

foster children, the Children's Network has evolved into the leading voice for all young people in Solano County. It is the convener of California's first and among its most effective inter-agency coordinating councils dedicated to improving the lives of children.

The Children's Network works to educate people in Solano County about the needs of children and to bring together those who can help achieve the best outcomes for kids. In promoting the health, education, and well-being of all children in the county, the Children's Network conducts and disseminates research, offers training, administers grants, coordinates county agencies, advocates for policy changes at all levels of government, and works to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of county services for children and families.

The Children's Network partners with a variety of private and public organizations to improve the lives of local children. Through contracts with Solano County, the Children's Network also provides staff support—such as budget development, research, training and administrative support—for three councils appointed by the Board of Supervisors (Children's Network Council, Child Abuse Prevention Council, and the Child Care Planning Council), as well as for a network of the county's Family Resource Centers.

Accomplishments of the Children's Network include:

Developed and helped foster successful passage of a California state law permitting funding for "family preservation," which provides support and allows appropriate families to stay together in cases where children might otherwise be placed in foster care.

Provided the leadership to establish the Solano County Children's Trust Fund, which raises more than \$100,000 annually for child abuse prevention services in Solano County.

Worked to create a system of Family Resource Centers, which provide family support services in every city in the county for more than 4,000 at-risk families each year.

Advocated successfully for the county to maintain and increase the amount of money available for child care for families in the state's welfare-to-work program, who today receive more than \$8 million annually in child care subsidies.

Persuaded the County Board of Supervisors and all seven local city councils to adopt a set of Policy Principles that provide a framework for successful delivery of children's services.

Convinced the Board of Supervisors to adopt the goal of improving the lives of children as its top priority for 2001-2003.

Provided child development training and/or stipends to more than 400 early education professionals to support high quality child care in the first year of the Compensation and Retention Encourage Stability (CARES) program.

Helped develop and coordinate the Integrated Family Support Initiative, a home-visiting program that allowed for nearly 1,000 visits to isolated, at-risk families in its first year, 2001.

Raised awareness of children's needs through publication of The Children's Budget and The Children's Report Card, which drew attention to state and federal funding shortfalls that affect local families and provided data for grant proposals, thereby increasing funds for local children's services.

Organized an annual Child Abuse Prevention Conference that has provided high-caliber

training to approximately 900 government officials, parents, service providers and community members for each of the last four years.

Current activities of the Children's Network include:

Researching and publishing The Children's Budget, a series examining how government funding for children is allocated and spent in Solano County, and The Children's Report Card, a compilation of data about the county's successes, challenges, and progress in serving children.

Involving parents and community members in forums to discuss what can be done to improve the lives of children.

Established a strong child advocacy and fund-raising presence in Solano County as the action arm of the first children's inter-agency coordinating councils in the state.

Seeking creative budget strategies in partnership with county agencies to achieve better, more efficient, and more effective investments in services for children and families.

Encouraging officials at the local and state levels to consider the needs of children in policy decisions.

Administering the county's program to provide stipends and child development training for child care professionals.

Coordinating a home-visiting program present in all Family Resource Centers to provide family support countywide.

Mr. Speaker, we know we speak for all the members of the House of Representatives when we congratulate the Children's Network for twenty years of effective advocacy on behalf of children in Solano County.

TRIBUTE TO THE TIBBITS OPERA HOUSE OF JACKSON, MICHIGAN

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 8, 2002

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise to recognize the Tibbits Opera House, in Coldwater, MI, which celebrated its 120th anniversary on September 21, 2002. Having opened in 1882, the Tibbits is one of Michigan's oldest theaters. Built for a cost of \$25,000, the Tibbits was one of the finest opera houses of its day.

Through the years, the Tibbits has provided the residents of Michigan's seventh district with a wide range of entertainment offerings: hosting operas, plays, wrestling matches, silent pictures and movies. Famous acts like John Phillip Sousa and his band, Guy Lombardo, the Glen Miller Orchestra and Bufalo Bill and his Cowboys all performed on its stage.

Fellow Representatives, I am happy to report that after all this time, the Tibbits is still going strong, thanks to the Tibbits Opera House Foundation and Arts Council, which purchased the theater in 1963. Every year, thousands of people flock to the Tibbits to see plays like Camelot, The Last Night of Ballyhoo, A Connecticut Yankee, and A Grand Night for Singing. In addition, the Tibbits offers programs for children, professional touring musicians, and art exhibitions, and also plays host to a variety of community activities.

The Tibbits is a community landmark and an important piece of our country's rich theatrical

heritage. It is a testament to the residents of Coldwater that it has been preserved for 120 years, and continues to thrive.

THE RETIREMENT OF CONGRESSMAN BENJAMIN GILMAN

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 8, 2002

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, it is with profound respect and admiration that I bid my good friend, esteemed colleague, and fellow New Yorker, Congressman BENJAMIN GILMAN, farewell as he retires after 30 years of service to the House of Representatives.

Congressman GILMAN has been devoted to public service and helping others his entire life.

From the time he lost family members in the Holocaust, and witnessed persecution by Nazi Germany as a young soldier in World War II, Congressman GILMAN has been unwavering in his commitment to human rights.

He fought for human rights before the fight became popular.

Congressman GILMAN was first recognized for his human rights work in 1978, thanks to his successful efforts to free several prisoners in East Germany, Mozambique, Cuba, and several other nations.

But he didn't stop there.

Two years later he fought for the release of 30 U.S. citizens from the political imprisonment by the Cuban Government.

It is these courageous feats, among countless others, that contributed to the tremendous leadership he provided to the International Relations Committee.

As a ranking minority member on the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee, Congressman GILMAN earned a reputation as a leader and a fighter for safe and equitable workplaces for civil service and postal service employees.

Now the senior Republican on the Government Reform Committee, on which we serve together, I have had the honor of working with him on issues that are not only important to our state, but to the country.

Last year, I proudly worked with the Congressman to fund an environmental study on the potential causes of high breast cancer rates in our state.

Whether it was in Hudson Valley or one of many countries around the world, Congressman GILMAN has never hesitated to help those in need.

Although he may be unsure where his path will now take him, I have no doubt that his determined spirit and renowned kindness will continue to be appreciated by many.

Even though the Congressman and I have always stood on opposite sides of the aisle—we have rarely stood on opposites sides of an issue, most importantly matters that affecting New York—and I am proud to have served with him.

Beloved by both Republicans and Democrats, "Gentle Ben"—you will be sorely missed by your constituents, by fellow New Yorkers, and by fellow Americans.