



October 2026 Newsletter

At **Inspiring Dreams Network (IDN)**, we believe that empowering youth begins with equipping the adults and communities around them. Through accessible resources, evidence-informed practices, and opportunities to learn and collaborate, we are working to build stronger networks of support, so every young person has the opportunity to thrive.



In recognition of **National Bullying Prevention Month** and **Global Diversity Awareness Month**, we are excited to share new additions to our **Youth Development Portal**. These resources help us recognize the warning signs and traumatic effects of bullying, encourage young people to become positive allies, celebrate diversity and inclusion, and explore innovative approaches to healing and emotional well-being—including equine-assisted learning.

Featured resources include *Bullying in School: The Traumatic Effects of Bullying on Children*, *Be Someone's Hero*, *Warning Signs for Bullying*, and *Empowering Youth and Families Through Global Diversity Initiatives*.

Your voice, your actions, and your partnership matter. We encourage you to explore these resources, share them with colleagues and community networks, and put these tools into action. Together, we can create environments where every young person feels safe, respected, included, and empowered to reach their full potential.

And this is just the beginning! As we look ahead, IDN is preparing for an exciting opportunity to bring youth-serving professionals, community leaders, educators, and advocates together to strengthen our collective impact. Mark your calendars for **June 24–25, 2027**, as we prepare to gather at Fairmont State University for our inaugural conference, **Empowering Communities. Inspiring Youth**. More details are coming soon!

The future of our young people is shaped by what we do together today. Thank you for being part of a growing network committed to inspiring dreams and building stronger, more resilient communities for West Virginia's youth.

With gratitude,

Dr. Barb Brady
Executive Director
Inspiring Dreams Network
www.inspiringdreamsnetwork.org

Upcoming IDN Trainings

These training opportunities are partially provided through funding from The Claude Worthington Benedum, Milan Puskar, and Greater Kanawha Valley Foundations. We appreciate our partnerships with these organizations.



ACEs 103: Preventing ACEs

Date: October 21, 2026 | 3:00-4:00pm

Trainers: Corey Beahm & John Barton

Location: Zoom

Description: The youth you work with may struggle with the traumatic effects of **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**. We invite you to learn about ACEs and the impact ACEs have on brain development and

behavior. ACEs often interfere with school success and can **negatively impact** participation in activities, events, school, relationships, overall wellness, and life outcomes. This ACEs training series is intended to help caregivers and adults who serve youth better understand the impact of ACEs and to learn some **best-practice strategies** to help youth and families overcome and prevent the future occurrence of ACEs, changing lives in a positive direction. This training series is brought to you through funding provided by the Milan Puskar Foundation, Benedum, and TGKVF.

STARS credit, Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Nursing, Social Work, and Addictions CEUs offered! If you wish to receive STARS credit, please register on the STARS Portal at www.wvstars.org

IDN is partnering with **Marshall University School Health Technical Assistance Center (MUSHTAC)** to offer continuing education units (CEUs) for **Alcohol and Drug Counselor (ADC)** and **Advanced Alcohol and Drug Counselor (AADC)**.



Register Here!

Youth Mental Health First Aid

Date: November 18, 2026 | 8:30am-4:30pm

Trainers: Nick Larson, Laren Iezzi & Dr. Barb Brady

Location: CED Morgantown | 959 Hartman Run Rd, Morgantown, WV 26505

IDN is pleased to offer the first of three Youth Mental Health First Aid trainings as part of a **strategic partnership** with the **WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities**.

Description: Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) is an interactive, skills-based training course that teaches participants about common adolescent mental health issues and teaches a five-step process on how to identify, understand and respond to these youth issues. Participants are able to practice using the skills to build confidence in supporting youth. Those who successfully complete the course earn a Mental Health First Aider Certificate. **Nursing CEUs** and **Graduate credit** can be offered as an option.



Objectives:

- Describe the PURPOSE of Youth Mental Health First Aid and the ROLE of the Youth Mental Health First Aider.
- Recognize the SIGNS and SYMPTOMS of mental health challenges that may impact youth.
- Explain the role of RESILIENCE and the impact of traumatic experiences on adolescent development.
- Apply the appropriate steps of the MHFA Action Plan (ALGEE) in CRISIS and NON-CRISIS scenarios.
- Practice appropriate methods for SELF-CARE following the application of Youth Mental Health First Aid in a crisis or non-crisis situation.

[Register Here!](#)



Building Relationships & Resilience

Date: December 1st, 2026 | 11:30am-1pm

Trainer: Dr. Barb Brady

Location: Zoom

Description: Every child is one caring adult away from a success story. Developmental relationships are the foundation that helps young people discover who they are, build essential life skills, and become

their best selves. When children have healthy, supportive relationships with caring adults, they are more likely to succeed in youth and thrive into productive adulthood. Developmental relationships are strong, intentional connections through which young people gain confidence, cultivate their strengths, and learn how to navigate and contribute to the world around them. These relationships benefit youth of all ages, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds—helping them move beyond simply surviving to truly thriving. This training focuses on the key elements of healthy developmental relationships and equips supportive adults with practical strategies to build resilience and protective factors that empower young people to overcome challenges and reach their full potential.

Objectives:

- Review research about healthy adult/youth relationship outcomes.
- Identify and discuss key elements of healthy adult/youth relationships.
- Review nonjudgement listening and effective feedback practices that form healthy adult/youth connections.
- Review and discuss the 7 keys to building resilience.
- Identify 7 positive experiences that help youth thrive and achieve positive outcomes.

- Review protective factors and discuss the mentor's role with connecting youth

LPC CEUs Offered! Nursing, Social Work, & Addictions CEUs Pending

[Register Here!](#)

Coming in 2027...

February 17, 2027

Youth Mental Health First Aid

April 7, 2027

Youth Mental Health First Aid

...& many more!

Stay up to date on our social media
[@InspiringDreamsNetwork!](#)



Interested in IDN providing a training for your organization? Check out our [Training Menu](#) and complete our [Training Request Form!](#)

What Else is Up With IDN?

We are so excited to make a **BIG ANNOUNCEMENT!!** This is going to be a **DON'T MISS Event** for anyone who works with children. We've already identified our keynote note speaker, bringing his expertise to WV to support you in helping this generation of youth thrive. Announcement coming soon. But, for now **SAVE THE DATE!!** **Sign up for alerts and updates below.**



[Save the Date!](#)

IDN Welcomes Two New Board Members

As Inspiring Dreams Network looks toward the future, we are excited to welcome two new board members whose leadership, expertise, and fresh perspectives will help strengthen our strategic direction and accelerate our growth. Their contributions will help us expand our reach, forge new connections with stakeholder groups, and advance innovative training initiatives and resources that equip more communities to support, inspire, and empower youth to thrive.

Courtney Rombow is a project management professional and consultant with BerryDunn, where she supports public-sector health and human services initiatives that benefit children, families, and communities. A certified **Project Management Professional (PMP)**, Courtney also serves as a **CASA Advocate** and has completed **foster parent training**, reflecting her deep commitment to supporting youth and families in West Virginia. She is excited to serve on the IDN Board of Directors, where she can combine her experience in project management, collaboration, and advocacy to support the organization's growth and help create opportunities for the professionals and volunteers who serve young people across the state.



[Read Full Bio](#)



Elyse Griswold is a child welfare professional with **Children's Home Society** of West Virginia, a **CASA Advocate**, and a passionate supporter of children and families across the state. With experience in early childhood education, professional development, and infant mental health, she brings a strong child advocacy perspective to the IDN Board and Training & Development Committee. Elyse is excited to serve with IDN because its mission closely aligns with her commitment to helping children thrive and strengthening support for families and communities.

[Read Full Bio](#)

IDN Continues to Expand Our Training Initiative "Supporting At-Risk Youth through Coaching and Community Connections"

Inspiring Dreams Network (IDN) is pleased to announce the continuation and expansion of our training initiative, supported by another \$60,000 grant from the **Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation**.

In 2025-26, through our Benedum funding enabled IDN to deliver 21 high-impact training in-person to **more than 200**

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BENEDUM
FOUNDATION**

staff members across **44 program sites** from **10 youth-serving organizations** in **13 counties** as well as providing 26 virtual trainings to more than 100 youth-serving organizations.

Building on this success, the 2026-27 grant, combined with other partner grants, will allow IDN to continue to provide training support to these **44 program sites, plus 11 new sites**, serving an estimated **22,000 young people across West Virginia**.

We are grateful for this continuing partnership with the Benedum Foundation. Thank you your continued support.



Inspiring Dreams Network (IDN) is also pleased to announce the continuation and expansion of our training initiative in The Greater Kanawha Valley five county, supported \$35,000 grant from the **Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation (TGKVF)**.

In 2025-26, TGKVF funding enabled IDN to deliver high-impact, targeted training in-person to programs to **23 youth-serving community program sites in Kanawha, Lincoln, and Putnam counties**, as well as providing virtual trainings opportunities to more than 100 youth-serving organizations across the state.

Building on this success, the new grant, combined with other partner grants, will allow IDN to expand training opportunities to Boone and Fayette County to include 8 juvenile centers operated by PSIMED in Boone, Fayette, Kanawha, Lincoln and Putnam counties: and 3 afterschool programs in Boone County, as well as, nine Tri-County YMCA afterschool programs in Putnam County. We're excited to be training staff from **43 youth-serving programs in the five county TGKVF through this grant**.

We appreciate our partnership with the Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation. Thank you your continued support.

"These expanded training opportunities will equip afterschool and other youth-serving program staff with best practices in mentoring, success coaching, mental health support, resilience-building, child safety, trauma-informed care, and career exploration. By strengthening the skills of adults who serve at-risk youth, IDN seeks to disrupt cycles of poverty, trauma, substance use, and incarceration while opening pathways to brighter futures.

We are deeply grateful for the **Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation** and the **Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation's** continued partnership in advancing our vision for West Virginia's youth," said Dr. Barb Brady, IDN Executive Director. "Together, we are ensuring that thousands of young people have a trained adult network that is prepared to give them the guidance, support, and opportunities they need to thrive."



Join Our Team! One IDN Board Member Position Still Open

Inspiring Dreams Network is now accepting self-nominations for our Board of Directors. Join a mission-driven team working to strengthen youth resilience, community well-being, and systems that truly support young people. We're filling one Board seat and welcome leaders of all backgrounds—no prior Board

experience required. Members serve a three-year term, meet monthly (virtual), and help guide IDN's strategy, values, and impact. Walk with us as we build a more supportive, youth-centered future.

Application deadline is November 15th.

For any questions, contact Dr. Barb Brady at drbarbbrady@inspiringdreamsnetwork.org

Apply Here!



Eradicate Hate Global Summit Take-A-Ways (Sept. 14-17, Pittsburg)

Executive Director, Dr. Barb Brady and Board President, Sarah Barton wish to thank the *Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation* for sponsoring us to attend the *Eradicate Hate Global Summit* held in Pittsburg, PA IDN exhibited and made valuable connections to continue to grow IDN. They both attended valuable sessions and are inspired to do a Youth Summit in WV. It also made them aware

that we have so much work to do regarding teaching and modeling cultural acceptance and appreciation for diversity, as well as, warning parents and children about the cyber safety dangers from groups that are trying to radicalize our young people to hurt and hate others who are different.

We're featuring Sarah's favorite day... spending time with 600 students at the *Student Summit* on Day One. She wants you to know what students shared, because hearing from them directly is incredibly valuable in informing the work we all do with youth.

What they're seeing and feeling

- What they hear online and in their schools, doesn't sound right to them. The language is tinged with hate, and people are not very tolerant of each other.
- Humor that's inappropriate, and insults and jabs, have become commonplace.
- When they bring it to adults, it gets minimized or dismissed instead of addressed head on.
- "We say there's no tolerance, but clearly there is."
- Instead of being celebrated for being different, students are targeted for it.
- They don't see enough history or other cultures in what they're taught, so differences aren't represented, and they aren't celebrated.
- They live today, not in the 1990s or 2000s, and they want adults to understand that today is different.

What they'd like adults to do

- Advocate for change so this behavior isn't acceptable in their schools and communities.
- Include the person who was harmed in the apology and the repair. When they're left out, it tells them they aren't valued.
- Don't bully the bully but instead resolve the situation fully. That includes talking about what behavior is expected from the student who did the bullying. We don't get healthier without identifying what healthier looks like.
- Respond. They called out "institutional bystanders," the schools and adults who see it and don't act.
- Make room for real conversations. Some topics are never discussed but have a significant impact on them, like body image and sexual orientation. They want to talk about these in positive ways.
- Use social media for positive things instead of negative. They wake up seeing the negative, just like adults do, and it's not healthy for anybody. They also want adults to hear their perspective on social media and on the value of their words.

What they're already doing

The students came with ideas, and most of them are micro steps rather than big programs:

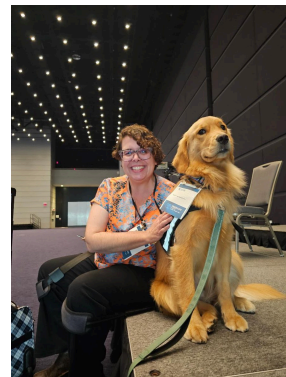
- Locker stories: a place to drop stories of challenges and successes to share with others, so students can put themselves in someone else's shoes and know they're not alone
- Call in, not out: help people understand why a change would help, and hold friends accountable when something isn't okay
- Teaching elementary students about cultural differences and celebrating them
- Buddy systems pairing juniors and seniors with freshmen and sophomores
- A kindness tree and mentorship programs in middle and elementary schools
- Games that make difficult conversations easier
- Student-led summits, multi-school gatherings, and a conference that highlights differences "Shout out to the Uncommon Conference held in PA on
- Positive rivalry that builds up instead of tearing down
- Using social media to share belonging, and not engaging with the negative
- A decompression meeting after the summit to share what they learned across their schools

Their phrase for it was "become leaders in loving."

What Sarah took away...

The students named something researchers have studied. Psychologists Carly Smith and Jennifer Freyd call it institutional betrayal: when an organization people trust fails to act on harm inside its walls, the harm gets worse. The students didn't need the term. They've lived it. What they asked for is mostly small and doable. An adult who responds, includes the student who was hurt, and says yes when young people want to lead.

If you work with young people, in a school or a nonprofit, I'd love to hear what you're seeing too.



IDN is excited to share a new collection of supports now available on our **Youth Development Portal**, our free, trauma-informed hub for youth, families, educators, and professionals. The portal continues to grow with **practical, evidence-based tools** that help young people navigate identity, transition, and moments of challenge with confidence and care.

In recognition of **National Bullying Prevention Month** and **Global Diversity Awareness Month** this **October**, we have added several new resources focused on bullying prevention, inclusion, empathy, resilience, and healing. These additions provide guidance on recognizing warning signs of bullying, understanding its impact on youth, encouraging positive bystander action, celebrating diversity, and supporting emotional well-being through innovative, trauma-informed approaches.

Be Someone's Hero Video

Bullying in School: The Traumatic Effects of Bullying on Children

Warning Signs for Bullying

Empowering Youth and Families Through Global Diversity Initiatives

Co-Creating Education in Times of Crisis: Youth Leadership from the Frontlines

Partner Updates

WV ACEs Coalition Summit 2026



Join the **WV ACEs Coalition** for a groundbreaking **two-day event** dedicated to addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences in West Virginia.

November 4 will feature revamped ACEs 101, 102, and 103 training, followed by a networking reception with hors d'oeuvres and drinks.

November 5 will feature a full day of ACEs research, Joey Stepp, and an interactive World Café discussion to create an action plan for the future of the ACEs Coalition of West Virginia.

Click the link below to learn more & register!

Learn More & Register

Sponsorship Opportunities, Exhibitor Booths, & Program Ads

If you are interested in having a leading role in supporting the conference, there are a variety of sponsorship opportunities to fit any organization's size & budget! Exhibit

Learn More About Sponsorships

WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities- Positive Behavior Support Program Upcoming Trainings



Increasing Social Awareness: October 20, 2026 | 1:00-2:30pm Via Zoom
Anger Management for Youth: October 27, 2026 | 5:00-6:00pm Via Zoom
Parental Buy-In: November 11, 2026 | 10:00am-12:00pm Via Zoom

For more training opportunities or to register, click the link below!

WVUCED PBS Website



WV Statewide Afterschool Network Updates

Lights on Afterschool is October 22!

This nationwide celebration of afterschool programs, students, and staff is back for its 27th year- bringing together more than 8000 programs to showcase the important role afterschool plays in supporting youth, families, and communities.

WVSAN Offers In-Person PD Sessions

As you prepare your afterschool team for an exciting new year of learning and engagement, explore professional development opportunities designed by WVSAN specifically for afterschool professionals. These interactive sessions offer practical, ready-to use strategies to help staff build strong relationships with students, create engaging learning environments, set meaningful program goals, and begin the school year with confidence.

PD Sessions Currently Available:

- **Quality Standards:** A 2-hour training offering an overview of the WV Afterschool Program Quality Standards, Assessment Tool, and how to develop a plan for program quality improvement. An all-day version of this training is also available.
- **Quality in Family and Community Engagement:** A 2-hour focus on the Family and Community Engagement Standard Domain, identifying community assets, and developing a plan to improve family and community engagement.
- **Career-Connected Learning Framework:** 1-2 hour training to help programs embed career awareness, exploration and preparation into activities in ways that are practical, age-appropriate, and grounded in both research and real-world relevance.
- **Advocacy:** 2-3 hour training learning what advocacy is, identifying local afterschool champions and stakeholders, creating advocacy messages for specific audiences, and elevating youth voice.

To schedule a Professional Development session, or to ask any questions, please reach out to Tami Jo Wilt, WVSAN Quality Program Coordinator at tjwilt@mail.wvu.edu.

Nonprofit 411 Upcoming Workshops

WV Nonprofit 411 supports nonprofit organizations in diversifying and expanding funding. Owner, Sarah Barton invites you to participate in the upcoming workshops.



Every Monday | 2:00-3:00pm

The Fundraising Roadmap Small Nonprofits Need

Description: In this free workshop, Sarah Barton from Nonprofit411 walks you through the Fundraising for Small Teams Roadmap — a 9-step framework designed to help small nonprofit teams move from scattered fundraising efforts to a structured system that builds reliable, recurring donor revenue.

Register Here!

"Caring for the Caregiver" Conference 2026

Save The Date

"Caring for the Caregiver" Conference



November 17-18, 2026

Embassy Suites Hotel

300 Court Street

Charleston, WV 25301

Metro Area Agency on Aging invites you to our FREE "Caring for the Caregiver Conference". This is an event for both family caregivers and provider agencies to gather and learn more about caregiving.

CEUs will be available

For more information contact:

Kim Young

kyoung@metroaaa.com

(304)720-6861



CFWV Pathway to Champion

College for West Virginia (CFWV) coordinates annual college-planning milestones to help students in West Virginia plan their pathway to education or training beyond high school. CFWV's milestone events, along with ongoing support



at every school level, help bridge this gap and ensure that West Virginia's students are ready to achieve their goals and contribute to a strong, competitive workforce.

Learn more at the link below!

CFWV Pathway to Champion

Complete Our Training Needs Survey!

Inspiring Dreams Network is excited to provide training and partner with you to better support the youth you serve. Help us serve you better by clicking the button above to complete our training needs survey.

Training Needs Survey

Visit our
Website

If you have specific resource needs not available on our website, please contact Dr. Barb Brady at drbarbbrady@inspiringdreamsnetwork.org



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