



NOTEABLES

Spotlight on Mingo County

Last spring, you learned about Kermit and in the summer about our creeks and hollows, but did you ever wonder what else is out there? All those creeks and hollows meander through the mountains that form Mingo county, the youngest county in West Virginia.

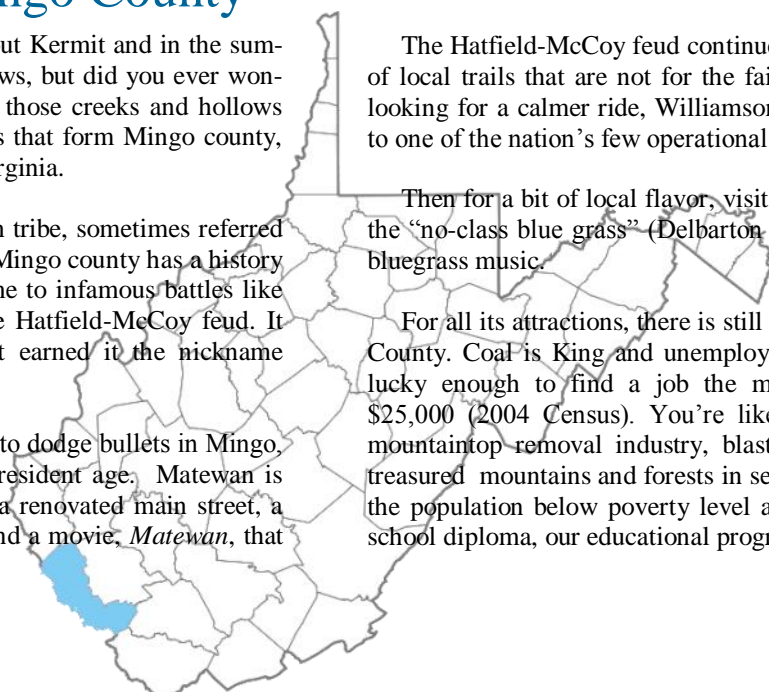
Named for the Mingo Indian tribe, sometimes referred to as the Ohio Seneca Indians, Mingo county has a history of rebellion. The county is home to infamous battles like the Matewan Massacre and the Hatfield-McCoy feud. It was these turbulent times that earned it the nickname “Bloody Mingo.”

These days, you won’t have to dodge bullets in Mingo, which is the oldest county by resident age. Matewan is celebrating its bloodshed with a renovated main street, a museum, a bed and breakfast and a movie, *Matewan*, that attracts international tourism.

The Hatfield-McCoy feud continues on 4-wheeler in a series of local trails that are not for the faint of stomach. If you are looking for a calmer ride, Williamson, the county seat is home to one of the nation’s few operational railroad roundhouses.

Then for a bit of local flavor, visit Delbarton, WV, home of the “no-class blue grass” (Delbarton t-shirt) for Saturday night bluegrass music.

For all its attractions, there is still work to be done in Mingo County. Coal is King and unemployment high, but if you are lucky enough to find a job the median income is a mere \$25,000 (2004 Census). You’re likely to be working in the mountaintop removal industry, blasting off the tops of your treasured mountains and forests in search of coal. With 25% of the population below poverty level and only 60% with a high school diploma, our educational programs are paramount.



ABLE Families Learns CPR



Sr. Janet practices CPR

Last month, 10 respiratory therapy students and their instructor traveled to ABLE Families to teach a one-day seminar in adult and child CPR. The 14 participants learned what to do if someone chokes, how to shock the heart with a defibrillator, and how to keep a person alive until an ambulance comes.

In remote areas of Mingo County, it can take ambulances more than 45 minutes to arrive at the scene. Residents depend on a 911 dispatch service which transports to a hospital 20 miles away in Williamson. In the past two months, at least four local accidents have required emergency vehicles or helicopter transport.

“I’m out a lot of times alone with kids, so it was very beneficial for me to refresh my CPR. This is really important,” said ABLE Families’ respite worker Brenda Horn.

The Wheeling Jesuit University students study respiratory therapy with their instructor Kristy Lewis. Respiratory therapy is the field that is responsible for giving CPR and defibrillator services in hospitals. Respiratory therapists also perform tracheotomies, work with patients with breathing disorders, test lung function, and assist with ventilators. The group traveled for more than five hours to give this workshop and donated a full day of their time to teach it.

ABLE Families’ director Sister Janet Peterworth said “I was very pleased with the program the students designed. All of the staff were engaged in a realistic, hands-on learning process.”

New Partnership

ABLE Families recently partnered with the Clay Center Community Partnerships Program.

ABLE will work with community partnership coordinator Kate McComas to develop two music camps that will be integrated into the 2008 afterschool program.

A Note from the Director

I know you've heard the old saying, "The faster I go, the more behind I get." I do not know the source of that saying, but I sure do know the truth of it. Seems like I just can't catch up these days. I'm running to meetings, listening to staff, being present to the afterschool kids, writing letters, working on grants, responding to donations, and emptying the garbage—to name a few things.

But it isn't just me. It seems everyone here at ABLE Families is busy in her own area. Garnet Fitchpatrick, our MIHOW Coordinator, is busy training five new in-home family educators according to the Vanderbilt curriculum.

Lori Ferguson, our Respite Team Leader, is meeting herself coming and going trying to finish her college degree in counseling in between scheduling parent meetings, doing in-service for her outreach worker and doing home visits.

Kelli Marcum, my office assistant, gets frazzled answering the phone, doing the taxes, tracking grants, paying bills, and chasing down receipts. Julia De Silva, our new adult education tutor, is having a hard time keeping up with ten new students who need individual attention.

Linda May, our new Americorps member, scampers from here to there balancing afterschool and our newly formed 4-H club. Our 11 MIHOW workers are in and out getting supplies, planning playgroups, making appointments with their moms, and participating in important trainings.

Brenda Horn, our respite outreach worker, flies in and out with her "magic suitcase" full of anger management projects for her kids and Lea Ann Messer-Kelly, (who moves slower than the rest of us because she is *very* pregnant) juggles afterschool and keeping our donor base accurate.

And, then, there is also Jenta Cheung who hardly ever rushes—but gets a lot of creative things done both in the afterschool and on our computers. And, finally, we have Tracie Blummer, our new VISTA, who rushed to not only design this newsletter, but also to author most of it.

Perhaps during the holiday season, we can all get some much needed rest—or is that possible?

May your Christmas season be blessed with some down time with family and friends, too, and may God bless you for all you do for ABLE Families.

Sr. Janet



In Memoriam

ABLE Families remembers our generous benefactor, Mrs. Alice Riley who recently died four days beyond her 100th birthday.

Mrs. Riley was interested in our work from the beginning, and often asked about our projects. She loved the make believe part of our annual non-dinner gala and was our oldest donor.

One of her daughters, Sr. Christine Riley serves on our board. Her other daughter, Katherine Riley, continues to be a generous donor to our programs. Thanks to all of the Riley family for their contributions.

ABLE Families starts 4-H Club



Students enjoy a 4-H game

ABLE Families recently hosted 20 children ages 9-12 in forming a 4-H club. 4-H County Representative, Tammy Estep, and two seasoned members, Jennifer Musik and Paige Prater, led this first meeting full of fun and questions.

New member, Adam Hannah, said his favorite part of the meeting was "When we played the 'Honey, -I-love-you, -will-you-please-smile' game." "What does 4-H do?" was the most common question on the students' minds.

Eight-year 4-H member, Paige Prater, stressed that the most important part of 4-H is giving back to your community. Students chose their group name "Kermit Youth in Action" (KYIA) based on 4-H principles.

KYIA will meet on the first Friday of every month at ABLE Families to plan community service projects, play games, sing songs, and make crafts. Group leader and Americorps members, Linda May needs community volunteers to help with these activities.

ABLE wishes for:

Summer camp volunteers (1 week)

New or used digital cameras (\$20 & up)

Gas for magic school bus (\$85/tank)

Commercial vacuum cleaner (\$300)

Portable CD player "boom box" (\$40)

Mom's day out sponsor (\$500)

Supper in a Sack sponsor (\$1000)

Peace in your life & the world (priceless)

Spotlight on Staff member Kim Teeters

Kim Teeters, one of our newer in-home family educators serves in the Chattaroy, Nolan, Miller's Creek area of Mingo County. She graduated from Williamson High School and has her Associate Degree in Criminal Justice Corrections from Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College. Kim felt drawn to the Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker program because of her love of children. She has seen children separated from their families because of neglect or abuse, and she felt that she might be able to be of some assistance.

"I just thought that maybe I could help a new mom not to feel so overwhelmed when she is faced with so many new things in her life," said Kim.



Kim and Destiny Teeters

"I know what it is like to have so much on your mind, you don't know which way to turn. I have a four year old, and she is a handful. I just want to support some other mothers in my neighborhood."

ABLE Families was able to hire Kim with a grant from the Logan Healthcare Foundation. This grant enabled us to offer a new section of the county the services of an in-home family educator.

Kim reflected, "I spent the first months at ABLE Families building my skills for home visiting. I didn't know there was so much to it. I have studied the curriculum from Vanderbilt and I am getting to feel better about going into someone else's home. It has taken me a while to get my families, but word is getting around now, so I am sure I will have a full load soon."

Kim lives on Dan's Branch, near Chattaroy, WV, with her daughter, Destiny.



Linda May



Tracie Blummer



Julia De Silva

Welcome Americorps and VISTAs

ABLE Families has recently welcomed the arrival of three Americorps and VISTA volunteers. In August, native West Virginian Linda May joined the staff of the afterschool program through a Kanawha County United Way Americorps program. Linda is also taking classes at Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College.

She hopes to give students more field trip opportunities as the group leader for ABLE's 4-H club and is searching for funding to do so.

Late August brought Marylander Tracie Blummer as an Americorps VISTA in marketing and capacity building. Tracie recently returned from volunteering and teaching English in China with her husband, Matt, who is serving a VISTA term at the Web of Life Ecology Center. At ABLE she is developing marketing materials including posters and videos.

She is also researching the possibility of starting a craft cooperative to bring more economic opportunities to the region.

September welcomed our newest Americorps member, Julia De Silva. She volunteers through the Christian Appalachian Project. A Massachusetts native, and recent Boston University graduate, Julia is enjoying the slower pace of life here. She is a tutor in our popular adult education program that recently gained 10 participants. She has a sign on her classroom door that reads "I don't know" is not allowed in here."

Americorps and VISTA are federal programs that place volunteers in under-served communities across the United States for a year of service. For more information about Americorps and VISTA visit www.americorps.gov.

Out of the Box

By Tracie Blummer

During Kermit's Fall Festival I sat at our booth crossing my fingers anyone would come and paint the mural project I dreamed up. Sister Janet took a more direct approach screaming, "Come paint a block. Come on kids!" The first little girl was skeptical, "There are no rules? I can paint anything?" but ultimately sacrificed her time to a blue flower.

They trickled in slowly, but soon I had a crowd of teens and youth vying for the remaining squares. The 48 quilt-like squares I had prepared filled completely up and we even filled the back of another board with an additional 24 squares.

They painted footballs and flowers, love notes and Pollock-esk finger paintings, but my favorite artist didn't even have his own block. He wasn't old enough to talk; he just sat in his stroller watching the other children paint and started to cry desperately reaching for the mural board.

I found a small blank space on another child's block for him and gave him a big red paint brush. His mother held him above the board and gently guided his fist hand into the space.

To her dismay, he jerked it away and left passionate red trails across the squares of several other participants. He put the finishing touches on our mural with an enthusiasm that was a little outside the box!



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Lights On Afterschool

In October ABLE Families participated in a national rally for afterschool programs. Lights on Afterschool coordinator and VISTA volunteer, Trina Fitzpatrick, welcomed Mayor Johnny Linville, County Commissioner Greg “Hootie” Smith, Mingo County Sheriff Lonnie Hannah, and former Emergency Services Director Bill Davis to ABLE Families’ Afterschool program.

Students recited poems and performed a *High School Musical* dance. ABLE Families’ director Sr. Janet Peterworth said “Afterschool is important because it helps students develop socialization skills. Our program offers opportunities for enrichment that students might not have otherwise.

It is a safe place for students to stay engaged in the hours after school and throughout our summer camps.”

Brittany Hall and Adam Hannah worked with Afterschool Facilitator Jenta Chapman and VISTA volunteer Tracie Blummer, to create digital stories. Brittany discussed how ABLE Families has helped improve her anger management skills. Adam talked about how afterschool will help him achieve his dreams.

Afterschool Facilitators, Jenta Cheung and LeaAnn Messer-Kelly, and Americorps Volunteer Linda May are committed to providing a safe place for children to be afterschool.

These women plan exiting activities, like a visit from Kermit’s



Afterschool students perform a dance

Fire department (complete with a ride on their fire truck) and painting lessons from a local artist.

Visit ABLE Families’ Lights on Afterschool webpage to view photos and digital stories of the event. (<http://pnn.ablefamilies.net>)