

# Reconnecting McDowell

## 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](http://www.ReconnectingMcDowell.org).

● Maier Supports McDowell Students

● McDowell County Schools Continues to Support Students During Pandemic

● Mark Kemp to Join Reconnecting McDowell

## ● Renaissance Village Nears Completion

Reconnecting McDowell’s housing project, Renaissance Village, is in its final stages. The structure is the first multistory building in downtown Welch in more than 50 years. There are two floors of commercial space and two floors of residential space. The residential units are a mix of one- and two-bedrooms and are now move-in ready. A one- bedroom unit will rent for \$625, and the two-bedroom units are priced at \$825.

To schedule a showing, call 304-344-2679 or 800-222-9838. By providing moderately priced apartments for teachers and other professionals, as well as retail space that can be patronized by community residents, Reconnecting McDowell hopes to revitalize the local economy.



Renaissance Village’s exterior and a model unit are pictured above.

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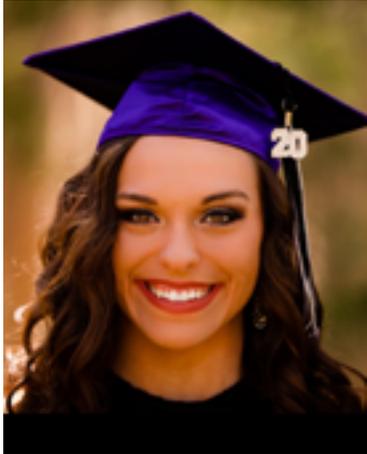
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## Maier Supports McDowell Students

For the third consecutive year, the Maier Foundation and Reconnecting McDowell awarded \$5,000 scholarships to McDowell high school seniors. Since 2018, all McDowell County students entering a four-year tertiary institution in West Virginia were eligible to apply for the For the

Future Scholarships. Awardees are selected each year based on their community service and involvement and are awarded \$5,000 to go toward their tuition costs. Recipients from 2019 were also awarded support toward their sophomore year.



Bailey DeHaven



Kamryn Grubb



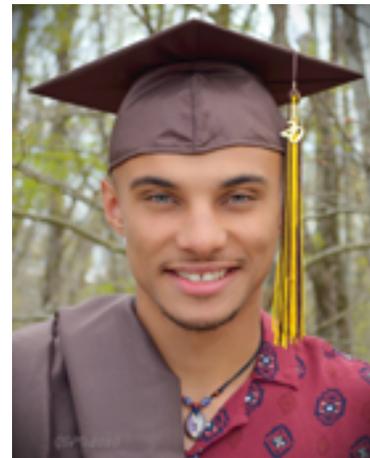
Michael-Paul Hare



Demi Lester



Miranda Osborne



Jasauni Sizemore

“I will be attending Bluefield State College in the fall to pursue a degree in nursing. I hope to give back to McDowell County as a registered nurse with the help of this scholarship.”

Bailey DeHaven  
2020 For the Future Scholar

## McDowell County Schools Continues to Support Students During the Pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic led to the sudden closing of McDowell County schools in March. As a result, students were unable to complete in-person instruction for the academic year. Additionally, the closure brought a sudden stop to support systems that students depend on, such as access to free meals. Fortunately, the years of building strong community bonds allowed McDowell County Schools to spring into action. "Roll, Read and Feed" was planned as a new summer program, but it started in March to meet the extenuating circumstances. With the support of the American Federation of Teachers and First Book, a nonprofit organization that provides educational resources and essentials to kids in need, educators were able to distribute more than 40,000 books to McDowell students. They also provided free meals in the first two months of the initiative to more than 2,000 students from birth to age 18; and students continue to receive free meals on a weekly basis.



Educators distribute meals and books to students' families.

Read more about the district's efforts to support its students from Amanda Fragile-Peyton, assistant superintendent of federal programs for the McDowell County School District: [bit.ly/RollingReadingFeeding](https://bit.ly/RollingReadingFeeding).

### STAFF CHANGES

## Mark Kemp to Join Reconnecting McDowell



Reconnecting McDowell recently hired Mark Kemp, a longtime West Virginia University employee. Kemp will be working primarily as a grant writer to help secure much-needed funding for the project.

Between 1998 and 2016, Kemp worked as a writer/editor and then communications director for the National Environmental Services Center; NESc's mission is to supply information and services related to drinking water and wastewater in rural communities. For the last four years, he has been a project administrator with the Na-

tional Alternative Fuels Training Consortium, helping the next generation of automobile technicians learn about alternative fuel vehicles.

Both NESc and NAFTC are based in West Virginia University's Energy Institute. During his time there, Kemp helped develop numerous grant proposals, including funded projects from federal, state and private sources.

"I'm eager to get started with Reconnecting McDowell," Kemp says. "I look forward to meeting everyone who is working to write the next chapter in this story. As Hall of Fame Coach Vince Lombardi noted, 'People who work together will win, whether it be against complex football defenses or the problems of modern society.'"

Kemp begins work on Sept. 14 and encourages you to contact him at [mkemp@aftwv.org](mailto:mkemp@aftwv.org).

### Farewell to Chad Webb

After almost three years as Reconnecting McDowell's partnership coordinator, Chad Webb has transitioned out of his position. We thank Chad for his dedication to the residents of McDowell County and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

# 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)



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[facebook.com/ReconnectMcD](https://facebook.com/ReconnectMcD)

## Want to get involved or learn more?

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

