

PARENT

# NEWSLETTER



ABOVE PHOTO: A WIC Staff Member at their table of giveaways during the Community Baby Shower Event

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### A SHOWER OF LOVE, SUPPORT, COMMUNITY

*Celebrating new and expecting mothers at our Community Baby Shower*

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### OFFICER OF THE YEAR

*TMI Drug Free Communities Program held its second annual Officer of the Year event.*

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*Inside the Prom Promise Campaign*



# A SHOWER OF LOVE, SUPPORT, & COMMUNITY

Celebrating new and expecting mothers at our Community Baby Shower

BY TMI STAFF

Attendees were lavished with essential baby items and meaningful keepsakes, but perhaps the most lasting gift was the sense of belonging and support that filled the room. For many young families navigating the joys and challenges of new parenthood, events like this serve as a powerful reminder that they are not alone.

"It was incredible to see our community come together to support new and expecting moms in such a tangible way. From essential items to meaningful connections, this event helped ensure families feel supported as they begin this new chapter." - Rebecca LeMoine, Grant and Support Services Coordinator

*Ten expectant and new mothers walked into a room and were met with something they may not have expected: an entire community ready to cheer them on. The Martinsburg Initiative recently hosted its Community Baby Shower — a heartfelt celebration bringing together local families, donors, vendors, and community partners to surround new and expecting moms with the gifts, resources, and connection they deserve.*

*The result was an afternoon filled with food, games, prizes, and the kind of warmth that only a true community effort can create.*



TOP: Maddie Ragosta poses with a coworker behind a giveaway table at the Community Baby Shower event.

BOTTOM: Moms and family members visit organization tables at the Community Baby Shower event.



ABOVE: TMI's table setup stocked with giveaways.



ABOVE: Maddie Ragosta reads from a page at the event.



ABOVE: WVU Medicine Staff poses together at table.

*"I was one of the lucky moms who attended the community baby shower. I honestly had such a good time. Everyone there was so nice and very helpful. It's been very hard with a newborn baby, so it was great to take a break to eat, play games, and win prizes! I left the event with many things I actually needed. I think it went amazingly well, and thank you to everyone involved. I would love to see more Moms come out to this event next year."*

**- ANONYMOUS ATTENDEE**

The success of the event was very much a team effort. Community vendors showed up in force, offering their time, products, and services, while generous donors ensured that every mother left with items she truly needed. One of the event's organizers, TMI School Support Specialist Susan Corun, shared that vendors and donors alike were the backbone of what made the day work: "We had great community vendors. We also had great donors... Those people really contributed to the success of the event."

Games and activities kept the energy lively throughout the afternoon, giving attendees a chance to relax, laugh, and bond with one another. For mothers in the thick of newborn life, even a few hours of community and celebration can be a meaningful respite.





ABOVE: Early Head Start's table setup

Events like this Community Baby Shower don't just distribute goods; they build relationships, reduce isolation, and plant seeds of trust between families and the organizations that serve them. The Martinsburg Initiative is grateful to every partner who helped make this vision a reality. This event would not have been possible without the generosity of the following community partners and donors:

		ON PURPOSE LIVING	
CORE			
			
			
			
			

The Martinsburg Initiative looks forward to growing this tradition and welcoming even more mothers into the fold. If you'd like to get involved as a donor or vendor for future events, we'd love to hear from you.



ABOVE PHOTOS: Recipients of 2026 Officers of the Year Awards

# 2026 OFFICER OF THE YEAR CEREMONY

BY TMI STAFF

The Martinsburg Initiative's Drug Free Communities Program held its second annual Officer of the Year event. TMI and the DFC presented an award to an officer from each of Berkeley County's law enforcement agencies. Recipients of the 2025 Officer of the Year Award were Phillip North (State Police), Logan Leake (Berkeley County Sheriff's Department), and Austin Shank (Martinsburg City Police). In attendance were friends, family, and co-workers, along with the Sheriff, Chief of Police, WVSP District Commander, Mayor Kevin Knowles, Prosecutor Joe Kinser, and TMI Executive Board Members.

The award was to recognize officers chosen by their agencies who go above and beyond the call of duty and contribute to reducing the amount of illegal narcotics in our community.

BY TMI STAFF

# MEET FRANCES

## *Administrative Assistant*

*Before joining TMI, I worked for Berkeley County Schools. I began my career as an administrative assistant at Hedgesville High School. I applied for a position at the Berkeley County Board of Education in 2009 and served as the superintendent's secretary for 6 years. Retiring in 2015, I was happy to devote my time to mentoring, homeschooling several of my grandchildren, and babysitting my youngest grandson until he started school.*

Sharon Dove is a very special friend and an integral part of the TMI team. She asked me if I would be willing to work part-time at TMI because the organization needed help in the office. I was hired in January 2023 as an administrative assistant.

Since my first encounter with a MacBook, I have graduated from learning to cope with it to dealing with our financial "beast" (where TMI manages all of its financial administration). It is a joy and a pleasure to be a part of the amazing TMI team and to be able to serve with such an extraordinary group.



I am married to a very sweet man. We will celebrate our 56th wedding anniversary May 2. We attend Independent Bible Church and serve as greeters for the Pastor's Guest Reception, and I serve in the infant nursery one Sunday each month. We are the proud parents of two sons, one daughter, two daughters-in-law, and one son-in-law. We have been blessed with eleven grandchildren and have added two granddaughter-in-laws and one grandson-in-law. Our first great grandson was born August 26, 2025.

I am married to a very sweet man. We will celebrate our 56th wedding anniversary May 2. We attend Independent Bible Church and serve as greeters for the Pastor's Guest Reception, and I serve in the infant nursery one Sunday each month. We are the proud parents of two sons, one daughter, two daughters-in-law, and one son-in-law. We have been blessed with eleven grandchildren and have added two granddaughter-in-laws and one grandson-in-law. Our first great grandson was born August 26, 2025.

I would like to extend a special "thank you" to everyone who kept me in your thoughts and prayers during the six weeks I was off for emergency surgery and recovery. Returning to a decorated desk and work area was an extra special treat!

BY TMI STAFF

# MEET MADDIE

*Family Outreach Coordinator*

*My name is Maddie Ragosta, and I serve as the Family Outreach Coordinator for The Martinsburg Initiative. One of the things I love most about my role is that no two days are ever the same. My work truly depends on the needs of the families and community members we serve each day.*

Through the Nurturing Parenting Program, I have the opportunity to work closely with parents as they navigate the challenges of raising children. Whether it is helping families strengthen communication, develop healthy parenting strategies, or connect with community resources, my goal is to provide encouragement and support while helping parents build confidence in themselves and their abilities.

In addition to working with parents, I also spend time in Berkeley County Schools supporting students who may need additional one-on-one skill building. Some children need help learning how to regulate emotions and develop healthy coping skills, while others benefit from support with communication, patience, and social interaction. Being able to work alongside these students and watch them grow emotionally and socially has been one of the most rewarding parts of my position.



Another positive aspect of my role is having the opportunity to participate in and help facilitate community events that bring families together and create meaningful connections. Annual TMI events such as the Community Baby Shower, Trunk or Treat, and Joys and Toys allow us to support families in different ways while fostering a sense of community, fun, and encouragement for both children and parents. Seeing families come together during these events and knowing they feel supported by their community is incredibly rewarding.



ABOVE: Maddie poses with coworkers on Save a Life Day

One experience that has had a lasting impact on me was having the opportunity to facilitate parenting support inside the Eastern Regional Jail. During that time, I met a mother who was determined to strengthen her parenting skills and create a better future for herself and her children. After her release, she chose to continue participating in services and remained committed to making positive changes for her family. Since then, she has worked hard to connect with community resources, improve her stability, and strengthen her relationship with her son and two daughters. Watching her dedication, growth, and perseverance has been an incredible reminder of why this work matters. Success does not always happen overnight, but seeing families take meaningful steps toward positive change is what makes this role so fulfilling.

*Every day in this position looks different, but the heart of the work remains the same: supporting families, empowering parents and children, and helping build a stronger community.*



**TOP PHOTO:** Maddie poses with a toy dinosaur at the Toys & Joys event

**BOTTOM PHOTO:** Maddie poses with her car at Trunk or Treat

BY TMI STAFF

# MEET TEAH

## *School Support Specialist at Rosemont Elementary*

*I provide supportive services to students and families through intervention sessions that promote academic success, social-emotional well-being, and a positive school environment. By collaborating closely with school staff, families, and community partners, I help identify and address barriers to learning while supporting the overall success of each student. Through this work, I also help advance the mission and goals of The Martinsburg Initiative.*

Each morning, I help with student drop-off by greeting children as they arrive from the bus or walk into school with their families. It's one of my favorite parts of the day because it gives me the chance to start each student's morning with a warm welcome and positive interaction.

Once everyone has arrived, I head to my office to prepare for the day ahead. I maintain a full caseload and typically meet with 5-6 students each day. Some weeks, I also teach Too Good For Drugs, which gives me the opportunity to connect with every student in the school.

I begin each session by checking in with students about their week, their day, or even something they are looking forward to. Many of the students I work with focus on social-emotional learning and behavior management skills. During sessions, I introduce the topic or skill we are working on and guide students through activities designed to support their growth and success. I also like to end sessions on a positive note by giving students time to choose a fun activity, such as a game, a puzzle, or a drawing activity.



**Their growth, resilience, and joy are my greatest successes – they are my “why.”**

After each session, I complete my documentation and keep track of the students I have met with throughout the week. At the end of the school day, I help with bus duty and say goodbye to the students as they head home.

This year has been a success in so many ways that it's hard to choose just one moment that defines my work. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to serve in this role, especially because every day brings new experiences and challenges.

Working with my students this year has been one of the most rewarding parts of the job. In such a short time, I've witnessed tremendous growth, resilience, and progress. Students who once avoided conversations or complained about meeting for sessions now eagerly talk and share about their day. Others who struggled with tantrums or behavioral challenges are now navigating their school days with confidence and success.

Watching each student grow throughout the year has truly been a gift. Seeing their smiling faces every morning reminds me why this work matters so much. Even though I haven't been at my school for very long, I've built meaningful relationships with these students that I know will last a lifetime. They have impacted me just as much as I hope I have impacted them.

BY TMI STAFF

# MEET HEATHER

*Prevention Professional/Business Official*

*If you spend a few minutes talking with TMI's newest staff member, Heather Green, you'll notice she has a gift for seeing how things fit together — people, organizations, ideas, and work that might otherwise stay in separate lanes.*

Heather comes to The Martinsburg Initiative from the prevention field, where she served as a Partnership for Success Coordinator covering five counties across southern West Virginia (Fayette, Raleigh, Mercer, McDowell, and Wyoming). Her main understanding of prevention and best practices came from her first prevention role, which was in partnership with Marshall University and assigned to Fayette County, WV. In that role, she learned what it really means to link resources to communities: connecting funding to organizations, evidence-based programming to youth, and people across a region to each other. Heather will quickly tell you that every community is different and that building trust takes time. But building those bridges? That's something she's always done naturally.

**BOTTOM:** Heather rides alongside her husband, exploring the Eastern Panhandle



At TMI, she'll be bridging those two worlds. While her title is officially "Coordinator," she's already become known around the office as the "Business Official," because what she really does is make sense of all the moving parts: bringing order to the administrative side, connecting the operational threads, and helping build the clean, unified systems that a growing organization needs.



Heather's background stretches back further than prevention work, though. She spent nearly a decade in office and human resources settings, working her way from receptionist to benefits and payroll to HR, all while gaining a deep fluency in the administrative and operational systems that keep organizations running. Then came a pivot into grant work and prevention (which, in her words, was "a leap of faith") where what she'd learned in the office world translated beautifully into the coordination and structure that community-based work demands. The team's welcoming nature in Fayette County and their knowledge of prevention work also helped facilitate her transition. She arrived at TMI as someone who had already been quietly (and perhaps coincidentally) preparing for this role.

At TMI, she'll bridge those two worlds: supporting the business and administrative sides of the organization while also applying her prevention knowledge where needed. On any given day, that might mean reconciling grants and processing invoices, or helping coordinate Trauma Sensitive Educator Trainings and supporting efforts to get vape disposal containers into local schools. She's also looking ahead to helping TMI build internal systems that can grow alongside the organization – bringing some order and structure to the behind-the-scenes elements that make the mission-driven work possible.

*The connection to this work runs deeper than her résumé. Heather's husband is a peer recovery support specialist, and she's watched their work overlap and intersect in the same spaces. They have presented together, with Heather speaking to prevention efforts while her husband spoke to the recovery journey – a natural division of expertise that, in practice, tells one unified story. She knows firsthand that this field is full of those kinds of connections.*

Outside of work, she and her husband are settling into the Eastern Panhandle. After four moves in four years of marriage, Heather is more than ready to put down roots. She and her husband have already begun enjoying the area, taking their two dogs, Luna (a black lab-collie mix) and Roxy (a golden retriever), on walks and to the dog park near the state park. She'd also thought about training Roxy as a therapy dog someday!

We're so glad Heather found her way to TMI and excited to see the wonderful contributions that she will make to our team!



**TOP PHOTO:** Luna (a black lab-collie mix) and Roxy (a golden retriever).

**BOTTOM PHOTO:** Taking their two dogs on a walks at a nearby state park.



BY TMI STAFF

PHOTO: A student poses with the PROMise banner in the cafeteria

# MORE THAN A NIGHT TO REMEMBER

INSIDE THE PROM  
PROMISE CAMPAIGN

*For the third year running, the Musselman Youth Coalition is wrapping its community in a web of safety, from elementary school art classes to liquor store shelves, before prom night arrives.*

Prom can be an incredibly exciting night in a teenager's life, but it also has the potential to be risky. The Musselman High School Youth Coalition understands both truths; its annual Prom Promise campaign is built on the belief that safety messaging works best when it's woven into the fabric of a community, not just posted on a wall.

Now in its third year, the campaign has grown into a multi-pronged effort that touches students, parents, local businesses, and even the youngest kids in the district. "It grows every single year that we do it," coalition leader Diana Anthony shared. "Every year, we get more community partners... getting the community involved and having those partnerships is a great way to keep everyone safe."

Here's a look at the seven components that make the Prom Promise campaign one of the most comprehensive youth safety efforts in the region.



PHOTO: Gift card basket prizes from local sponsors

## A PLEDGE WORTH WINNING

In the week leading up to prom ticket sales, students are invited to pose in front of a PROMise Pledge banner in the school cafeteria and share the photo on social media. In exchange for that public commitment to safe decision-making, they're entered into a drawing to win a free prom ticket and potentially a gift card basket from a roster of local sponsors, including Olive Garden, Chick-fil-A, Outback, Applebee's, Logan's, Taste Buds, Pownall Bistro, Jules, and King's Pizza. Two baskets are awarded, giving the incentive plenty of reach.

RIGHT PHOTO: Students at Bunker Hill Elementary and Mill Creek Intermediate created safety postcards that were distributed to everyone who purchased a prom ticket.

## PLANTING SEEDS EARLY

One of the campaign's most distinctive features is how far upstream it reaches. Students at Bunker Hill Elementary and Mill Creek Intermediate participate through their art classes, creating safety postcards that are distributed to everyone who purchases a prom ticket. The goal is to promote positive norms long before a student ever sets foot at prom, engaging youth at an age when those values are still taking shape.

## SOMETHING FOR EVERY POCKET AND EVERY TABLE

Each prom-goer receives a Prom Survival Bag stocked with practical items (floss picks, deodorant wipes, stain remover, mints, safety pins, bandaids, chapstick, tissues, and hand sanitizer). The bags serve a dual purpose: they're genuinely useful on a big night out, and they keep the coalition's prevention message visible in a tangible, personal way. Inside the venue, that message continues. Safety posters are designed to match the prom's theme each year (this year's is Bridgerton), making them feel cohesive rather than tacked on. Table tents at each seat carry the same core safety messages, reinforcing expectations in a setting where students are relaxed and receptive.

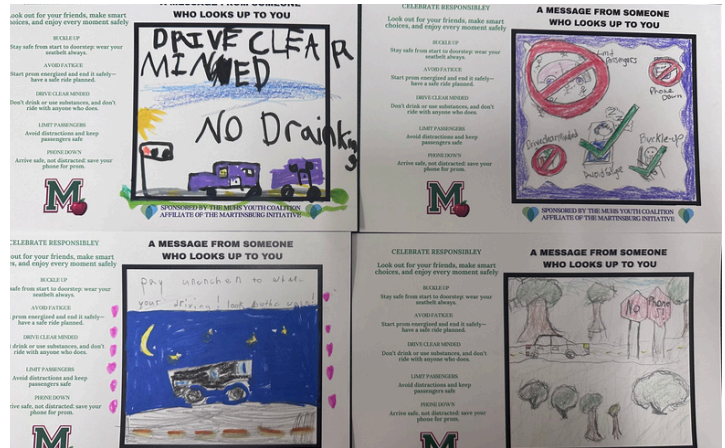




PHOTO: Table Decor at Musselment High School Prom

**“THE VERY FIRST YEAR THEY DID IT, I HAD TO TAKE THEM MORE STICKERS. THEY RAN OUT AND REQUESTED MORE. THEY’VE BEEN GREAT.”**

– DIANA ANTHONY, MUSSELMAN YOUTH COALITION ADVISOR

## TAKING THE MESSAGE TO THE STORE SHELF

Perhaps the campaign’s most creative reach is into local liquor retailers. Through the Sticker Shock initiative, coalition members partner with stores to place awareness stickers on alcohol packaging – a direct, in-the-moment reminder to adults about the legal and safety consequences of providing alcohol to minors. Big Apple Liquors, for example, has been a standout partner in this effort from the beginning.



## CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE WHO SHOW UP

To close the loop on community involvement, the coalition is presenting certificates to individuals and organizations as official Partners in Youth Safety. The certificates are delivered by students and youth coalition members, a meaningful gesture that puts young people in the role of thanking their community for showing up for them.

Taken together, the seven elements of Prom Promise form something more than a safety campaign. They form a tradition – one that, year after year, demonstrates what’s possible when a community decides that keeping its kids safe is everyone’s job.

*“Prom should be about making positive memories. It’s something we look forward to all year, and it should be remembered for the fun, friends, and amazing moments – not poor decisions. The I PROMise campaign reminds us that our community truly cares about our safety. It allows us to have fun, look out for each other, and make positive choices while knowing we have the support of our schools, families, and community behind us. Ultimately, we just want everyone to get home safe at the end of the night.”*

– YOUTH COALITION PRESIDENT, LAYLA MCCUTCHEON

THOUSANDS OF US ARE IN RECOVERY.

**YOU CAN BE TOO.**



**WHEN IT'S TIME, WE'RE HERE.**

**CALL 1-844-HELP4WV**



FUNDED IN PART BY



# EVERY CHILD DESERVES A GOOD START

If you have an Infant or toddler at home and have concerns about their development with moving, talking, hearing, vision, playing, learning, or growing, we are here to help.

West Virginia's Infant and Toddler Early Intervention Program. Telehealth and In Person appointments are available at NO COST TO YOU.

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**(304) 267-3595 ext 132**





JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
 <p>16<sup>TH</sup>: LOVING OUR COMMUNITY (CHARLES TOWN)</p>	 <p>20<sup>TH</sup>: LOVING OUR COMMUNITY (MARTINSBURG)</p>	 <p>1<sup>ST</sup>-15<sup>TH</sup>: UNITY CAMPAIGN</p>  <p>20<sup>TH</sup>: LOVING OUR COMMUNITY (CT)</p>  <p>21<sup>ST</sup>: MARCH MADNESS BASKETBALL EVENT</p>
APRIL	MAY	JUNE
 <p>13<sup>TH</sup> - 17<sup>TH</sup> : CIT TRAINING</p>  <p>17<sup>TH</sup>: LOVING OUR COMMUNITY (MARTINSBURG)</p>  <p>25<sup>TH</sup>: COMMUNITY BABY SHOWER</p>	 <p>15<sup>TH</sup>: LOVING OUR COMMUNITY (CHARLES TOWN)</p>	 <p>6<sup>TH</sup>: SUMMER KICKOFF COMMUNITY PICNIC</p>  <p>19<sup>TH</sup>: LOVING OUR COMMUNITY (MARTINSBURG)</p>
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER
 <p>17<sup>TH</sup>: LOVING OUR COMMUNITY (CHARLES TOWN)</p>  <p>27<sup>TH</sup> - 31<sup>ST</sup>: CAMP SUNSHINE</p>	 <p>6<sup>TH</sup>: BACKPACK GIVEAWAY</p>  <p>21<sup>ST</sup>: LOVING OUR COMMUNITY (MARTINSBURG)</p>	 <p>SAVE A LIFE DAY</p>  <p>DAY OF CARING</p>  <p>18<sup>TH</sup>: LOVING OUR COMMUNITY (CHARLES TOWN)</p>
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
 <p>15<sup>TH</sup>: COSTUME GIVEAWAY</p>  <p>16<sup>TH</sup>: LOVING OUR COMMUNITY (MARTINSBURG)</p>  <p>23<sup>RD</sup>: TRUNK OR TREAT</p>  <p>TBD: ELEVATE YOUTH ELEVATE JOY</p>	 <p>5<sup>TH</sup>: WINTER COAT GIVEAWAY</p>  <p>20<sup>TH</sup>: LOVING OUR COMMUNITY (CHARLES TOWN)</p>  <p>FOOD DRIVE (DATE TBD)</p>	 <p>14<sup>TH</sup> - 18<sup>TH</sup>: TOYS &amp; JOYS</p>  <p>18<sup>TH</sup>: LOVING OUR COMMUNITY</p>

The Martinsburg Initiative and Community  
Cup Coffee and More present:

# Senior Support



The Martinsburg Initiative's Social Workers will be on-site weekly to assist senior citizens with vital resources, including:

- Help staying safely housed
- Utility relief & benefits navigation
- Medicare/Medicaid guidance
- Health & wellness info
- Caregiver and behavioral health referrals
- Providing free "Stay Safe at Home" Kits for eligible seniors

No appointment needed — just stop in for coffee and connection!

📍 **Community Coffee Cup and More**  
🕒 **Every Tuesday | 10 AM – 12 PM**



THE  
**MARTINSBURG**  
INITIATIVE



PHOTO: Coffee and Care Weekly Senior Wellness Events held at The Community Cup and cohosted by TMI. Get help and resources from TMI Social Workers and enjoy coffee and conversation.



*Get the facts about electronic cigarettes, their health effects and the risks of using e-cigarettes.*

E-cigarettes (also called “vapes”) have been the most commonly used tobacco product among U.S. youth since 2014. Educators can make a real difference by engaging in meaningful conversations with their students about the dangers of vaping for young people and ways to quit.

CDC launched the Empower Vape-Free Youth™ campaign in 2023 to encourage middle and high school educators to speak with students about the risks of e-cigarettes and nicotine addiction. The campaign also provides resources for educators to help students avoid or quit vaping.

**EMPOWER**  
**Vape-Free**  
**YOUTH™**



Info Provided by the Center for  
Disease Control and Prevention



**i talk**  
they hear you®



# START TALKING BEFORE SHE HEADS OFF TO SCHOOL.

It's never too early to have a conversation about alcohol and other drugs.

The sooner you talk about the dangers of underage drinking and substance use, the greater chance you have of influencing your child's decisions about using alcohol and other drugs. For tips on how—and when—to begin the conversation, visit

[www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov](http://www.underagedrinking.samhsa.gov)

#TalkTheyHearYou

PEP20-03-01-041



**SAMHSA**  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration



# A MODEL SOLUTION

## TO A NATIONAL PROBLEM

*Our mission is to prevent substance use disorders, build strong families, and empower the Martinsburg community through police, school, community, health, and education partnerships.*

1

### **Increase awareness**

of how to prevent substance use disorder through community empowerment.

2

### **Mitigate negative consequences**

Resulting from substance misuse or trauma through community interventions, medication overdose.

3

### **Identify, risk stratify and offer appropriate interventions**

for individuals experiencing risk factors of trauma or substance misuse.

4

### **Evaluate and report performance.**



THE  
**MARTINSBURG**  
INITIATIVE

A POLICE, SCHOOL, COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP