

Stay connected with McDowell

McDowell County is an American story that deserves a new chapter—one filled with promise, with goodwill, with the type of shared commitment that offers solid reasons to believe in a brighter future. Be a part of this historic partnership and show your support for McDowell's children and the greater community by joining the effort at www.ReconnectingMcDowell.org.

Coding Club Comes to McDowell

Reconnecting McDowell is recruiting and sponsoring a pilot group of elementary and high school students who will work with the West



Virginia Coding Club, which provides extracurricular in-person instruction and online self-paced curriculum to teach kids a variety of computer languages and help them reach certification. Six students will be in the pilot group slated to begin this summer. The students will be nominated by their teachers, and selections will be completed by June 1.

The coding club is currently established in Boone, Jackson, Kanawha and Putnam counties. Reconnecting McDowell is working in conjunction with AFT-West Virginia and the coding club to expand the

Janice Roberts Memorial Park Raises Funds for Accessible Swing

The Janice Roberts Memorial Park was opened in laeger in September 2015 to honor the life of Charles Walker's mother. The park is a place where children can keep active and play. Charles Walker and his wife, Margo, would like to ensure that all children are able to enjoy the park. They are raising funds to install a swing that can be used by children with physical disabilities. If you would like to make a donation, please contact the Walkers through the park's Facebook page: <http://bit.ly/parkswing>.

Equal Footing for Kids



OF SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA

The Equal Footing Shoe Fund, a program of United Way of Southern West Virginia (UWSWV), aims to remove barriers to student learning by providing shoes, socks and athletic shoes to students, ages 1-18, who are residents of McDowell County. The program recognizes that children without functional shoes can face stigmatization or be unable to participate in physical activities in school and provides help to address this concern. Sandy River Middle School in Avondale also has a similar, already established program.

Reconnecting McDowell serves as a liaison to Equal Footing by putting the program in touch with McDowell County schools and educators, which led to the creation of shoe closets in Kimball and Welch elementary schools, as well as transporting shoes from Beckley to McDowell County. In addition, approved family resource centers and child development programs, may contact the United Way to request shoes for a child the program is working with.

Counselors, principals, teachers and social workers are all encouraged to contact UWSWV directly to anonymously identify students who may be in need of support. Adults are not eligible to receive shoes for children; the shoes must be given directly to the children.

Additional questions about UWSWV's Equal Footing Shoe Fund and requests for shoes may be directed to community impact coordinator Christina Cowley (ccowley@unitedwayswv.org or 304-253-2111). The program also serves Fayette, Mercer, Nicholas, Raleigh, Summers and Wyoming counties.

Drug and Violence Free Day

The next annual Drug and Violence Free Awareness Day will be held on Saturday, May 4, at Mount View High School in Welch from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event is sponsored by McDowell County Schools and the 21st Century Commu-

nity Learning Centers after-school programs. The yearly event aims to provide information and encourage student and community involvement in addressing and preventing violence and substance abuse. Refreshments will be provided.

Get News About Renaissance Village!

The McDowell County school district has struggled with a shortage of teachers and low teacher retention rates partly due to a dearth of available housing. As a result, many teachers reside outside the County. Renaissance Village is Reconnecting

McDowell's housing project that seeks to address the teacher shortage. It will provide housing for teachers and other County residents. For updates on the progress of Renaissance Village, visit www.reconnectingmcdowell.org and sign up for the email list.

Wraparound Services Subcommittee Meeting

Reconnecting McDowell's Health, Social and Emotional Wraparound Services Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Friday, May 3, at 11 a.m. at Southern Highlands Community Mental Health Center in Welch. To RSVP or to join the subcommittee and support its work, contact Frances McNulty (Fmcnulty@aftwv.org).

Let's Connect

Follow Reconnecting McDowell on social media to receive the latest updates and news. We share information on webinars, job-training opportunities and upcoming community events. We also highlight our partners and their work in McDowell County and the state.

Social Media

-  Follow us on Twitter: [@ReconnectMcD](https://twitter.com/ReconnectMcD)
-  Follow us on Instagram: [@ReconnectMcD](https://www.instagram.com/ReconnectMcD)
-  Like us on Facebook: [facebook.com/ReconnectMcD](https://www.facebook.com/ReconnectMcD)

BROADER HORIZONS SPOTLIGHT Emily Hicks



Buffy Jones Photography

Emily Hicks, an alum of Reconnecting McDowell's Broader Horizons mentorship program, was featured by the Bluefield State College Teacher Education Student Spotlight. Emily is a Mount View High School graduate and is majoring in elementary education K-6 and special education with an expected May 2019 graduation. Emily is a teacher in residence at Kimball Elementary and is working to become a special education teacher. She earned a certification for autism along with her special education endorsement, and plans to continue teaching in McDowell County.

Keep up the great work, Emily! Your Reconnecting McDowell family is so proud of you.

For a list of Reconnecting McDowell partners, visit www.ReconnectingMcDowell.org/partners.

Want to get involved or learn more?

For more information about Reconnecting McDowell or to find out how you can get involved, contact Chad Webb (cwebb@aftwv.org) or Debra Elmore (delmore@aftwv.org or 304-552-5766).

