

Marshall County Family Resource Network, Inc.



www.marshallcountyfrn.com

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FRN Corner

By Stacie Dei

Executive Director

Marshall County Family Resource Network

It's been a busy year for the Marshall County Family Resource Network, especially with our alcohol and substance abuse prevention efforts.

In the course of the past several months, Marshall County retailers who sell alcohol have made extraordinary progress in the quest to keep alcohol out of the hands of youth.

In 2008, Marshall County retailers sold alcohol to minors 94% of the time during compliance checks. This year, only 11% of retailers sold alcohol to an undercover minor working with police. That's a testament to the efforts by many members of the community to eliminate underage drinking. While much more work still needs to be done, this year the undercover compliance checks carried out by the Marshall County Sheriff's Department have progressed much better than last year's.

Another great accomplishment is the change in the penalties associated with underage drinking. In our nearly 100 one-on-one interviews with community members about youth access to alcohol, we heard repeatedly that there needed to be stronger penalties for underage drinking and alcohol possession. Through the Marshall County FRN's involvement with the Marshall County Anti-Drug Coalition, we were able to work with legislators to pass a law, which took effect in early July, with the help of Sen. Jeff Kessler, Marshall County Sheriff John Gruzinkas, Magistrate Bill Anderson and others, that changes the penalty for underage drinking to a juvenile delinquency and not just a status offense.

These major accomplishments are only part of the solution to combat substance abuse in our community. The Marshall County Family Resource Network and the Marshall County Anti-Drug Coalition are continuing their work and asking community members to join in their efforts. The next Marshall County Anti-Drug Coalition meeting is scheduled for Sept. 4 at noon in the Marshall County Family Resource Network conference room in the historic federal building, 324 7th St., Moundsville.

Stacie Dei is executive director of the Marshall County Family Resource Network.