



WEST VIRGINIA
COUNCIL of CHURCHES

2207 Washington Street, East
Charleston, WV 25311

September 18-20th, 2020

WEST VIRGINIA Days of Hope

Encouraging
Prevention & Recovery

County coalitions can be found at:

HelpAndHopeWV.org/prevention-in-your-region.html

For more information, contact the Day of Hope Partners

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Dear Faith Leader,

With many activities being cancelled this year, one might rightly ask, “Why should I celebrate the Days of Hope in 2020?” Fortunately, there are many reasons for us to celebrate prevention and recovery this year, and many ways to do so, while still following CDC guidelines. People are still finding their way to recovery and finding ways to maintain that recovery; treatment and recovery centers continue to offer help; and our congregations and communities remain committed to sharing hope and support. In these times, for the people and families who have been affected by substance use disorder, the faith community has an especially important role to play in celebrating these victories.

The theme of the 2020 Days of Hope: A Celebration of Prevention and Recovery is “You Can Touch a Life.” Children in our state have been particularly affected by the opioid crisis with the numbers of children in foster and kinship care rising exponentially over the past several years. These children have often experienced profound trauma and need our support. This support cannot wait until the coronavirus pandemic abates, but is an ongoing endeavor.

In 2020, you can touch the life of a foster, adoptive, or kinship child by supporting the families who care for them, aiding prevention efforts, celebrating those who are in recovery, and caring for those who are still on the journey.

To learn more, please turn the page.

Sincerely,

2020 West Virginia Day of Hope Organizers



WEST VIRGINIA
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www.wvcc.org





Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Care Resources

WV Foster, Adoptive, & Kinship Parents Network
WVFosterParents.org

TEAM for West Virginia Children
TeamWV.org

Children's Home Society of West Virginia
ChildHSWV.org

Genesis Foster Care
GenesisWV.org

WV Birth to Three
WVDHHR.org/birth23/

Legal Aid
lawv.org

Foster Care Ombudsman
WVDHHR.org/oig/fco.html

WV Court Improvement Program
CourtsWV.gov/public-resources/CAN/court-improvement-program.html

Mission West Virginia
MissionWV.org

You Can Touch a Life: Children in Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Care

You've probably heard this statistic many times recently: nearly 7,000 kids in foster care in West Virginia.¹ 7,000 children. West Virginia is the state with:

- The highest rate of removal of children from their homes,²
- The highest rate of children in care per capita,³ and
- Drugs as a factor in 83% of open child abuse and neglect cases.⁴

And those statistics do not capture the whole picture. There are thousands more children being raised by grandparents or other relatives outside of the formal foster care system. There are many reasons for these numbers: the opioid epidemic, poverty, and lack of community supports all play a part.

Children in foster care have experienced some kind of trauma, whether that includes abuse or neglect or just the trauma of being removed from their family of origin. They often struggle to maintain relationships over time as they may be moved from one home to another for a variety of reasons. About half of children who enter foster care are eventually reunified with their birth families. In these cases, support is needed for that family to reintegrate and continue on a healthy path.

For foster and kinship families, the task of caring for children who have experienced trauma is compounded by the challenges of navigating a complex system where they often feel invisible. When a child is adopted, the case management and other supports that were in place end and the family receives little if any support as they settle into permanency and manage the traumas and behaviors that may present themselves differently as children age.

Children who have been in foster care need our help. Once emancipated, nearly 50% of these children will find themselves homeless and 25% will experience incarceration.⁵ Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) can also dominate their lives with diagnosis rates twice as high as that of veterans who have been in active conflicts.⁶

But there is hope. You can touch a life.

10 Things You Can Do to Touch a Life

- 1 **Become a foster parent.** (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/bcf/Providers/Pages/Adoption.aspx>)
- 2 **If you are a foster, adoptive, or kinship parent, join the WVFAKPN Facebook group.** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/552944021818825/>
- 3 **Celebrate National Foster Care month in May and Foster Parent Day on May 31.** (<https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth>)
- 4 **Donate to a foster/kinship closet.** (<https://www.missionwv.org/foster-care-closets-in-wv>)
- 5 **Support a foster, kinship, and/or adoptive child or youth in scouting.** (Girl Scouts - www.bdgsc.org; Boy Scouts - www.buckskin.org)
- 6 **Provide respite or child care for a family.**
- 7 **Provide other support for families such as meals, assistance with rides, grocery shopping, cleaning, or lawn care.**
- 8 **Support foster agencies, staff, and child protective service workers.**
- 9 **Befriend and listen to foster parents without judging.** Support them in grieving when children leave their homes and in walking through this difficult journey.
- 10 **Pray for the foster, adoptive, and kinship families in your congregation and community.**



RESOURCES *on the* WEB

- **Help & Hope WV:** HelpAndHopeWV.org/prevention-in-your-region.html
One of the best prevention resources in WV.
- **Help4WV:** Help4WV.com. One of the best recovery resources in West Virginia
- **Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) WV:** SADD.org
- **Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America:** CADCA.org
- **Partnership for Drug Free Kids:** DrugFree.org
- **Narcotics Anonymous Meetings:** 1-818-773-9999 x771; NA.org
- **Center for Substance Abuse Prevention:** SAMHSA.gov/topics
- **Alcohol Anonymous Meetings:** 304-231-5867 or the 24 hour hotline at 1-800-333-5051; AAWV.org/site/meetings.htm
- **WV Day of Hope:** On Facebook
- **Community Impact Coalition:** On Facebook or visit: ImpactWV.blogspot.com
- **Stigma Free WV:** StigmaFreeWV.org
- **West Virginia Council of Churches:** WVCC.org/day-of-hope.html

¹ WV DHHR Legislative Foster Care Placement Report, August 2020.

² <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/parenting/love-over-everything-west-virginia-struggles-foster-care-crisis-families-n1118851>.

³ West Virginia's Child Welfare Crisis: A Path Forward, p. 14.

⁴ <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/parenting/love-over-everything-west-virginia-struggles-foster-care-crisis-families-n1118851>.

⁵ <http://www.fostercare2.org/ask-the-pros-2>.

⁶ Ibid.