



The Underprivileged Children Foundation

helpWVkids.org

A YEAR IN REVIEW FOR 2020

Annual Newsletter

May 2021

Our Mission to Serve

The Underprivileged Children Foundation (UCF) was established in 2016 by native West Virginians with more than 50 combined years of witnessing and assisting impoverished families. With a mission to "enhance and advance the lives of West Virginia families in need," we set out to make a difference one family at a time.

Going Strong

We continue to stay true to our mission by assisting our State's most vulnerable. This past year brought on a plethora of new challenges and obstacles. Mandated shutdowns and loss of employment; the overwhelming COVID-19 virus ripped through our neighborhoods and made the lives of West Virginians even more difficult. Children and families who were already struggling were now faced with childcare difficulties, school closures and loss of income. We are so proud we were able to help alleviate some of the stress for our neighbors. From providing school supplies (for both in person and virtual students) to purchasing clothes, beds, Easter baskets and Christmas gifts, we did our best to bring some joy to the children

and families we serve. We could not have done it without your help!



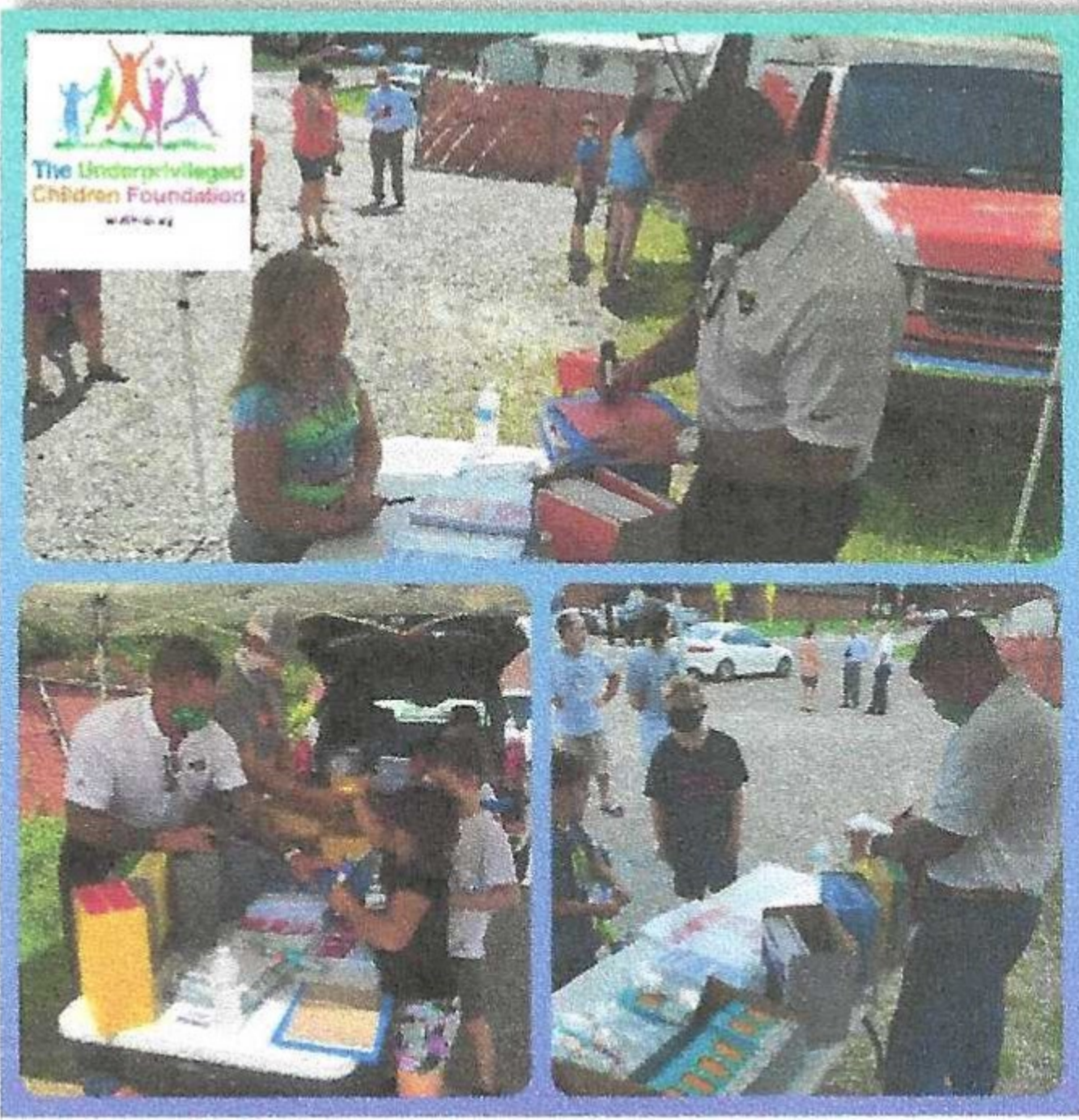
Community Events

We are proud of our roots and where we live. As born and raised West Virginians, we enjoy helping our beautiful State and its citizens. Here are some events we arranged and/or participated in throughout our communities.



June 2020, we participated in a new event. Fun Fitness Fest 2020 was organized by the Fun Fitness Fun Club. With lots of exercise for the kids, tons of great, healthy choices for snacks and obstacle courses, this event was a hit! Even our President, Tommy Vance, enjoyed himself!





A December to Remember is arguably our most popular campaign. Beginning every November, this campaign brings companies, community leaders, and citizens together for a common goal: To bring joy back to Christmas for children. Every year, the need is greater than the previous and every year, we meet that need! With the help of our community heroes and our own “elves”, Christmas morning is a little brighter!

August 2020 brought some uncertainty over schools opening. We were right there to help where we could. We teamed up with Chesapeake native and former NFL star, Chris Massey, to help children in the area start school prepared. Notebooks, pencils, backpacks, and every other school supply imaginable was given out to area children, along with a free meal through our Food S.H.A.C.K.



Due to the global pandemic, children and families have been suffering more than usual. Christmas was no different. Families who normally provide gifts for their children were unable to due to loss of income from COVID-19. To increase our ability to meet the ever-growing need, we teamed up with Autumn “Auti” Gillispie. Auti is an internet singing sensation. Her beautiful vocals and amazing range made her the perfect Angel to help us raise money. “Auti’s Christmas Wish” aired live on the World Wide Web and allowed viewers to send money straight to our cause.



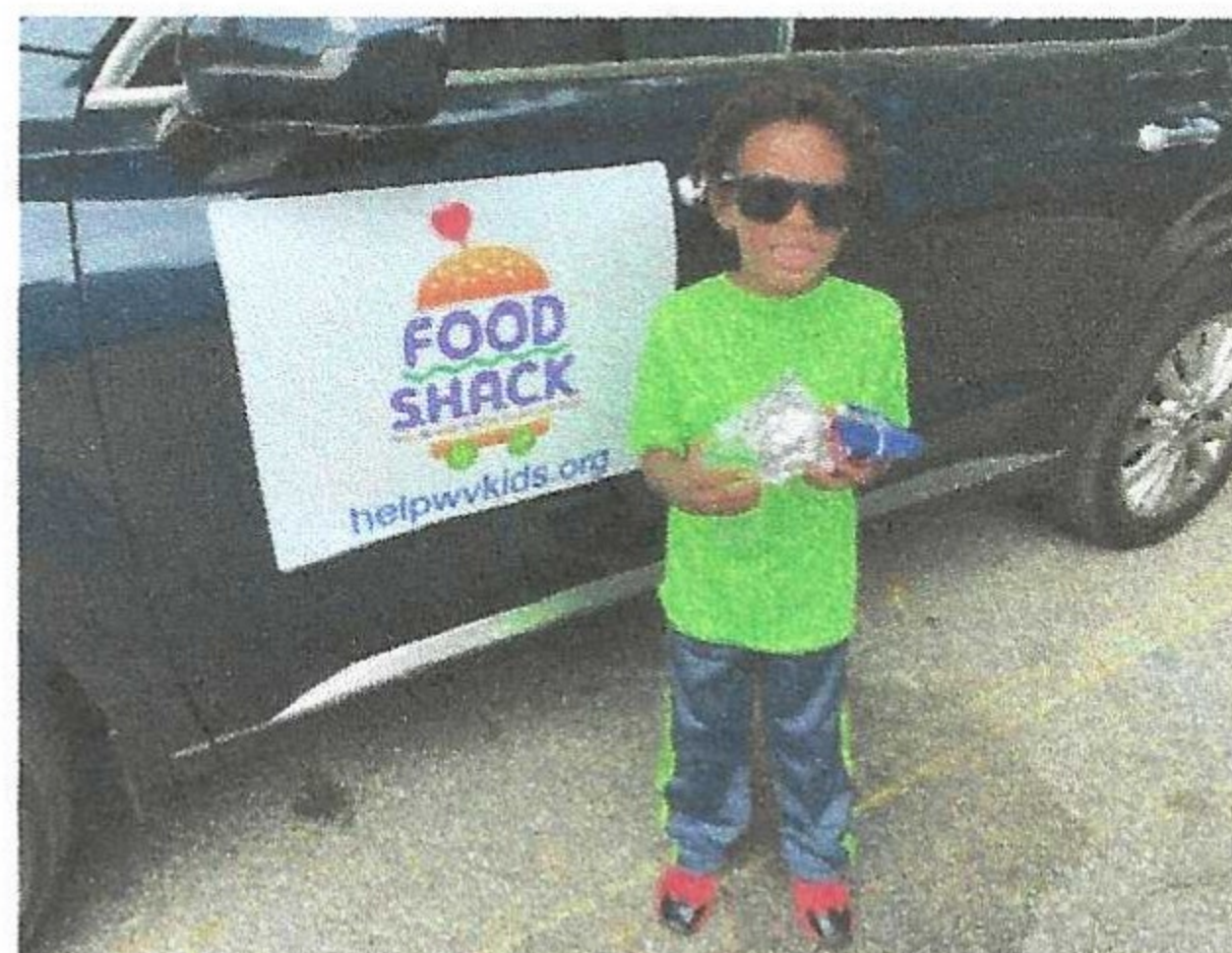
Operation Easter Basket is another popular campaign for The Underprivileged Children Foundation. We provide Easter baskets, spring clothing and toys to children and families in need all over West Virginia. This time, instead of “elves”, we team up with the Easter Bunny to bring smiles and laughter to our community children.



The Food S.H.A.C.K



children in the communities we visited. Regardless of the type of transportation used, the community was welcoming and thankful the Food S.H.A.C.K. was continuing the mission.



According to the West Virginia Education Association, **1 in 4 children** are living poverty. WVEA estimates approximately 27% of all children in our state live below the national poverty level and a staggering 33% of children under the age of 5 fall into that category. Our state is struggling. Our neighbors need help. Our children deserve better.

In 2019, we began the daunting task of feeding as many hungry children as possible, in their own neighborhoods. We purchased a food truck and was off to feed kids. We served 285 children in our first week! Then tragedy struck. An accident left our food truck out of commission. Thankfully, no one was injured, but our food truck was totaled.



After a lot of work and help from our community, the Food S.H.A.C.K. was able to purchase a new food trailer that could be pulled by any type of vehicle. Add in the colorful graphics the community has come to recognize, and we had a brand-new Food Truck.



It is utterly amazing to see how appreciative and excited families are to see the Food S.H.A.C.K. roll into their community. Every week, we deliver more and more food to hungry children. Every week, the crowd gets bigger as people tell others about our mission and how great the food tastes. Children of all ages come out to talk, laugh and eat with their neighbors. We did that. With the help of people like you, businesses like yours and community heroes, we can give children full bellies and bring neighbors together.



Our team quickly started problem solving, trying to find a way to continue feeding hungry children, without our truck. And the Food S.H.A.C.K. On The Go was born. Using our President's truck or other personal vehicles, we began giving out hot meals, as well as easy to fix snacks, to

In April 2021, the Food S.H.A.C.K. served the 20,000th meal! That is 20,000 times children have not been hungry. Twenty thousand meals a parent did not have to worry about or purchase. Twenty thousand times a child had a hot meal to eat and a smiling face to see. Hunger is something most of us do not think about often, but these 20,000 meals went to a child who knows what it feels like to be truly hungry.

Therapy Services

This year, we began a new adventure. The Underprivileged Children Foundation is always looking for the needs of our communities and how to fill them. According to www.wv.dhhr.org, West Virginia is ranked 1st highest in the prevalence of poor mental health. So many suffer with mental health problems in silence. And of those who want to seek help, transportation is often a major barrier, especially in the rural counties. After looking at the statistics, we knew we had to act.

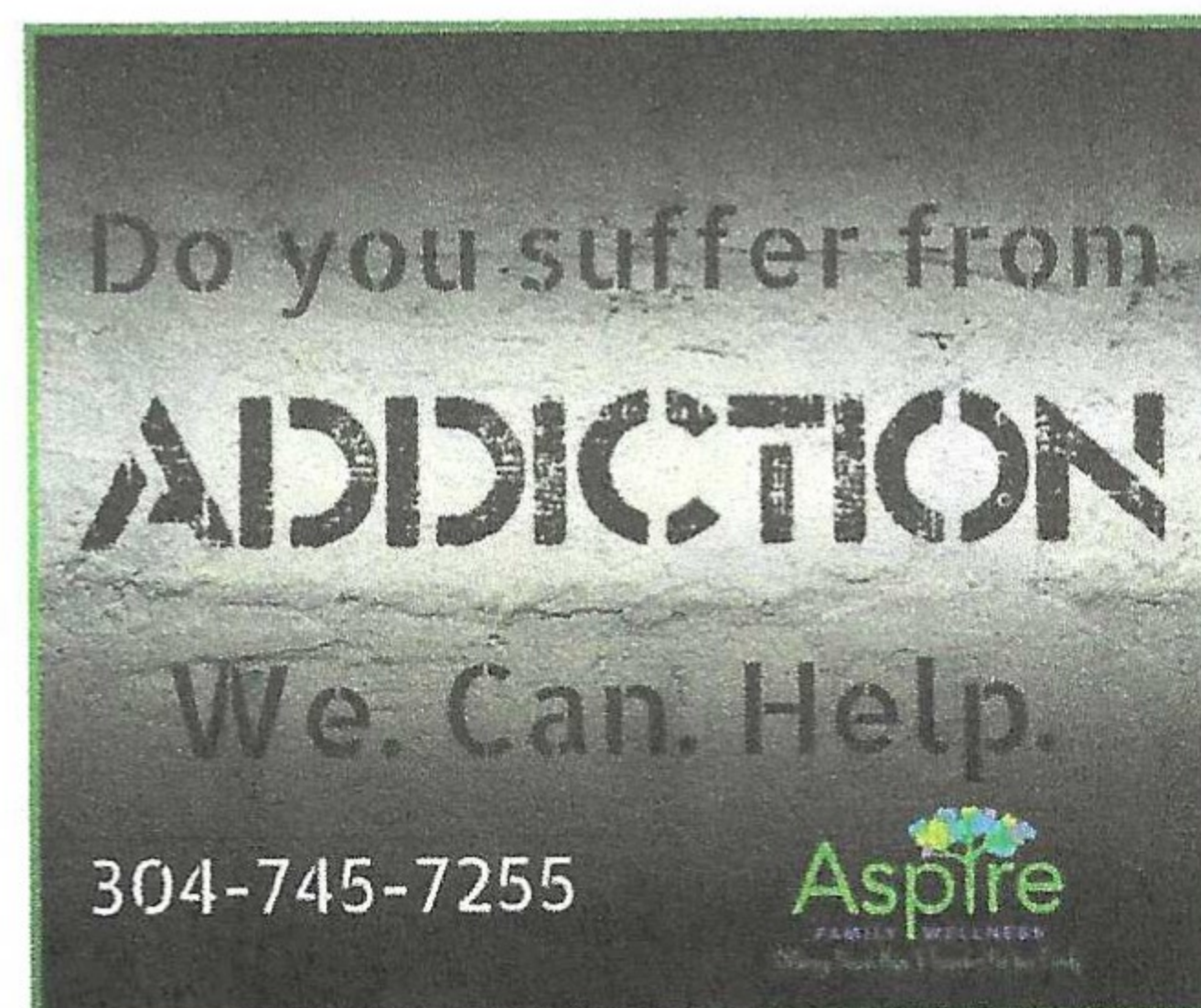


Aspire Family Wellness brings the needed therapy services to our communities. With experienced and compassionate therapists, Aspire helps individuals take their lives back. Adults, children, and families can seek mental health treatment, regardless of their access to transportation. Telehealth appointments are also available to those who are at high risk for COVID-19 complications.

Peer Recovery Support

Anyone who lives in West Virginia, or neighboring states, know how critical our opioid epidemic has gotten. Now, every West Virginia resident knows not just one, but multiple people who are addicted to substances. It is affecting our brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, grandparents, and our children. Babies are born addicted to substances and face a lifelong journey of difficulties and setbacks. According to the National Library of Medicine, West Virginia is the "epicenter" of the opioid crisis. Overdoses account for approximately 41.5 per 100,000 deaths in West Virginia. More and more of our neighbors are becoming addicted and are suffering. Peer Recovery Support, along with therapy, has proven to be effective in the treatment of substance abuse and dependence.

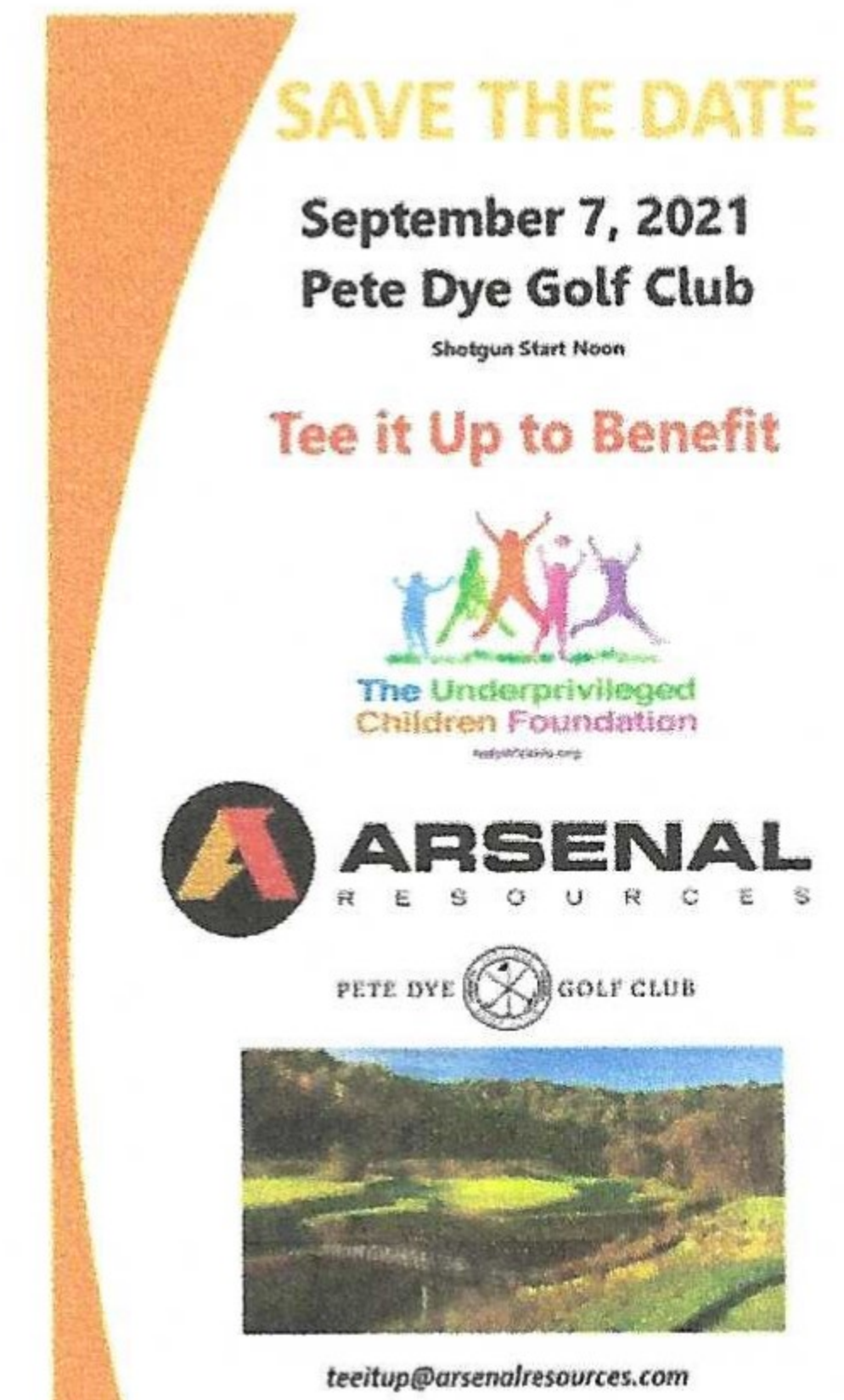
Peer Recovery utilizes individuals who have been in the trenches of addiction and have come out the other side. It provides a confidante and support system by pairing the person suffering from addiction with someone who has already been there. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (www.samhsa.gov), peer recovery is an amazingly effective tool in treating substance dependence when paired with proper therapy. Without appropriate peer support and positive social interactions, a person is less likely to be successful with their attempts at sobriety. Our Peer Recovery Support Specialists provide the needed positive interaction and support, while assisting the individual in making appropriate choices to aid in a sober lifestyle. Given the current statistics surrounding West Virginia and our opioid dependence, it is vital that we follow the research to give our residents the best possible care to help them overcome their addiction. Even though our Peer Recovery Support is a new program for us, we are already seeing incredibly positive results within our communities and sober living homes.



Things to Come

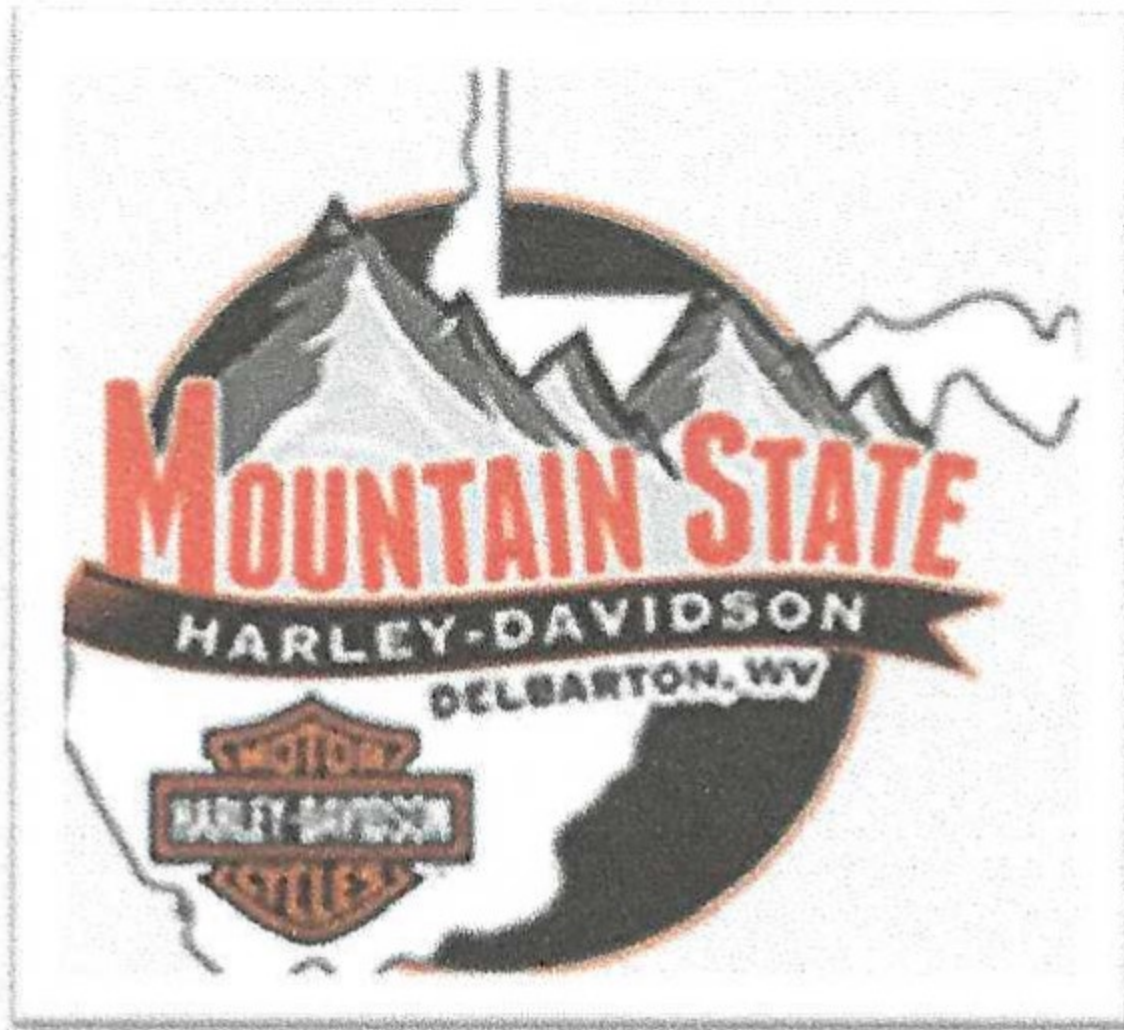
Every year, we become more invested in our communities and our state. From participating in community projects to aid for those suffering from addiction, we plan on being here for a long time. We done so much work toward our mission, but we are nowhere close to being done. The acceptance we have received from our communities, leaders, citizens, and businesses has been incredible. We truly thank those who have helped us get this far and would like to remind you we are still here. We are still fighting for the great people of our beautiful state.

Our next event is one we are really excited to share! On September 7, 2021, Arsenal Resources is organizing "Tee it Up to Benefit UCF". Taking place at the beautiful Pete Dye Golf Club, it is sure to be an amazing event with tons of fun and sunshine for a great cause!

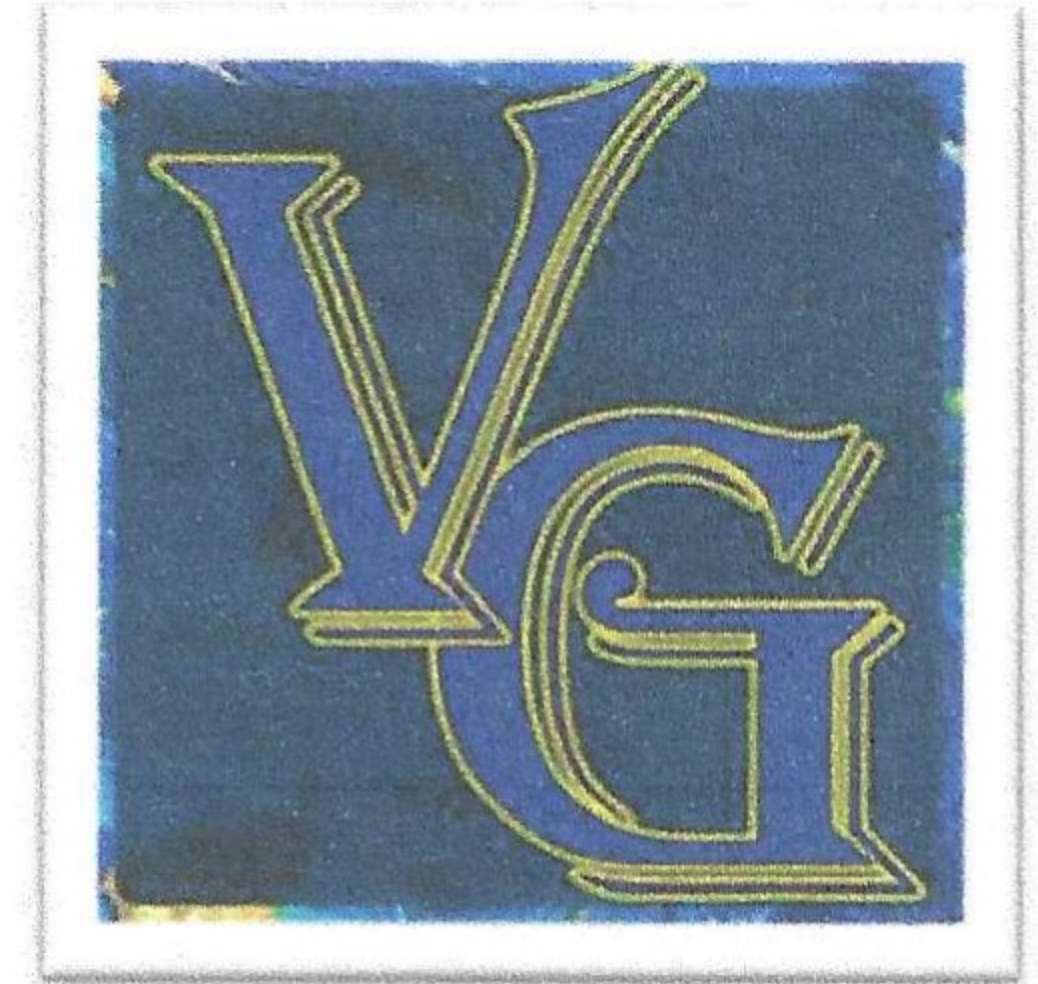


Community Heroes

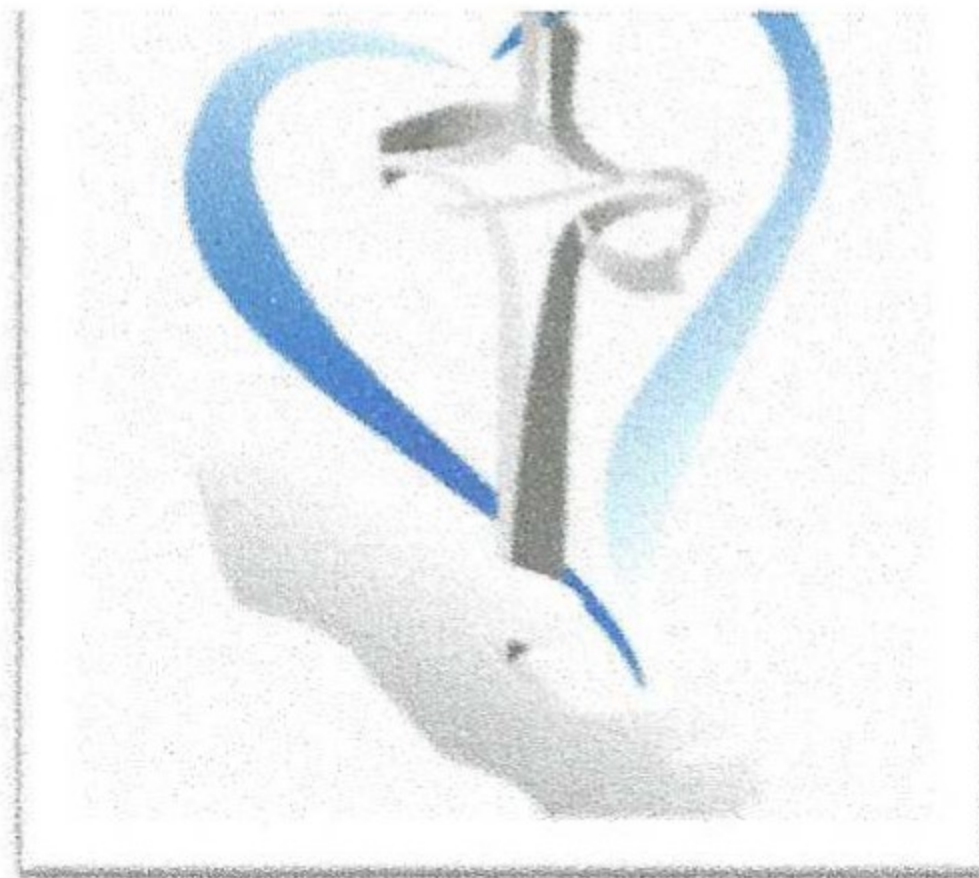
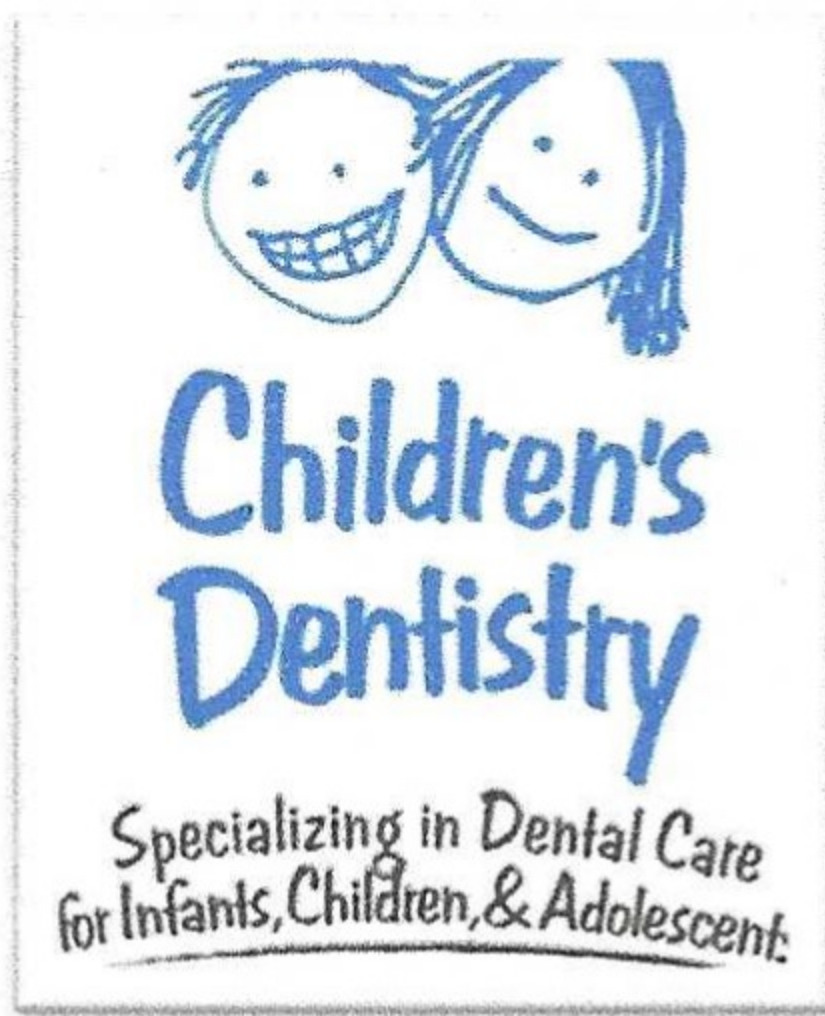
There are some things we cannot do alone. All our endeavors must be a collective effort within our communities. We would like to recognize some of the sponsors who have been vital to us continuing our mission. Thank you!



Vance Family Services



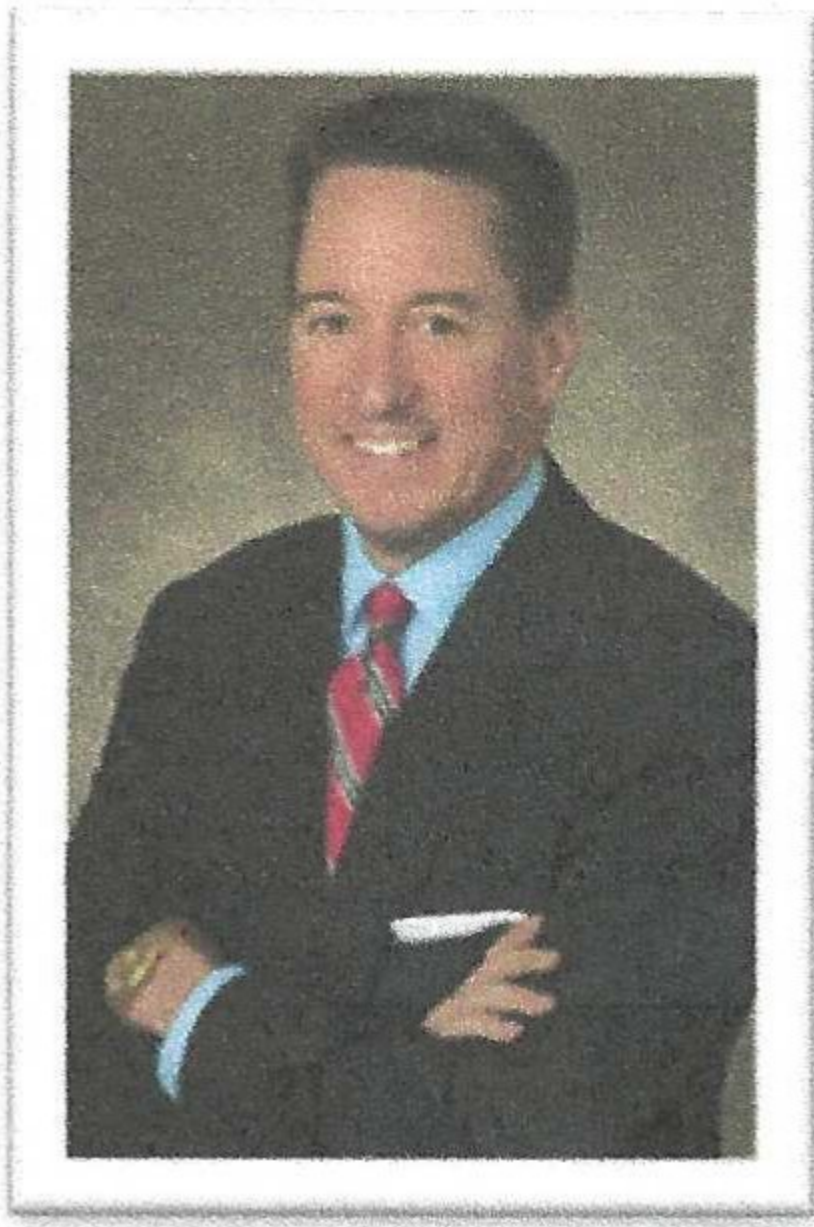
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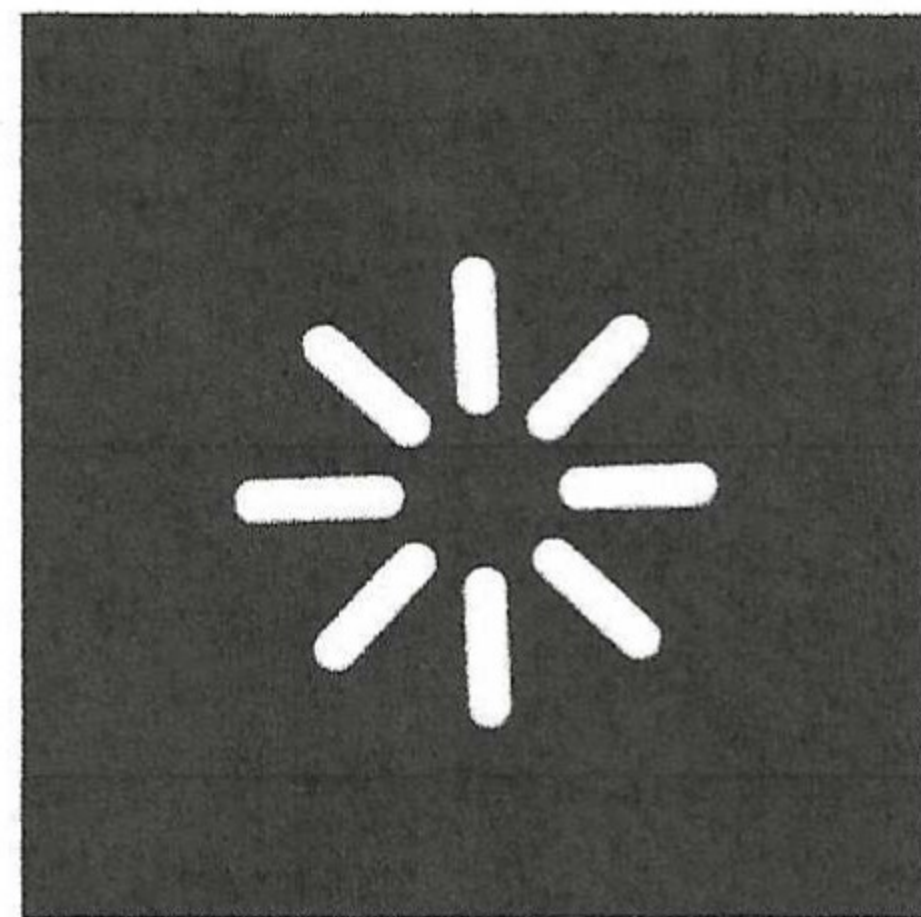
Mill Creek Church of God-Women's Ministry



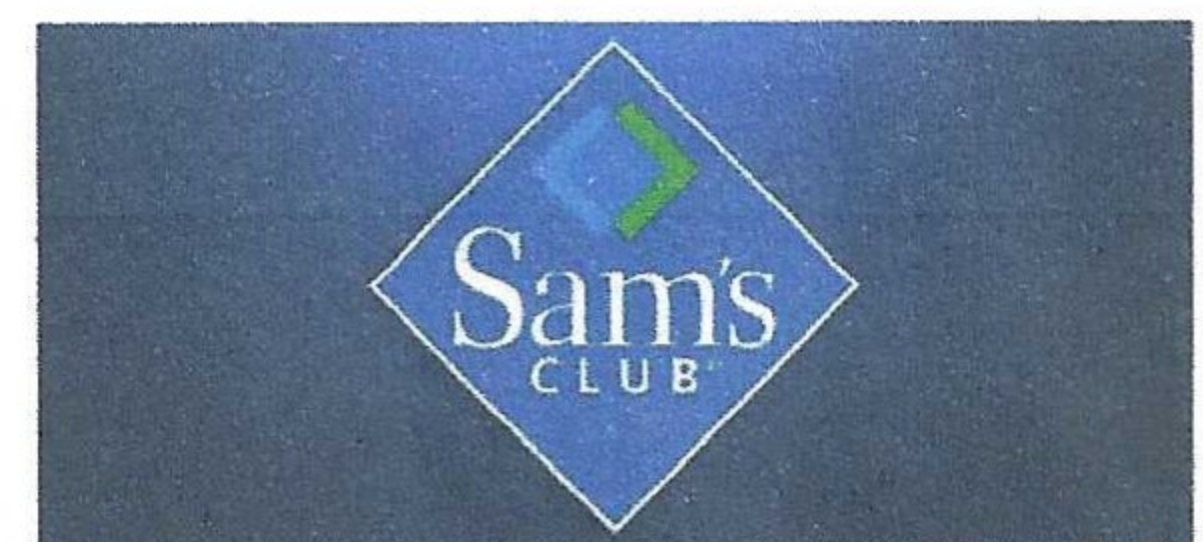
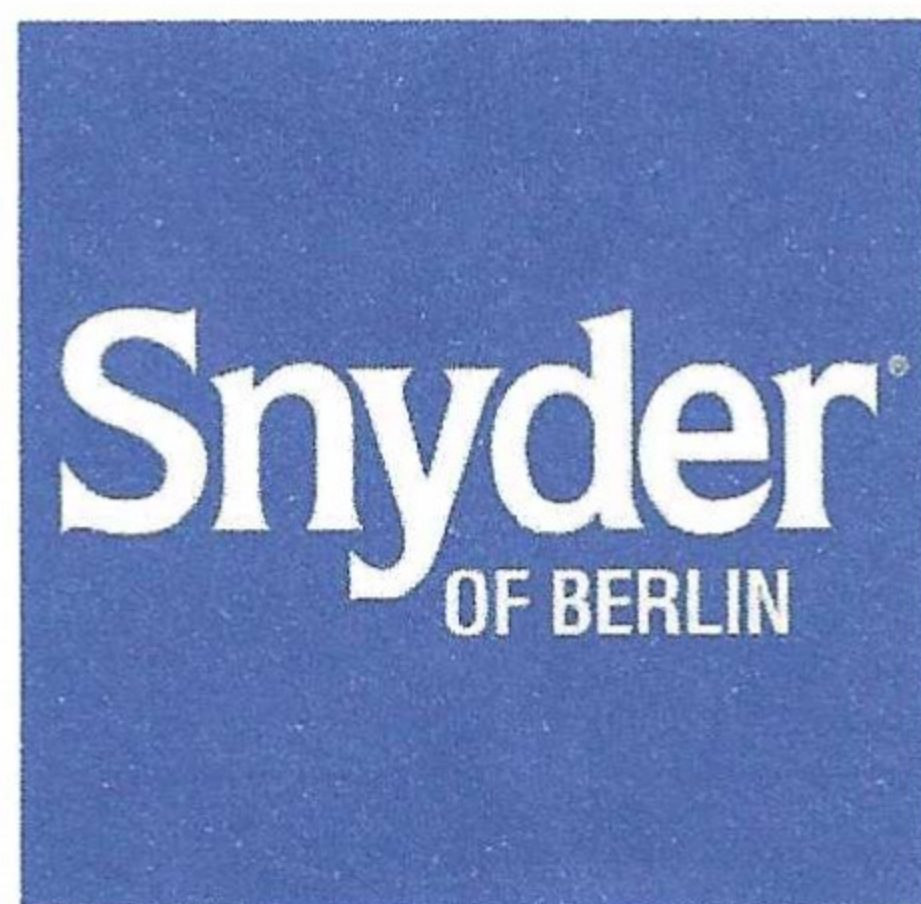
Webb Law Centre



Utz Potato Chips



Suddenlink Communications



For more information about The Underprivileged Children visit:
www.helpWVkids.org or <https://www.facebook.com/helpWVkids.org>

For our Food S.H.A.C.K visit <https://www.facebook.com/LetsFeedKids>

For more information about Aspire Family Wellness and our services,
visit: <https://www.facebook.com/MentalWellnessForYou>

