

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.

● Go Grocery Finishes Year Two

● Spotlight on Broader Horizons

● In Loving Memory: Jason Grubb and Larry Hairston Sr.

McDOWELL COUNTY SCHOOLS PROVIDED FREE SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR ALL STUDENTS

Back to School McDowell



Southside K-8 students were eager to get back to school.

In what has become an annual tradition, Reconnecting McDowell participated in August back-to-school events at Kimball Elementary, Welch Elementary and Southside K-8 schools.

McDowell County Schools provided free school supplies for all students this year, and Reconnecting McDowell augmented this with journals, lip balm, hand sanitizer and other supplies. Nonprofit organizations in the County contributed additional supplies and services, including winter coats, shoes and clothing, as well as information about social services.

TACKLING LITTER PROBLEMS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTY

Make It Shine McDowell



A fledgling coalition—known as Make It Shine McDowell—has formed to tackle litter problems throughout the County. The coalition includes members from various churches, Adopt-a-Highway groups, volunteer fire departments, 4-H, the Sheriff's Office,

FACES (the Family Resource Network in McDowell) and concerned residents.

Make It Shine's first official event was a countywide cleanup held Oct. 23. A special effort was made to address the main transportation routes in McDowell: State Route 16 and US 52. Participants collected more than 300 large bags of trash. The County supplied gloves, grabbers and bags, and picked up the filled bags for



From left, Mark Kemp, Reconnecting McDowell; Delegate Ed Evans, WV-26; Carlotta Young, We Are the Teachers; and Nathaniel "Peanut" Evans from Brothers and Sisters of the Patch work on the Oct. 23 countywide litter cleanup.

disposal in the landfill. Reconnecting McDowell is a founding member of the coalition.

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In Loving Memory

IN MEMORIAM

Jason Grubb



Reconnecting McDowell joins the City of Welch and community in mourning Jason Grubb, the city's business development specialist, who died on Oct. 7. Grubb was honored at the City Council's November meeting.

"Jason had a heck of a passion for Welch," said Mayor Harold McBride in a Nov. 3 article in the *Welch News*. "He worked tirelessly and made a lot of achievements for Welch. He had a good vision for the city and knew we could make this happen and believed in it. He worked very, very hard toward that."

Grubb is survived by his wife, Stacy, and five children.

IN MEMORIAM

Larry Hairston Sr.



Reconnecting McDowell mourns Larry Hairston Sr., who died on Sept. 25. Hairston worked a variety of jobs in McDowell County, from coal mining to running a grocery store to owning a garbage disposal business. He was also employed as the transportation manager for the McDowell County Commission on Aging until he retired.

Hairston is probably best known for being pastor of Beulah Missionary Baptist Church in Big Sandy, W.Va., and also ministering at Lovely Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Kimball. In 2019, he was elected mayor of Gary and began work on several improvement projects for his beloved hometown.

Hairston is survived by his wife, Patricia, a son and two daughters, seven grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren and many other relatives.



THE MOBILE FARMERS MARKET RETURNED TO 16 SITES AND ADDED THREE NEW STOPS

Go Growcery Finishes Year Two

At the end of October, the Go Growcery project completed its second year. The mobile farmers market returned to 16 sites in McDowell County this season and added three new stops—Mullens, Pineville and Oceana—in Wyoming County. The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

'We were delighted to work with local farmers to supply fresh produce to the areas we established last year and to new locations as well.'

"The second year of the Go Growcery mobile farmers market built on the foundation started in 2020," says Spencer Moss, executive director of the West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition, the entity running the project's day-to-day operations. "We were delighted to work with local farmers to supply fresh produce to the areas we established last year and to new locations as well.



WVFFC and Reconnecting McDowell are committed to building equitable and resilient local agriculture in the southern coalfields. We are especially excited that the program accepts EBT/SNAP, including SNAP Stretch, making it easier for residents to incorporate local produce into family meals."

Go Growcery sold more than \$13,000 worth of produce to more than 9,200 community shoppers between June and October 2021.

Learn more about Go Growcery at: www.gogrowcery.com

West Virginia Department of Agriculture Grant Helps McDowell Food Production

As part of ongoing efforts to increase local food production and help rectify food insecurity in the County, Reconnecting McDowell received a West Virginia Department of Agriculture specialty crop grant to construct a high tunnel and school farm at Southside K-8 in War.

Goals of the grant include education about crop production, market opportunities for local produce growers, creating an agriculture club at Southside K-8, and providing community-based workshops. Crops grown in the facility will be used in the school and sold to the Go Growcery project in 2022.



Produce from a recent Go Growcery stop.

BROADER HORIZONS ALUMNI EDUCATORS

Spotlight on Broader Horizons

It is always our joy to share the milestones of our Broader Horizons alums who continue to make us proud.

Broader Horizons is Reconnecting McDowell's mentorship program where high school students in their junior year are paired with a mentor and then participate in edifying trips and activities for a year. Here are some career highlights that showcase how they are contributing to the County's progress through education.

Adrienne Montgomery, a first-year participant in Broader Horizons, is a long-term substitute teacher of health at Mount View High School.

Emily Hicks has been teaching for three and a half years and currently teaches fifth-graders at Kimball Elementary. She recently graduated from a master's program in special education at Concord University. Hicks was a first-year participant in Broader Horizons.

Faith Poore, from the second year of the program, is in her second year of teaching prekindergarten at Welch Elementary.

Jim Bob Sparks, who participated in the second year of the program, is teaching social studies at River View High School and is the assistant football coach.

Nadia Johnson, who was recently featured in our [10-th anniversary issue](#) has become the Communities in Schools facilitator at Mount View middle and high schools. Communities in Schools is a dropout prevention organization that believes every student should have equal access to critical resources. Johnson participated in the third year of Broader Horizons.

Congratulations to our Broader Horizons educators!

JOIN US ON JAN. 7 (SNOW DATE: JAN. 14)

Making Health Happen

Join us for Making Health Happen on **Jan. 7** from **10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Big Creek Community Center in War, W.Va.** There will be free health screenings, COVID-19 tests and vaccinations. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Sponsored by McDowell County FACES, South Central Educational Development Inc., Uni Care, MountainHeart, and Reconnecting McDowell.

Note: We will follow social distancing.

Free Screenings:

- Tug River Medical—**Diabetes foot care**
 - WVU Eye Institute—**Eye exams**
 - McDowell County Health Department—**Clinical breast exams**
 - CAMC Ryan White Program—**HIV testing**
 - WVU Extension—**A1C test, blood pressure**
 - Walgreens—**COVID-19 vaccines**
 - McDowell Commission on Aging—**Oral exams**
 - Welch Community Hospital—**COVID-19 testing**
 - South Central Educational Development, Inc—**Hepatitis C testing**
- ...and many more. Free Narcan will be available, as well as other giveaways.



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



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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 or 304-552-5766).