

Reconnecting McDOWELL

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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.

Rep. Jenkins Holds Roundtable

U.S. Rep. Evan Jenkins (W.Va., District 3) held a roundtable at Welch's Sterling Drive-in on Oct. 13. The congressman's office organized the event to give residents an opportunity to discuss issues affecting southern

West Virginia. Attendees discussed the economy, jobs, infrastructure, coal and other areas that contribute to people's socio-economic status. Reconnecting McDowell participated in the event to gather information on the needs

of the community, as well as to share information about projects that partners are working on and services they offer for McDowell residents.



Grandparents Learn About Healthy Eating

McDowell County Schools coordinates the Second Time Around Grandparents Club, which holds regular meetings to provide support for people who are raising their grandchildren. The most recent session, a "Smart Shoppers Grocery Tour" was held Oct. 28 at Goodson's Supermarket in Welch. Attendees received recipes and information on the nutritional value of various foods and how to ensure their families are eating healthy meals. Participants each were given a \$10 voucher to buy groceries and then challenged to prepare a healthy meal with the items they bought. The school district co-organized the event with West Virginia University Extension Service, which led the tour and presentations.

▶ **Grandparents listen as the tour leader deciphers the often hidden meanings behind complex food labels.**

McDowell Schools Are Showing Improvement

The Office of Education Performance Audits, an agency of the state board of education, conducted an audit of the McDowell County Schools in October 2015. It was the first audit since the board returned the school system to local control in 2013; county administrators and retired educators served on the auditing team. All schools in the district were judged in seven areas: school climate and culture; school leadership; standards-focused curriculum, instruction and assessment; student support services and community connections; educator growth and development; efficient

and effective management; and continuous improvement.

The audit results showed that McDowell schools were successful in their efforts to improve classroom instruction and student performance through continuous data review to provide support for students both in and outside the classroom. Principals were found to be more present in the classroom, and feedback from teachers reflected a positive school climate that nurtured leadership development. The audit also showed an increase in technology integration in the schools and a

decrease in the dropout rate over a five-year period from 4.5 percent (2010-11) to 2 percent (2014-15). The audit noted that McDowell County Schools' central office staff and superintendent were an excellent support system for educators and students alike. These and other improvements highlighted in the audit emphasize the leaps the district has made to improve the County's schools.

Broader Horizons Spotlight Destiny Robertson

Destiny Robertson is one of 62 mentees from the Broader Horizons mentorship program. An alum from the third year of the program, she is now a senior at Mount View High School and applying to universities; she hopes to attend an in-state university as a pre-med major. Excited about her future, Destiny credits Broader Horizons for allowing her to see the world in a different light through the mentoring and traveling the program has provided. She says she was terrified of public speaking before she entered the program, but the Broader Horizons communications training helped her become an adept speaker. "I don't believe I'd be the person I am today without the impact it has had on my life, personality and perspective," she says.



▲ Destiny Robertson takes a moment to relax on the Temple University campus during a Broader Horizons trip to Philadelphia.

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Want to get involved or learn more?

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