

Featured mini-grant recipient:

Mechanicsburg for a Healthy Community

The Mental Health Drug and Alcohol Services Board was proud to partner with Merv Miller of Mechanicsburg For a Healthy Community to help establish a Community Center in Mechanicsburg. Merv and Tammy Miller own Simple Comforts coffee house and the Community Center is in the same building. According to Merv, the Community Center will consist of office space for drug and alcohol therapy, clergy, and youth mentoring, and a dried goods pantry. The mini-grant provided for construction materials to remodel the space and the estimated completion date is around July, 2021.

Drug and Alcohol Therapy: Merv has been talking with TCN Behavioral Health about having a satellite office to provide therapy in Mechanicsburg at least one day a week. This would remove the transportation barrier that can make it difficult to get enough support during the recovery journey. The public's access to care is a priority for MHDAS and Merv's efforts are greatly appreciated. "I have a real passion for people with substance use disorders," reports Merv. "I don't only want to give them a ride home from jail. I want a relationship with them. I want to connect them to the things they need to be successful like housing, employment, mentorship and a church family." Merv has been very successful with this approach and people have gone from a jail cell to an apartment, driver's license, and work uniform thanks to his involvement.

Youth Mentoring: Merv's grant request stated, "Trauma in children is caused by inconsistent parenting due to mental health, alcohol or drug issues and has been a problem in our community. Toxic stress can build up without the buffer of safe adult relationships. Social-emotional learning activities will help build children's understanding of their own emotions at the Community Center."

Office for clergy: Merv reports that it is important to offer a neutral setting for people if they want to meet with clergy. An office at the Community Center could remove a barrier for someone to receive clergy support if meeting in a church is intimidating for the person. Bible Baptist Church of Mechanicsburg is also an ongoing partner of the Community Center.

Dried goods: The last goal of the Community Center is to provide basic needs like toothpaste and dried goods that will help offset the impact of adverse experiences, whether it is childhood trauma, the experience of incarceration, homelessness, or any situation that prevents someone from having basic needs met.