

Marshall County Family Resource Network, Inc.



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More Than 50 Attend Substance Abuse Prevention Workshop Sponsored by the FRN

MOUNDSVILLE – On Aug. 14, more than 50 educators and law enforcement personnel attended a substance abuse prevention workshop sponsored by the Marshall County Family Resource Network at the John Marshall High School.

The workshop included presentations from Latrisha Whitelatch, substance abuse prevention director at the Marshall County Family Resource Network; Dara Pond, Adolescent Health Initiative coordinator for Region I; and Kimberli Green, coordinator of the Safe and Drug Free Communities program. The workshop concluded with a 90-minute presentation on Drug Endangered Children and Drug Identification from Andrea Darr of the West Virginia Prosecuting Attorneys Institute in Charleston.

In attendance were 45 Marshall County teachers, counselors and nurses along with two representatives from the Benwood Housing Authority's after-school program, three Glen Dale police officers and Marshall County prosecutor Jeff Cramer.

Whitelatch provided an overview of the FRN's substance abuse prevention efforts, including the work to keep alcohol out of the hands of youth and the fact that the FRN and the Marshall County Anti-Drug Coalition has shown recent progress. The age of first use of substances is 12-13; last year, it was 10-11. Whitelatch also said that the FRN and the coalition was hearing from community members deep concern about the abuse of prescription drugs.

"It's an issue that is on the rise in our county," Whitelatch said.

In her presentation, Darr provided statistics about how drug abuse was hurting children, not just as abusers themselves but if their parents or caregivers are drug users. She said that neglected and abused children are 50% more likely to be arrested as juveniles.

"Is that good enough reason to spread the word about these (drug endangered) kids," she asked. She said that community members can help by reporting to law enforcement officers if they suspect abuse or drugs.

"The second annual substance abuse prevention workshop and resource fair was a great success. We were very pleased with the number of school personnel and others who attended the event," said Whitelatch. "We were thrilled to be able to bring Andrea Darr to the Northern Panhandle to share her knowledge and expertise regarding drug endangered children and drug identification."

Shelly Behm, Safe and Drug Free Schools counselor/prevention specialist at Marshall

County Schools, thanked the FRN for its workshop.

“I’m sure that it will be put to good use in practice this year and in years to come in recognizing and dealing with substance-related issues,” Behm said. “I was very happy to see so many teachers, nurses, and counselors take the time out of their busy end-of-summer schedules to attend this very worthwhile training.”

Community organizations and agencies set up information tables and made a brief presentation to the educators and community members.

“Many teachers appreciated not only the training itself, but the availability of information about a variety of resources in our community,” Behm said.

The organizations who set up tables included the Child Care Resource Center, the Court Appointed Special Advocates, Harmony House, YWCA, Grand Vue Park & Recreation Center, Appalachian Outreach, Marshall County Emergency Management, the Youth Club of Marshall County, the Marshall County Adult Learning Center, USDA Rural Development, the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Initiative, New Vision, the Adolescent Health Initiative, the Marshall County Anti-Drug Coalition and the Marshall County Family Resource Network.