

JANUARY 2026

THE CHARLES TOWN INITIATIVE

Monthly Newsletter



DEAR CHARLES TOWN,

Happy New Year from CTI! As we kick off 2026, we're excited to share new ways we're connecting with and supporting our community. This month, you'll hear about JBA's new Facebook page, updates from Police Support Specialist Misty, and insights from our recent Loving Our Community event. We'll also explore what social media trends reveal about teens' perspectives on substance use and highlight upcoming Crisis Intervention Team trainings. Here's to a year of growth, connection, and positive impact!



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Success by Numbers

December 2025 School Support Specialist and Lead Mentor

Number of Moderate- or High-Risk Students on Caseload

12 students

Number of Mentoring Sessions

31 sessions

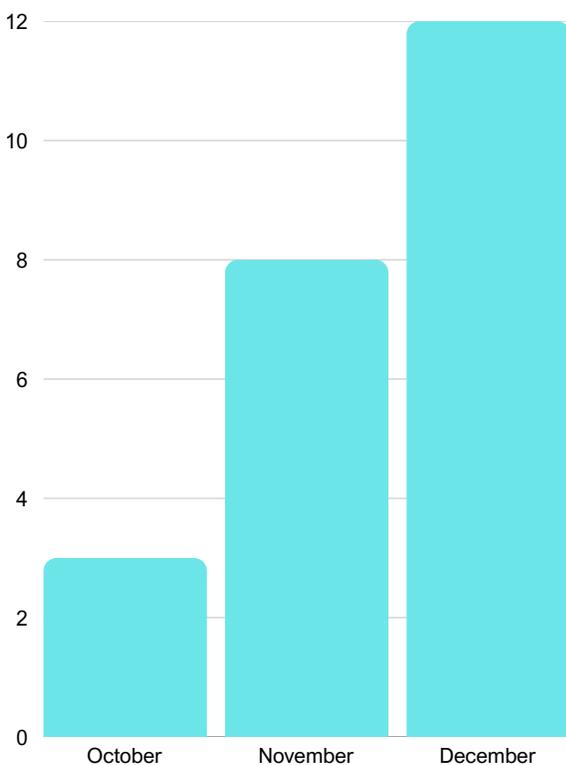
Number of Crisis Interventions Provided

16 interventions

Number of New Referrals to the SSS

3 referrals

Growth in Referrals to School Support Specialist



Specialized Skills Building Interventions to Moderate and High Risk Children

8 students

Indirect Case Management for Moderate and High Risk Children

2 students

Number of Initial Interventions

3 interventions

Number of ACEs Screenings and SDQ/CYRMs

3 screenings

CHECK OUT JBA'S NEW FACEBOOK PAGE!

Stay connected with our partners at the Jefferson-Berkeley Alliance! Visit and follow their Facebook page, where The Charles Town Initiative will be sharing upcoming events, community activities, and important updates. It's a great way to stay informed and engaged with what's happening across our region.



WHAT HAS CTI'S POLICE SUPPORT SPECIALIST, MISTY, BEEN WORKING ON?

Police Support Specialist Misty has been consistently active across Jefferson County and Charles Town, balancing direct response work, community engagement, professional development, and long-term prevention planning. Her efforts reflect a steady progression from day-to-day support and relationship building toward expanding community capacity and youth-focused prevention.

Throughout the past several months, Misty has responded to a wide range of community calls, including domestic violence situations, overdose follow-ups, juvenile behavioral concerns, dementia-related needs, suicide prevention assistance, and mental hygiene support. She has also conducted regular outreach with individuals experiencing homelessness, distributing supplies and connecting people to resources. To strengthen coordination with law enforcement, Misty completed ride-alongs with Detective Newlin and Community Resource Officer Cowell, gaining additional insight into on-the-ground response and collaboration.

Alongside this direct work, Misty has been deeply engaged in professional development and system-building. She has completed extensive training, including CIT Coordinator and CIT Train-the-Trainer certification, Sequential Intercept Mapping (CIT), Narcan, Youth Mental Health First

Aid, suicide prevention, overdose grief and loss support, SBIRT, PASS mentor training, and multiple substance use prevention trainings through Drug Free WV and other partners. She also recently received her provisional social work licensure, further strengthening CIT's ability to provide trauma-informed, ethical, and coordinated support. Misty has remained actively involved in Jefferson County's collaborative landscape,



attending monthly meetings and serving on task forces and coalitions, including the Domestic Violence Task Force, Sexual Assault Response Team, CIT, WE CARE, and the Jefferson Berkeley Alliance Board and Coalition. She has also been asked to join the Jefferson County MDIT. Her community presence extends to events such as National Night Out, Save a Life Day, WV Purple Day, City Council meetings, and multiple Loving Our Community events.

As the new year begins, Misty is hosting “Cocoa with the Po-Po” on January 31, creating an informal, welcoming space for community members and law enforcement to connect and build trust. January also marks the launch of an exciting new initiative. Beginning this month, Misty is starting a community-level youth prevention coalition, with the first meeting on January 12 at Washington High School in partnership with the school's Key Club. These conversations will focus on drug prevention, mental health, suicide prevention, and bullying, helping elevate youth voice and strengthen protective factors.

Looking ahead to the spring, Misty will further expand local crisis response capacity by hosting her first Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) trainings—an 8-hour training on March 19 and a full 40-hour training from April 13–17. Together, these efforts reflect meaningful momentum as Misty continues to connect systems, support individuals, and build a stronger, more responsive community.

LOVING OUR COMMUNITY

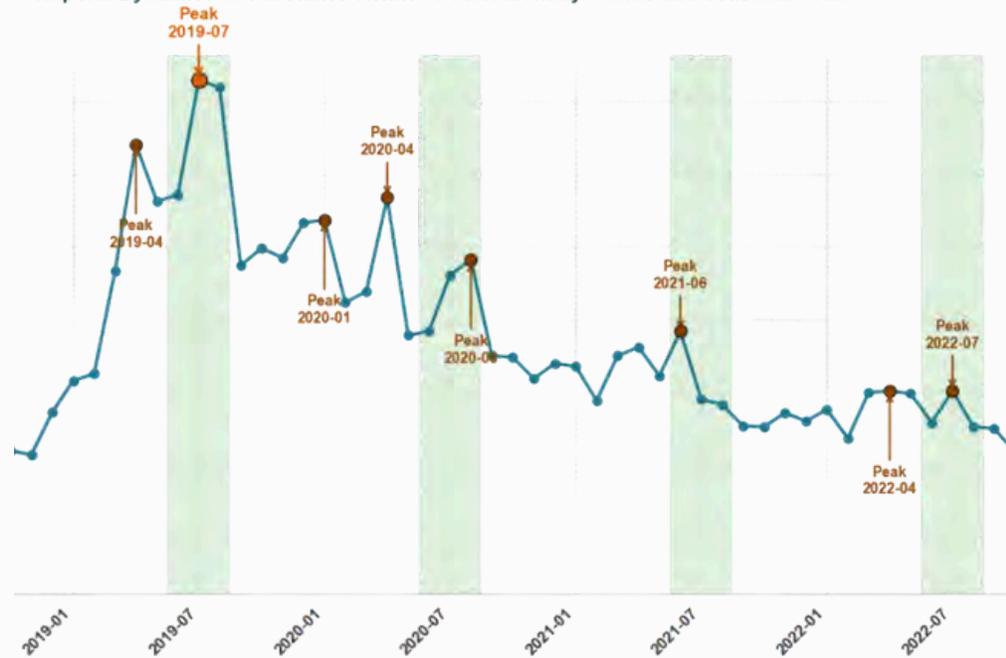
Loving Our Community continues to thrive thanks to the dedication of volunteers and partner organizations. Misty and Danielle have been helping community members access essential resources and supports, while Brian engages youth through games and mentorship. Loving Our Community offers free clothes, hygiene items, children's activities, and connections to community services, making it a welcoming space for everyone. Families leave with tangible support and new connections, while children enjoy fun, safe activities. Its success is a true reflection of so many organizations coming together. We hope to see many more community members next month at First Presbyterian Church in Martinsburg on February 20!



Predicting Substance Use Conversations

Using predictive modeling, the study showed that peer and family influences, guilt, and disgust were key predictors of substance-use posts. In contrast, joy and school-related content were linked to non-substance-use discussions. The model performed well in identifying substance-use content, underscoring the strong connections between emotions, social contexts, and behavior.

Temporal Dynamics of Substance-Related Posts: Monthly Trends and Seasonal Peaks



Monthly trends in the percentage of substance-use related posts from 2018 to 2022.

Implications for Prevention

This research highlights that adolescent substance use is not just experimentation—it is deeply tied to emotions and social pressures.

Key takeaways for prevention efforts include:

- Engaging peers positively: Peer norms are powerful; programs that build healthy peer networks can reduce risky behavior.
- Supporting emotional health: Addressing guilt, sadness, and fear through coping skills and mental health support is critical.
- Involving families and schools: Strengthening family bonds and supportive school policies can serve as buffers against risky behavior.
- Timing interventions strategically: Substance-use discussions peak during school breaks and holidays, suggesting opportunities for targeted outreach.

By understanding teens' emotional experiences and social influences, community coalitions like The Charles Town Initiative can design interventions that truly resonate with youth, providing timely support and fostering healthier choices.

READ THE *STUDY*

COCOA WITH THE PO-PO



A FAMILY-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY EVENT

- FREE HOT COCOA & TREATS
- MEET AND CHAT WITH LOCAL OFFICERS
- KID-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES
- GAMES, COLORING, AND GIVEAWAYS
- A SAFE, POSITIVE SPACE TO BUILD COMMUNITY TRUST

SATURDAY, JANUARY 31
WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL, 300 PATRIOTS DR.
1:00 PM- 4:00 PM

JOIN US FOR A WARM AND WELCOMING AFTERNOON OF FREE HOT COCOA, CONVERSATION, AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION! OUR GOAL IS TO BRING FAMILIES AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TOGETHER IN A FUN, RELAXED ENVIRONMENT

PLEASE CONTACT MISTY WAITS FOR MORE INFORMATION AT (304)-724-3288
HOSTED BY THE JEFFERSON BERKELEY ALLIANCE



CRISIS INTERVENTION TRAINING



This **8-hour training** is designed to provide law enforcement officers with essential tools to effectively and safely respond to individuals experiencing mental health crises. The training provides an overview of de-escalation techniques, mental health awareness, navigation of local resources, and practical, scenario-based exercises.



March 19, 2026
8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Before March 11th
20 participants maximum



Our Location
128 INDUSTRIAL BLD. KEARNEYSVILLE, WV



Expert Instructors

Including law enforcement professionals, behavioral health providers, and community experts.



Service Credits

This training provides 8 in-service credits through LEPSIS.



Participants will:



Gain foundational skills in de-escalation and crisis communication



Enhance their understanding of mental health and SUD



Engage in role-play scenarios and interactive exercises



Learn to connect individuals in crisis with appropriate community services



- Business casual attire; uniforms not required
- Drinks and snacks provided; break for lunch each day
- Full participation required; completion certificate awarded
- Active engagement expected throughout

Questions?

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THE
MARTINSBURG
INITIATIVE





“TALK. THEY HEAR YOU.”[®]
CAMPAIGN



What You Can Do to Prevent Your Child From Drinking Alcohol or Using Other Drugs

Be aware of potential risk factors, including:

- Significant life transitions, such as graduating from middle or high school or getting a driver's license;
- A history of social and emotional problems;
- Depression, anxiety disorders, or other mental health issues;
- A family history of alcohol or other substance use disorders; and
- Hanging out with friends or peers who drink alcohol or use other drugs.

Be a positive role model.

- Don't drink alcohol or use other drugs and drive, and don't get in a car if the driver has been drinking or using other drugs.
- Don't use prescription medication that wasn't prescribed by your doctor. And don't misuse medication that was prescribed to you.
- Get help if you think you have an alcohol- or other drug use-related problem.
- Don't give alcohol or other drugs to your child or their friends and peers. Explain that underage drinking and other drug use are never acceptable inside or outside your home.
- Know where you keep all of your alcohol and prescription medication, and always remind your child and their friends and peers that these substances are off-limits.



Work with schools and communities to ensure that they:

- Support and reward young people's decisions not to drink alcohol and use other drugs;
- Identify and intervene with kids who are engaged in alcohol and other drug use;
- Create, enforce, and promote rules that prevent underage drinking and other drug use; and
- Develop acceptable behavior agreements that are established, well-known, and applied consistently.

Provide support and give space for growth.

- Be involved in your child's life. Go to their school events and extracurricular activities, ask about their day, follow through on your commitments to them, and set aside time to do things together.
- Stay actively engaged in their social media activity. Talk with them about the differences between appropriate and inappropriate content and emphasize that what gets posted online can be there forever.
- Encourage their independence while establishing appropriate limits.
- Make it easy for them to share information about their life by actively listening and asking open-ended questions.
- Know where they are, what they're doing, and whom they're spending time with.

- Meet and get to know the parents or caregivers of their friends and peers. Share your rules about not allowing underage drinking or other drug use.
- Find ways for them to be involved in family life, such as participating in fun family activities and events, helping with house projects or weekly meal planning, doing chores, or volunteering together in the community.

Set clear rules and expectations.

- Brainstorm with your child about ways they can have fun without drinking alcohol or using other drugs.
- Encourage them to avoid parties and other gatherings where alcohol or other drugs are present. And don't allow underage drinking or other drug use at get-togethers in your home.

- Tell them to never drink alcohol or use other drugs and drive or get in a car driven by someone who has been drinking or using other drugs.
- Help them find services and support if you're worried that they're using substances.
- Create and sign a family agreement form where you agree to help keep them substance-free and they agree to not drink alcohol or use other drugs.
- Learn more about the risks and dangers of underage drinking and other drug use by visiting talktheyhearyou.samhsa.gov and using #TalkTheyHearYou on social media. Share and discuss this information with them.



Use Screen4Success.

Talking with kids early and often about the risks and dangers of underage drinking and other drug use can help keep them safe. But how do you know if your child needs more support, and where do you go to find it? Screen4Success will help you better understand your child's health, wellness, and wellbeing and find resources to help address their needs.

HELPFUL RESOURCES



Use and share Screen4Success.



Download and use "Talk. They Hear You." mobile app.



Subscribe and listen to "What Parents Are Saying" podcast.



Download and order "Talk. They Hear You." materials online from SAMHSA Store.



Download and read full "Tips for Teens" fact sheet series.



Download and read other SAMHSA underage drinking prevention and reduction materials.