



Mountain Kids News

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Janet White,
Admin. Assistant

Welcome Janet White! Janet White is a new member of the MKI family. She serves as Administrative Assistant and comes to us with valuable experience as the former Director of Mercy Ministries. We appreciate her servant's heart- and her catering abilities.

New Dental Clinic Up and Running! – In partnership with Clinch Valley Community Action (CVCA), the *Mountain Kids Dental Clinic at CVCA* opened for business in April. The new facilities allow staff the luxury of taking a break from our mobile dental unit to see patients in an office. Children receive free dental care and parents are charged on a sliding fee scale. The success of this program would not be possible without Dr. Brandon Buskill and his assistant Jennifer Shephard, along with Letisha Odum, who served as Dental Coordinator. Since its inception last July our dental programs have performed 1,180 procedures on children and their families, along with 3,393 dental screenings at our six target schools. This year's screenings found that 27% of children were in need of dental services. Preliminary results show that the attendance rate for those children participating in our dental project has increased by 47%.

MKI joins SATIRA – Mountain Kids has been invited to join Tazewell County's Substance Abuse Task Force in Rural Appalachia (SATIRA). The organization is a county drug prevention cohort made up of local law enforcement, school officials, social services, and counseling programs. SATIRA sponsors drug prevention programs such as DARE, "Stay on Track", and regional conferences for law enforcement and health care officials.

Push for Prevention- MKI's new emphasis is on prevention. By expanding preventative dental services and our mentoring/tutoring programs, and by working closely with SATIRA, we plan to begin a prevention campaign within the elementary and middle schools of this county. *An ounce of prevention is less costly and less painful than a pound of cure.*

Palmer Foundation Grant Award – The Palmer Foundation has graciously awarded MKI with a grant for dental supplies. This award is coming at a most useful time as we plan to increase dental hygiene services. Our hygienist will work throughout the summer promoting clean and healthy teeth in our clinic and in local summer programs at area schools.

Mountain Mentors- This is a new venture in which we coordinate after school mentoring programs for Richlands Middle School, Tazewell Middle School, and Pocahontas Combined Schools. Research reveals that students who meet regularly with their mentors are less likely to skip a day of school, less likely to start using illegal drugs, and less likely to start drinking.

School Health Challenge- MKI would like to congratulate Abbs Valley-Boissevain Elementary School for winning the School Health Challenge. For the second year Mountain Kids joined in the contest between Abbs Valley and Raven Elementary to see which student body could walk the highest number of miles per student during the school year. The total miles walked between the schools were 13,935.3! Abbs Valley reported 49.07 miles per child, with Raven having 25.85 miles per child. As a reward to the winner, Mountain Kids purchased additional playground equipment including basketballs, jump ropes, safety cones, Zocker footballs, and flying disks. The challenge between the schools was initiated by principals Sarah Cromer (Raven) and Sharon Smith (Abbs Valley) in order to encourage physical fitness among their students. Mountain Kids rewards the winning school to draw attention to the need for exercise in the fight against childhood obesity. According to the American Obesity Association, the increase in obesity among American youth over the past two decades is dramatic. About 15.5% of adolescents and 15.3% of children in this country are obese.

"The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children".

Dietrich Bonhoeffer