



Mission
WEST VIRGINIA

ANNUAL REPORT

A year in review of our community impact

20 21

WHO WE ARE

Mission West Virginia is leading a statewide effort to promote positive futures for all kids in West Virginia. We work alongside families as they navigate West Virginia's foster care system and provide evidence-based life skills education to help teens envision and create positive futures. As a result of our work putting kids first in collaboration with social services, school districts, private foster care agencies and other nonprofits, the future looks brighter for West Virginia.

Mission West Virginia **convenes** partners across the state to **prepare communities** to support every child on their journey to a **positive future**.

Mission West Virginia is a **neutral navigator** entrusted by the state to help those interested in foster care or kinship care to **understand the system, find a placement agency, and prepare to make a meaningful difference** in the life of a child.

Mission West Virginia is **trusted** by school districts statewide to provide effective, evidence-based life skills education to help teens and the families that care for them **envision and create positive futures**.

As an agency on the front lines of community action, Mission West Virginia prioritizes **responsiveness, knowledge and personalized support** for the families, youth, and communities we serve.

Mission West Virginia **collects and distills reliable, community specific data** to help legislators, government agencies, school districts and child and family serving nonprofits create and deliver programs and services that result in **better outcomes** for children, families, communities, and the state.

And we do this through our work with the Frameworks and THINK programs highlighted throughout the pages of this report.



MISSION STATEMENT

Mission WV changes the lives of youth and families. We promote positive futures by recruiting foster families, providing life skills education and creating community connections.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends, Supporters and Advocates:

With an average childhood, we get 18 years, 216 months, 936 weeks and 6,570 days, all before we are legally declared adults. When you look at these numbers, it becomes urgently clear just how important a day is in the life of a child, especially a child without safety or stability.

Every morning in West Virginia, more than 6% of our children wake up in homes that are headed by grandparents or kinship providers.

Every day in West Virginia more than half of children go about their school day behind on work.

Every evening in West Virginia, 36% of our teens are home coping with feelings of sadness or hopelessness. Every night in West Virginia, more than 6,800 children in foster care lay down to sleep in places with an uncertainty of where their future home lies, even the next day and beyond.

At Mission West Virginia, every single day is viewed as an opportunity to bring about change. Every day is a chance to instill knowledge, skills, and most importantly hope in the lives of those we serve. With this belief as our driving force, our primary motivation, Mission West Virginia staff re-entered schools, facilities, and community settings the very minute we were given the green light. With our mission at heart and the impetus to do what is within our reach, we made the decision that one more day of struggle is not acceptable.

Every single day is viewed as a chance to find those special people who we call foster parents. In fact, we supported 1,300 families in their desire to become foster parents this past year. Knowing the daily reality kinship families face, we provided support to 600+ new families to better help them as they care for their children. And speaking of students, 9,000 teens were given real life skills, education, and inspiration they need to make choices for better outcomes in their days ahead.

Our children, families, and communities should receive – rather, deserve – no less of a response from us. This day is calling us all to step up. It takes you and me, and our commitment to children, to change the future – one young life, one family, one community – one day at a time.



Kelly M. Thompson

Kelly Thompson, MSW/LSW
MWV Executive Director



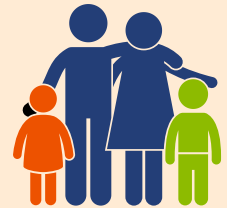
MISSION RESULTS

Year at a Glance



We connected
12,834 TIMES
with families considering
foster care to provide support
throughout the process.

Our Kinship Navigator
SERVED
600+ FAMILIES
in their role directly assisting
and advocating for caregivers.



Since its inception, nearly
100 CHILDREN
AND TEENS
have been adopted through the Wendy's
Wonderful Kids program. These children have
often been in foster care for at least 5 years and
considered "hardest to place."



We contacted
99% OF FAMILIES
inquiring about foster
care or adoption within
two business days.

We maintained up-to-date
listings for
11 AGENCIES ACROSS
55 COUNTIES
providing accurate information
regarding service areas and agency personnel.



We educated
9,042 STUDENTS
with evidence-based
curriculum.



We supported
1,300 PEOPLE
who are considering fostering by providing
emotional support and accountability needed to
become certified.



We taught
4,383 CLASSES
each with healthy
relationship education.



190 FAMILIES
were certified as a
foster and/or adoptive
family in 2021!

We presented caregiver
workshops and body safety
presentations to
4,416 COMMUNITY
MEMBERS, PARENTS,
AND STUDENTS.



FRAMEWORKS

Finding forever families for every child waiting in foster care.

More Than a Foster Youth: an art project created by teens in foster care for National Foster Care Month. Jane shows off her portrait and chose "Sassy" to describe herself.



Frameworks provides support for those interested in foster care or kinship care to understand the system, find a placement agency, and prepare to make a meaningful difference in the life of a child.

We take a **child-centered approach** to the foster care system and are invested in preparing communities to support children on their journey to a positive future.

Summarizing the Frameworks program is a complex task. We **recruit families** to be foster parents. We **mentor foster youth** in the school system. We **support relatives** raising children. We **find families** for waiting youth. We **identify service gaps** and **address needs** that other agencies cannot. **One common link is that we help families navigate complex systems.** Every member of the Frameworks team is an expert at their particular system, at breaking down all the elements and helping the family access the system in a way that is timely, straightforward, and beneficial to the child and family.

We don't just recruit families to foster, we follow them through the entire certification process, offering support and problem-solving along the way.

We don't just find a family for a waiting youth, we help the youth process complex feelings about adoption, prepare the family and the child for the adoption process, and help them navigate all the challenges along the way.

We don't just mentor youth in the school system and help them graduate high school. We sit beside them and complete college paperwork, or work on their homework to catch up in class, or provide the very most basic needs.

We don't just help a grandparent caring for grandkids apply for financial assistance. We help them access everything they will need, in the short-term post placement and in recurrence as they care for the children each month.

Our goal is not simply to refer families to resources, but to ensure that every resource is understood, accessible and helpful in a concrete and timely manner. We are proud to be an integral part of all the systems that work together to provide positive futures for youth in foster care.

Mission WV partnered with US Attorney, William Thompson, and Bible Center Church to address November as National Adoption Month.



Frameworks Director, Rachel Kinder, hosts a monthly television show sponsored by the WV Library Commission.



Executive Director, Kelly Thompson, modeling one of our shirts created for foster care awareness.



MEETING BASIC NEEDS

Thanks to the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation, we were able to subaward funds to schools for the purchase of essential items for youth in foster care and kinship care. **This year we supported 427 kids in 22 schools across 6 counties.** Here are some of the impact statements from the school counselors:

"I was able to take some students shopping for clothing. One student wore a shirt I loved to school the next morning and just smiled when I bragged on it. They were so appreciative after shopping. The parents were appreciative with getting the school pictures as well because those are wonderful memories but are pricey to purchase." - School Counselor

"This was very helpful to be able to support our students who have needs. We were able to provide yearbooks for some of our students that have never been able to buy a yearbook in the past. There was a student who was SO excited to find himself in the yearbook." - School Counselor

"The students get so excited to receive their new shoes and school-branded shirts (and other items) because it makes them feel 'special' and it allows them to have some new/nicer things that they may not have received otherwise. I have been so grateful for this grant funding. It truly is a blessing to the students who do not always have the means or support from their guardians to purchase new/needed items." -Teacher

A FOREVER FAMILY

Oliver was placed in foster care when he was 9 due to neglect and drug use by his biological parents. During his time in foster care, he was in several shelters and was placed in a potential adoptive home that didn't result in a forever family. Oliver then went to an emergency shelter and was placed in a long-term treatment facility, which is where Mission WV Adoption Recruiter, Carol, met him for the first time. In the beginning of their meetings, Oliver and Carol created a family tree so everyone could understand who Oliver was referring to when he was talking about his family. After these meetings, Carol was able to reach out and talk with Oliver's grandmother. Because it had been a few years since they had seen one another, she was able to provide support as Oliver and his grandmother started to nurture their relationship.

After Oliver left the treatment facility, he moved in with his grandmother who adopted him shortly after. There is a complete family support system built around Oliver in this adoptive placement. Oliver lives with his grandmother and uncle. In addition, Oliver was an only child and now has two college age cousins that live next door. He currently has multiple strong male role models in his life that can provide support and teach him all the things that he wants to know. Oliver went from not wanting to consider a family to never wanting to leave his forever home.

**Names have been changed to protect the identity of our youth.*

Rachel Kinder and Kylee Hassan set-up "More Than A Foster Youth," an art display for National Foster Care Month.

"The children loved their items... they finally felt like the other kids."



Marketing Director, Kylee Hassan, talks with potential foster families at summer event.



Board Member, Michelle LeMaster donates Easter Baskets for youth in foster care.

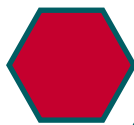
Karissa Golden accepts donations of luggage for our "Carry On Campaign" from Dynamic Insurance Group.



Dr. Shelly Bailey at Valley Health donates Christmas Stockings for youth in foster care.



"You thought of things I didn't know I needed."
-Kinship Family Member



Lion's Club donates funds for youth in foster and kinship care.



SUPPORTING KINSHIP FAMILIES

Our Kinship Navigator program made great strides in 2021, serving over 600 Kinship families that are caring for children who were formally placed in their homes by DHHR.

Our goal is simple: to ensure that families can access the tools and resources that are there to help them, making these systems accessible empowers relative families to provide and care for the children in their homes. Our work lives in the gap between the services that exist and the families' abilities to access them. We aim to be a guiding hand as the families navigate each system and service that they encounter in their journey to care for their family members.

Our ideal story is a grandparent or relative family that has confidence and security in caring for their children because they were able to seamlessly access every service which they are eligible.

"I am a 6'5, 265 lb. man, and it brings me to tears thinking about what my niece and nephew went through. To be able to talk to you is such a relief and not sure why I am so emotional, but these kids are my world. This is the first time I was asked how I am doing."
- Kinship Family Member



Morgantown's mini-Beauty Queen donates care items for youth in foster care.

"I didn't know there was anything (a program) out there like this to help me."
-Kinship Family Member



"This program is a Godsend. I didn't know how we were going to do this!"
-Kinship Family Member

Church at the Depot donates back to school supplies for youth in foster care.



SHAPING FUTURES

We support students in foster or kinship care each year on their respective journey with educational advocacy, mentoring, student enrichment, college funding support and post-secondary education/career planning.

In 2021, we celebrated the expansion of the Bridge! We are serving six new schools and 150 more students.

And, for the fourth consecutive year, every single program graduate had a solid plan for their future!

ALLISON'S JOURNEY

Facing your senior year of high school can be daunting on its own. Imagine trying to navigate this important transitional year after your mother's passing, followed by moving with your siblings to your grandmother's home, and then losing her, as well, six months later. This is where Allison found herself as she attempted to get through her final year of high school. It was a struggle just to get through the school year; thoughts of college and a future beyond 'right now' were the last things on her mind. A school counselor reached out to make a referral to the Bridge program for Allison, and it proved to be a pivotal moment in her life.

Initial visits with her mentor were a challenge. Allison came to the table with the reality of what her current situation was and the lack of hope that it could move beyond those current conditions. However, she also came to the table as a young girl who was resilient, who adored her grandparents and younger siblings, who had worked hard to care for them, and who was very much intellectually capable of training or study to do whatever she desired. Over time, through the patient, consistent presence of her mentor, a bond began to develop... and seeds of hope for her future crept in and her own potential was being realized.

Over the course of their ongoing meetings, Allison worked hard to improve her grades and became excited about the possibility of furthering her education. The Bridge mentor sat beside her as they prepared college applications, prepped for the ACT, and completed her financial aid. **And with equal bits of anxiousness and hope, she hit submit on her future dreams** and to no ones' surprise but her own, she was accepted into three colleges!!! Allison herself had all that it took to make it. She just needed that mentor to voice it, sit beside her and cheer her along.

Congratulations Allison!



Students from the Bridge Program visit local colleges.

Bridge student moves into college dorm.



THINK

Teaching Health Instead of Nagging Kids

Educator, Sarah Reeves speaks about Healthy Relationships with youth at a local Youth Leadership Camp



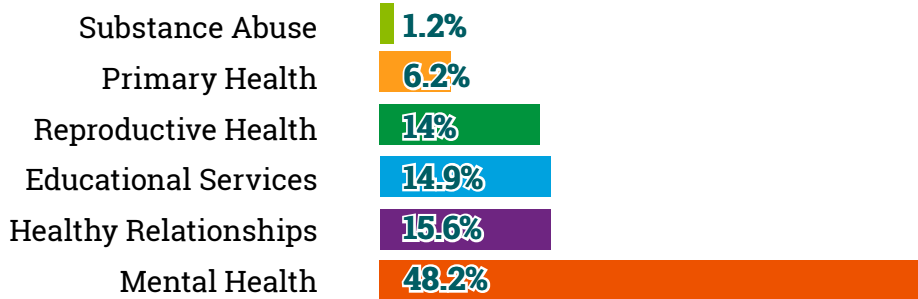
The theme for 2021 for THINK was "back to normal." While grantees across the nation were still not able to provide programming, we were **back in full force** with the THINK program. Because of the amazing teachers and administration, who understand the immense values of our programming, all program sites allowed our educators back to teach in person.

West Virginia youth, particularly the most vulnerable populations, have not had access to evidence based sexual health education. Just as schools are critical settings for preparing students academically, they are also vital partners in helping young people take responsibility for their health and future. The THINK program can **help teens adopt lifelong attitudes and behaviors that support overall health and well-being**, including behaviors that can reduce their risks. In most cases, when thinking about the success of THINK programming, we tend to look at the rates of the teen birth rate. As the largest direct service teen pregnancy prevention program in WV, we know our programming is effective because as of most recent 2020 data the TBR is still steadily declining.

However, our teen pregnancy prevention programming is not just "sex education ." Our program is focused on the complete physical, emotional, and relational well-being of youth.

Today, along with teen pregnancy prevention, we are focusing on communication and refusal skills, anger management, mental health, consent, sexual assault, parent or caregiver connections, and so much more. Our youth need and deserve more from us and we've responded.

STUDENT REFERRALS



Student Referrals are requests for topics, or services available to them. Percentages reflect the percentage of students who asked for a referral on a specific topic. Students may request referrals for multiple topics.

Students were asked to write down what "Love is."

stick to it
Love is respect

Cara Nelson teaches about healthy relationships at Scott High School



53 sites served.

Total class periods: 4,383

Educator, Anna Beaty getting positive affirmations at curriculum training.



COLLABORATION IS KEY

Relationships we maintain with our community partners and schools are integral to continuing the success of our program. These partnerships allowed us to serve and give back to our youth, parents, and community in big ways in 2021. With recommendations for limited face-to-face contact, we made connections online hosting webinars, a virtual conference, and attending coalition meetings via zoom. Webinars included topics such as Eating Disorders, Youth Gaming and Gambling, Bridging the Divide (between youth and parents), and Teen Dating Violence.

Teen Pregnancy Prevention in West Virginia is much more than a curriculum in Health Class. In any given community, you might see a clothing drive, back to school supply event, pool party, hygiene kits, blessing boxes, Christmas donations and more. These events encourage a more holistic health experience for youth by meeting their needs for healthy activities, food, clothing, hygiene items, drug and alcohol use prevention, and increasing school attendance. When our students feel safe and cared for, it sets the foundation for a happier, more successful future.

An example of how collaborations in our community make these things happen is the year end attendance celebration at Huntington High School in June. We joined Cabell County Superintendent, Ryan Saxe, and HHS Attendance Director, Jessica Jordan, to plan the special event. Students were treated to a cookout, games, prizes, ice cream and a day of fun!

The THINK program is a necessary addition to the education of our students.

-School Principal



***“Mission West Virginia is a life saver!
The students are so lucky to have you!”***

—Jessica Jordan, Huntington High Attendance Director



Autumn Wagoner and Becky White at a Teen Leadership Conference.

We love your efforts with our kids. I have seen a need for your program for years.

-School Teacher



Hillary Gore, Community Outreach Coordinator, wraps presents for the Greenbrier Dream Tree.

Mission WV staff participate in United Way Day of Caring.



EDUCATOR SUCCESS STORIES

The THINK Program has 20 trained Educators that teach evidence-based curricula in over 50 schools/sites in 20 counties in West Virginia. Our educators are trained extensively and care deeply about the students they serve and have amazing stories to share about the impact of the programming.



Educator teaches the Seven (7) principles of Smart Relationships

In the classroom we talk about how the decisions we make impact those around us and how often we jump into a situation without stopping to think about our actions. One student asked, "How would I know how to make a good decision?"

Everyone in my life has made bad decisions, and I don't know where to start." Our educator spoke with this student about how to make a positive choice. Each day, they wrote down decisions that he must make throughout the course of a day and made a visual reminder of what a positive choice looks like. By the end of our time with this student, he said, "For the first time in my life, I can see what a good decision looks like. Even though I might not always do that, now I know what that looks like." – Anna Beaty

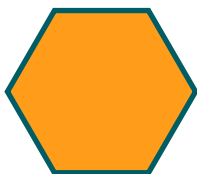
JOHN'S STORY

John had been the target of many bullying situations and was struggling to communicate with his parents. Our educator helped John learn communication skills and encouraged him to speak with his parents using the new communication techniques. Fast forward two years, John has been able to have tough conversations with his parents and reveal his private struggles and feelings. With their support and his newly acquired skills, he is more confident to confront bullying and focus on his schoolwork and overall wellbeing. John reminds us that when teens feel supported by the adults in their life, they are far better equipped to handle life challenges.

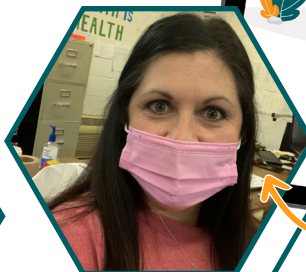
THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT Get answers for today's teen world

Mission WV THINK app allows students, parents & guardians to connect anonymously with educators and find resources to navigate being a teen.

Mission WV's THINK program provides effective, evidence-based reproductive health and healthy relationship education in West Virginia. As part of our program, teen students, parents and guardians can download the free Mission WV THINK app to connect anonymously with educators, find answers to their questions and explore helpful resources for navigating being a teen in today's world.



Educator, Kim Hutton teaches at Barboursville Middle School



Educator, Cara Nelson is excited to be back in schools teaching her students.

YOUTH RESOURCE COORDINATOR



"Most students just want someone to talk to because they feel like nobody listens to them."

At Mission WV, we not only provide evidence-based reproductive health education, we do it using a trauma-informed approach. Last year we identified a gap in the needs of the youth we serve. Our Educators are seen as a resource for students to ask questions and seek additional support. However, the needs of the students pushed the capacity of what our Educators could offer. As a means of addressing this need, we created a new position, the **Youth Resource Coordinator**.

Our Youth Resource Coordinator is a licensed mental health professional who supports and advocates on behalf of youth, including linking them with resources, until their need is met. Our Youth Resource Coordinator does not diagnose or provide therapy to youth, but instead serves as a trusted adult that youth can talk to and receive information, skills and/or resources they may need. Services provided to students vary from doing mindfulness exercises and teaching coping skills to helping with time management and even supporting youth in making appointments and following through that youth are getting the services they need.

RACHEL'S STORY

Rachel had been struggling with depression and suicidal thoughts for a while. She began working with our Youth Resource Coordinator and during one visit, Rachel was quiet, withdrawn and seemed depressed. Her demeanor indicated that she may be struggling with something. When our Youth Resource Coordinator spoke to her about it, Rachel revealed a plan to self-harm. Our Youth Resource Coordinator jumped into action. She assessed the student further and worked with the school counselor to make the appropriate calls for the student to receive help. Rachel received the help she needed and is continuing her path to mental wellness.

**Names have been changed to protect the identity of our youth.*



Youth Resource Coordinator, Autumn Wagoner, speaks with teens about mental health struggles and ways to cope.



Autumn Wagoner gives body safety, consent and sexual assault presentation to students.





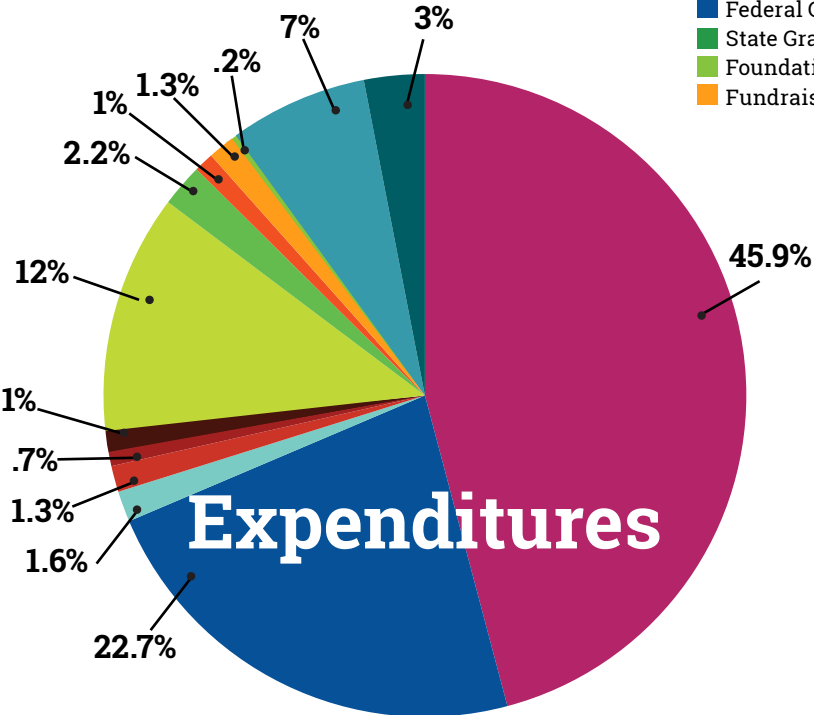
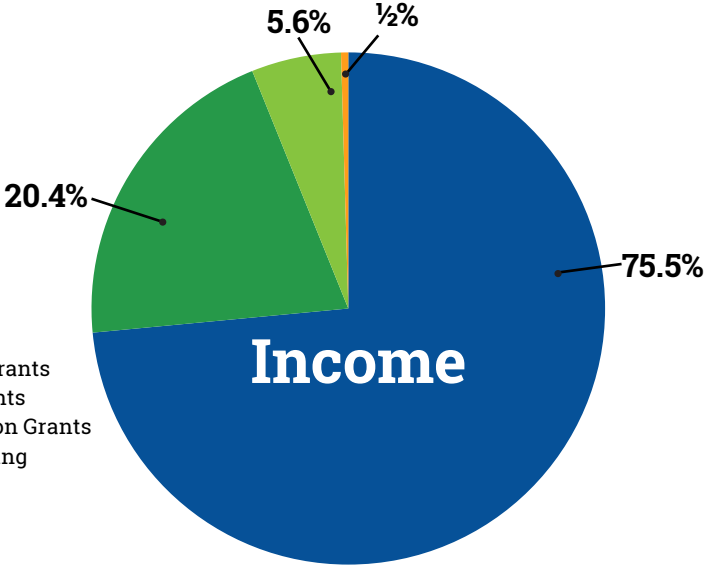
Karissa Golden, Adoption Recruiter picks up donations of Christmas gifts for her teens in foster care.

FINANCES

The following figures reflect Mission WV's expenses, inclusive of program implementation and administrative support costs. We keep our administrative costs low so funds can be directed to programming and those who need it most.

INCOME

Federal Grants	\$2,498,286
State Grants	\$693,483
Foundation Grants	\$192,006
Fundraising	\$15,404
Total Income	\$3,399,179

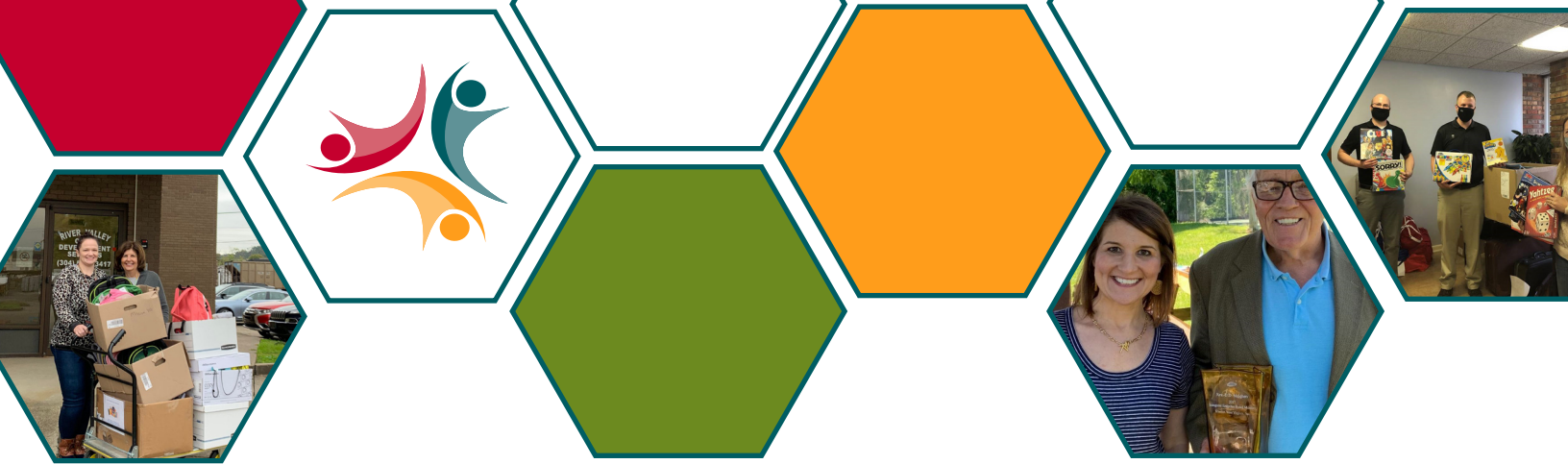


EXPENDITURES

Salaries and Wages	\$1,533,740
Subcontracts and Vendors	\$760,309
Curricula	\$51,848
Supplies	\$43,918
Professional Development	\$23,972
Outreach	\$35,064
Research and Evaluation	\$402,465
Travel	\$71,937
Communications	\$33,295
Rent	\$44,328
Community Events	\$8,283
Insurance and Other	\$232,747
Participant Incentives	\$101,980
Total Expenditures	\$3,343,886

Mission West Virginia has an administrative/indirect cost rate of 5.6%. We value effective program while ensuring the majority of our funds directly support our mission.

*Financials provided for the annual report are unaudited for the 2021 Fiscal Year, 1/1/21 - 12/31/21



OUR SUPPORTERS

We are proud and efficient stewards of the funds entrusted to us. Because of our donors, **WE CAN RESPOND** to the needs we see among our children and families, from offering effective programming to thousands each year to meeting the basic needs of a child in care.

We would like to acknowledge the generous donors who supported Mission WV during the past fiscal year.

Governmental Support

State

- WV Bureau of Senior Services
- WV Department of Education—Office of Diversion and Transition
- WV Department of Health and Human Resources—Bureau of Children and Families
- WV Department of Health and Human Resources – Bureau of Public Health

Federal

- US DHHS—Family and Youth Services Bureau
- US DHHS—Office of Population Affairs

Private Foundations

- The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
- The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation
- Good Samaritan Mission Service

Private Funders/ Donors

- Aimee Warren
- Ali Rezai
- Allison Jones
- Angel Wings Committee
- Baltimore Life, Hurricane
- Brent Winans
- Carrie Kincaid
- City National Bank
- Cold Spot
- Concord University Foundation
- Danielle Martin
- Elk Hill Presbyterian
- GLAM Gala Sponsors
- Heidi Talmage
- Michael Carpenter, HR Block
- Lions Club of Charleston
- Michelle and Doug Daugherty
- MOMS on a Mission Membership Drive
- Modjeski and Masters
- Morgan Norman
- Moses Toyota
- Pullin, Fowler, Flanagan
- Putnam County Bank
- Sara Busse
- Scott Davidson
- Software Computer Group
- Stacy Miller
- Steven Winans

- Tony Thompson
- Tri-State Roofing and Metal
- WV State Rheumatology Society

Significant In-Kind Donors

- Thank you to all the wonderful reporters and staff with the media who have helped tremendously in reaching our mission.
- Thank you to our county schools who have entrusted us to serve youth in your area.
- Thank you to our crucial partners, Angela Marie Turner & Consultants, Rainelle Medical Center and CASE of Southern WV who deliver amazing services.
- And to everyone who donated luggage, hygiene items, care packages, supplies, etc.. to the Carry On campaign to help normalize life experiences of youth in foster care, thank you!

A YEAR END THANK YOU



For a few short weeks I feel a little more balance to our work. Our "ask" is big all year long... a forever family. 24/7 love and care. A lifetime of buying Christmas and birthday wish lists. And unconditional love. Loads of it. As you can imagine it feels overwhelming at times asking so much and knowing what the impact is when a child goes without a family.

So, when Christmas comes around and our donors and supporters show up big without even an ask, it just feels good. Deep-down goodness. It feels great to know that for that moment the kids we serve have everything on their list.

Volunteers shop hard and put so much TLC in ensuring gifts are personal and meaningful. This year that looked like scoring an 18-inch horse last minute for a little girl and a remote-control beetle bug for another, or spicy Ramen Noodles among other hot foods for our girl who loves all things spicy. Our staff is out now traveling the state delivering gifts and will not let up until the cars are emptied out.

Thank you for all that you do to help us show up!



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We would be remiss if we did not acknowledge our Board of Directors for their contributions, wise counsel and patient advice, and serving with our mission at heart.

ALISON JONES

Board President

Putnam County Bank, Executive Vice-President

EDISON DWIGHT CASTO III

Board Vice-President

Bankers Life, Field Agent

STEPHANIE BELFORD

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DAVID DEAN

Board Secretary

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Committee Chair

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Goodwill Industries Mkt.

BETHANY KINDER

Director of Communications, Thomas Health Foundation

MICHELLE LAMASTER

GeneID, Sales representative/
Genetic Testing Specialist

MARGARITA L. PAULEY

PSIMED Corrections LLC, Vice President of Operations

PRAVEEN SRINIVASAN

Regional Manager, Papa John's, Inc.

MR. D.D. MEIGHEN

Emeritus Board Member
Retired Pastor



Scan me to request information about foster/ adoption in West Virginia.



Mission WEST VIRGINIA

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www.missionwv.org



Scan me to download the Mission WV THINK App for parents and students.



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