

## 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).

## Broader Horizons Spotlight Nadia Johnson

Nadia Johnson is a senior at Mount View High School and an alum of the Broader Horizons mentorship program. She maintains a 4.3 GPA and has received the Carter G. Woodson Legacy Award for outstanding academic achievement, leadership and community service; a local news station recently featured Nadia on its Excellence Program. She will attend Concord University in the fall, with plans to major in chemistry and pursue a career as a pharmacist. "Broader Horizons has taught me many life-changing lessons and given me the best mentor, Zanetta Thomas. It has helped mold me into the person I am today, and for that I'm thankful," Nadia says. Reconnecting McDowell wishes Nadia all the best at Concord!

**Nadia Johnson addresses the West Virginia Delegation at the Democratic National Convention in July 2016.**



## Students Against Destructive Decisions Holds Talent Show

The River View High School chapter of Students Against Destructive Decisions held its SADD Shines Talent Contest in Bradshaw on Feb. 26. Twelve contestants performed at the event, which was attended by about 70 people. The talents on display included singing and playing guitar, among others. Participation was open to everyone in the community, with contestants ranging from 4 to 59 years old showing off their skills. Dewey Mullins, Paige Cooper and Jacob Vance took the first-, second- and third-place honors, respectively. Reconnecting McDowell staff member Debra Elmore served on the panel of



**SADD helps teens successfully confront the risks and pressures that challenge them in their daily lives.**

judges. SADD plans to hold additional events, which will be open to all community residents.

# Children's Home Society of West Virginia Seeks Mentors

The Children's Home Society of West Virginia is a nonprofit child welfare organization founded in 1896 to promote the well-being of children. Its WE CAN Volunteer program recruits, trains and makes volunteers available to Child Protective Services to augment its work with children, parents and the community.

The society is currently seeking mentors for its WE CAN volunteer mentoring program in both Mercer and McDowell counties. The program serves children ages 4-18. Volunteers may spend a couple of hours a week with their mentees engaging in various activities such as homework assistance and dining out. Community

members are encouraged to apply to become a mentor; applicants must be at least 18 and able to pass a background check. To learn more about the program, contact the Children's Home Society office at 304-431-2424.

## Voya Renews Its Grant to Reconnecting McDowell

Voya Foundation—the charitable arm of Voya Financial, a retirement, investment and insurance company—has awarded Reconnecting McDowell a \$50,000 grant. The foundation awards grants to nonprofit organizations addressing a variety of community needs and resources, with a focus on children's education and financial education. This grant is the second

Voya has awarded to Reconnecting McDowell to fund family literacy centers in the County and our Books on the Bus program. The program will place mobile libraries on two school buses that serve the County. Students will be able to borrow and read the books while in transit to or from school.

## Upcoming Events

- McDowell County Schools' Early Childhood Fair will be held April 28 at the Welch National Guard Armory. The fair will have a superhero theme and is designed to highlight the importance of early childhood education and encourage family learning by providing a fun learning environment. Free vision and health screenings will be available. For more information, contact Amanda Fragile at [afragile@k12.wv.us](mailto:afragile@k12.wv.us) or call 304-436-8441, ext. 250.

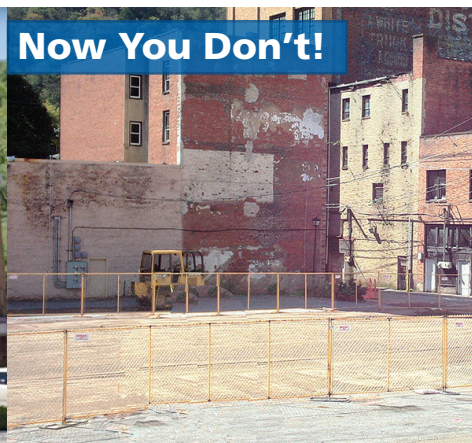
- Family Advisory Council meetings will be held March 28, April 25 and May 23 at the Phoenix Center in Welch at 10:30 a.m. The monthly meetings are organized by the McDowell County Schools for parents and community residents to encourage parent involvement and provide family learning tools, including information on literacy and good nutrition. For more information, contact Amanda Fragile at [afragile@k12.wv.us](mailto:afragile@k12.wv.us) or call 304-436-8441, ext. 250.

- The West Virginia University Extension Service will hold workshops that will teach 9- to 18-year olds life skills. A first aid workshop will be held at 10 a.m. on April 15 in the Payne Building community room in Welch. The May 13 workshop will focus on container gardening skills. For more information, or to register, call the WVU Extension Service at 304-436-9006. Registration is required, and parents are encouraged to attend along with their children.

### Now You See It ...



### Now You Don't!



Demolition of the Best Furniture Building in Welch marks another completed phase of Renaissance Village, a project being led by Reconnecting McDowell that will provide housing for teachers and other community residents. Watch a great time-lapse video of the demolition here: <http://bit.ly/rvdemo>

### 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 Kris Mallory, [kmallory@aftwv.org](mailto:kmallory@aftwv.org), or Debra Elmore at [delmore@aftwv.org](mailto:delmore@aftwv.org) or 304-552-5766.

