serve the state's most challenged children and families – the same children and families impacted by the policy decisions made in Lansing and in Washington, D.C.," he said. "This expanded network of advocates throughout the state can fight for the best interests of children and hold candidates accountable for campaign promises made long after November. And that's something we all believe is needed now more than ever."

With its new election-focus, the Sandbox Party will first promote awareness around the August 5 primary. Gillard said voting in primaries is notoriously low, often as low as 10 percent of registered voters, though in many districts primary elections will determine who is ultimately elected into public office. To counter

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that, Gillard said it is important that voters understand where these primary candidates stand on issues that matter most to children and families.

The new website will be an easy-to-use tool for individuals to understand the issues at play, the candidates, and how to get involved. Besides offering profiles of candidates and races, visitors to the redesigned michigansandboxparty.org website will be able to look up candidates running for office in their communities, a calendar of appearances by statewide and local candidates in their area, and a variety of other election-related news and information.

After the elections, the Sandbox Party website will transition to an outreach and engagement tool for Michigan's Children's networks to stay involved in public policy work by holding their elected officials accountable.

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With a jobless rate that's 50 percent below the state average, it's easy to think Ann Arbor is immune to the impacts of long-term unemployment. The Michigan Unemployment Insurance Project commissioned a study on the effects of the state's policies and discovered that we're undermining both our economic recovery and the well-being of our most vulnerable kids.

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