



VACCINATE YOUR FAMILY

*A Legacy of Prevention,
a Future of Protection*

The Greatest Privilege: Reflections on Thirty Years at Vaccinate Your Family

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This summer marks two milestones that are deeply personal to me: Vaccinate Your Family's 35th anniversary and my 30th year in service to the organization.

It's difficult to put into words what these years have meant. People often ask me how a young professional found herself working alongside two former First Ladies and eventually leading the organization they founded. The truth is, I often ask myself the same question.

Looking back, I realize what an extraordinary privilege it has been. Spending my career in service to others, alongside two of the people I admired most—Rosalynn and Betty—has been the defining honor of my life.

When I joined the organization, then called Every Child By Two, I was just 28 years old. I had recently finished graduate school while working at the American Nurses Association, and thought my career would focus on working with children with special needs. My father, a microbiologist, was the first to introduce me to the invisible world of microbes, sparking a lifelong fascination with infectious diseases. My mother was an office manager who embraced the emerging world of computers long before most people did, equipping me with skills that gave me a significant advantage as computers transformed the workplace.

When the opportunity arose to work on a childhood vaccine program, called Every Child By Two, within the American Nurses Foundation, I found myself working alongside extraordinary leaders, passionate advocates, dedicated nurses, pediatricians, researchers, policymakers, communication experts, and two remarkable First Ladies, whose vision inspired a national movement.

I certainly wasn't an expert. What I did have was energy, curiosity, and the willingness to learn about the science behind life-saving vaccines and the infrastructure that supported their delivery to every child in the nation.

Vaccinate Your Family has spent 35 years ensuring millions of children and adults have access to lifesaving vaccines.

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Looking back, I realize that my lack of expertise in vaccines and health policy may have been my greatest strengths.

I was confident in my abilities, but deeply humbled at the realization that I was surrounded by some of the greatest minds in science, policy, and public health. I leaned on an incredibly knowledgeable and supportive Board of Directors, generous mentors, and colleagues who patiently shared their wisdom. I asked questions. I listened. I welcomed advice. Those lessons shaped not only my career but also my philosophy of leadership. Today, our Board of Directors and Committee of Scientific Advisors keep up this tradition of supporting the organization in all our efforts.

Over the last three decades, I've watched the immunization landscape transform.

I've watched generations of children become parents themselves. I've watched friends become parents and now grandparents. I've watched vaccine-preventable diseases disappear from communities, only to return, reminding us that progress can never be taken for granted.

When I began, new vaccines arrived at a slower pace, giving us time to educate healthcare professionals and communities about the diseases they prevented. Much of our work centered on nurses, pediatricians, schools, communities and building confidence in vaccines through education and partnership. As vaccine science and communication platforms to reach families advanced, so did the complexity of the work.

What began as a shared vision of Rosalynn Carter and Betty Bumpers, evolved into a broad public health movement powered by organizations and coalitions working together toward a common goal, ensuring that everyone had access to fact-based information about and access to life-saving vaccines.

From the earliest days of our organization families who experienced the devastating consequences of vaccine-preventable diseases found the courage to tell their stories—not for themselves, but to protect other's loved ones. Their voices have always been our most powerful reminder that behind every policy discussion is a real family. Their advocacy has changed laws, influenced policymakers, educated communities, and saved lives. They remain at the heart of everything Vaccinate Your Family stands for, and they are deeply embedded in my soul.

One of the greatest lessons I've learned is that lasting progress doesn't come from one organization trying to do everything. It comes from recognizing when new expertise is needed and helping others succeed.

Throughout the years, Every Child By Two (now Vaccinate Your Family) had the privilege of helping launch, nurture, and strengthen organizations that became essential parts of our nation's immunization infrastructure. National and statewide coalitions, professional societies, trusted public health partners as well as the makers of life saving vaccines, have each brought expertise that strengthened the entire movement.



Together, we helped secure the Vaccines for Children Program, Children's Health Insurance Program coverage, expanded vaccine access through the Affordable Care Act, the development of immunization information systems, and increased federal vaccine financing. We helped to advance countless policy changes and recommendations that quietly improved millions of lives.

Our collective impact has been remarkable, and these accomplishments belong to all of us.

When I think about the people who made this journey so meaningful, my thoughts immediately go to those who worked beside me every day, including my coworkers, colleagues and family.

Service wasn't something I left at the office. It became part of our family's life together. My own family became part of the journey from the beginning. When my infant son was hospitalized twice with influenza, the experience strengthened my own commitment to ensuring every family understands the value of vaccines. Later, my children appeared in educational videos, news reports, and public awareness efforts. My husband and children have always been all in—hauling boxes, collating materials, and sharing precious moments with our cofounders.

That same spirit extended within our office. Jennifer Zavolinsky and Rich Greenaway weren't simply colleagues—they were family. For decades we led side by side, without much concern for titles or hierarchy. Whatever needed to be done, we did together. As our organization grew, so did an extraordinary staff whose passion and creativity expanded our reach far beyond what we ever imagined. I consider every one of them a lifelong colleague and friend.

Throughout these thirty years, I've also been blessed with extraordinary mentors including our tireless board members. People including the indomitable Betty and Rosalynn, Bill Foege, Walt Orenstein, Paul Offit, Mary Beth Petraco, John Crotty, Kirsten Thistle, Claire Hannan, Marcy Jones and Catherine Flores believed in me long before I felt that I deserved their confidence. Their wisdom and support shaped not only my career, but the person I am today.

When I became a Rotarian fifteen years ago, I realized I'd found a motto that perfectly captured the values I'd been fortunate to learn much earlier: *Service Above Self*. It reminds us to ask whether what we do is truthful, fair, beneficial, and rooted in service.

Looking back after thirty years at VYF, I don't measure success by titles or awards. I measure it by the people I've had the privilege to work besides, the families we've served, the partnerships we've built, and the lives that have undoubtedly been protected because so many people chose collaboration over recognition.



I'd like to encourage the next generation of public health leaders to remain steadfast:

Public health needs your new voices, new skills, new ideas. The technologies will change. The challenges will evolve and so must we. What will never change is the need for people who care deeply about others.

And, to my public health colleagues:

We are living through challenging times. Many experienced professionals are preparing to retire or pursue new opportunities. If you are one of them, I hope you'll leave more than an empty desk. Mentor someone. Invite young professionals into the work. Share your knowledge. Help them discover the incredible purpose that comes from serving others.

Thank you to everyone who has walked this journey with me. Betty and Rosalynn, I miss you dearly and remain deeply committed to the vision you shared—a world where everyone, everywhere has access to life-saving vaccines.

Everything I've gained from Vaccinate Your Family, I hope I've given back. Serving this organization—and the broader public health community—has been the pleasure, the privilege, and the defining honor of my life.



As Vaccinate Your Family celebrates 35 years, I hope you'll join us—not simply in celebrating what we've accomplished together, but in building what comes next. Public health has always depended on people willing to serve something larger than themselves. I know the next generation is out there, and I can't wait to see what they accomplish.

