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# Sunday Gazette-Mail

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## Getting healthy through FITNESS & FELLOWSHIP



KATE LONG | Sunday Gazette-Mail photos

Coal trucks barrel past Mingo County's Little Dove Baptist Church, but the Fitness and Fellowship group found a way to walk anyhow. Fifteen times around the church is a mile. Since June, the group has scored big drops in blood sugar, blood pressure and weight.

### Little Dove Baptist shows: 'It's something any church could easily do'

By Kate Long  
 Staff writer

**B**ELO — On Tuesdays and Thursdays, when the weather's good, you can see them out there, walking around and around church, 20 or 30 of them, circling the Little Dove Independent Baptist Church.



Some stride. A few hobble along with canes. "I may be in first gear, but I get there," said 72-year-old Wanda Maynard.

Last spring, they figured out that 15 times around the church is a mile.

"In Mingo County, if you try walking on the road, you risk getting flattened by a coal truck," said Pastor Jimmy Maynard (no relation to Wanda). A few hundred feet away, coal trucks whiz by on narrow, twisty W.Va. 65, a steep hill on one side, a creek on the other.

"They don't let coal trucks stop them," said Dr. Patty Jo Marcum, their medical adviser. She grew up in the 132-year-old church. "We're a close bunch," she said. "I'm so proud of them."

They started exercising last spring. Jesus was a healer, Pastor Maynard noted. "We had sisters and brothers with sugar problems, knee problems, arthri-



Pastor Jimmy Maynard of the Little Dove Baptist Church tells visiting officials from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that, by walking, he has cut his blood sugar and cholesterol in half.

### Declare war on diabetes in West Virginia, feds urge

By Kate Long  
 Staff writer

**B**ELO — One day in late October, a van with "Jay Rockefeller" on the doors rolled into the Little Dove Baptist Church parking lot. Out climbed officials from the Centers for Disease Control, the Appalachian Regional Commission and the West Virginia Bureau of Public Health.

They'd come to admire Little Dove's Fitness and Fellowship program. They came because they're worried about West Virginia's high

diabetes rate. Inside the rural Mingo County church, person after person testified about big drops in blood sugar, depression, blood pressure and weight. "The exercise helps everyone, whether they've got diabetes, heart trouble, arthritis, whatever," said Pastor Jimmy Maynard.

The CDC officials never stopped smiling. Individuals might not be able to change the processed food industry, CDC official Ann Albright said, but they

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and heart problems, and we decided it was time for us to step up," he said. "When the body's fit, the spirit's more likely to be fit, too."

"I advised them to walk and stretch," Marcum said. "They created their own program from there. They have such a good time together; they keep coming back, and I'm telling you, they're getting results."

■ When they started, Wanda Maynard couldn't walk half way around the church. Now she makes six or eight times without puffing. Last May, she needed 20 units of insulin a day. Now she takes four to seven units.

■ Pastor Maynard discovered in June that he has Type 2 diabetes. Since then, he has lost more than 60 pounds, dropped his pants size from 50 to 44 and cut his blood sugar and cholesterol in half.

■ Tom Sloane used to ride his lawnmower down the hill to the mailbox because he was afraid he couldn't walk back up. "Now I walk down the hill and walk back up," he said. He had rotator cuff surgery last summer. "This walking appears to have lubricated my rotator joints," he said.

■ Wib Thompson organizes the walks. His early morning blood sugar used to run at about 225. Now it's about 120.

■ Last spring, Marcum told

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#### PUBLIC SCHOOL SAFETY

## Local police in schools a hot topic

With federal funding drying up, school boards urged to act

By Mackenzie Mays  
 Staff writer

Local boards of education can make a significant impact on school safety, especially when it comes to recruiting police officers to patrol campus, officials say.

With major cuts to federal funding over the years, only 64 of West Virginia's more than 800 public schools have a prevention resource officer patrolling the halls. None of those are elementary schools.

About a third of those officers are locally funded, while the rest are supported by about \$800,000 in federal grants that were awarded to the state in 2012, according to the West Virginia Division of Justice & Community Services.

Leslie Boggess, deputy director of the division, said the schools with PROs in the building are "the lucky ones," and since the program started 15 years ago, requests for an officer have dramatically increased while funding has decreased.

"It's safe to say that having an officer in the school is better than not having an officer there.

"It's safe to say that having an officer in the school is better than not having an officer there."

LESLIE BOGGESS  
 W.Va. Division of Justice & Community Services

INSIDE: Citizens Defense League 'quite displeased' with Manchin 9A

It would be wonderful if we could have them in every school, but we don't have any control over the federal budget," Boggess said. "We recommend looking to local funds. Your local school board is always the safest place to go, but county commissions and others will probably be willing to contribute. Federal grants are continuing to decrease."

PROs are not only trained to respond to dangerous school situations, but also provide mentoring services and talk to students about issues such as underage drinking and drug abuse.

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#### EMERGENCY SERVICES

## \$33M tower project to go online June 30

Upgrade nearly doubles network's capacity

By Eric Eyre  
 Staff writer

West Virginia has started testing a \$33 million upgrade to its emergency communications tower network — a project designed to bolster public safety and make Internet available to homes in rural communities.

The two-year project, funded by the federal economic stimulus, expands the state's existing 90-tower network. The improvements are expected to nearly double the network's capacity for voice and data communications. The tower network also will likely link up with a national public safety system.

"You could stand on the steps of the U.S. Capitol and talk to the state Capitol here in West Virginia," said state Homeland Security Director Jimmy Gianato, who helped lead a tour of a tower site atop Malden Mountain last week.

The \$33 million is paying for new radio equipment and satellite dishes at existing tower sites, and up to 17 new towers across

the state. Workers have finished erecting a dozen towers, with five more expected to be finished within the next two months.

State officials hope to have the expanded tower network up and running by June 30.

"You're going to be able to put much more [information and data] on there on the broadband side," said Joe Gonzalez, communications director with state

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#### Note on coupons

Because of the Christmas holiday, there are no national coupons included with today's Sunday Gazette-Mail.

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# DIABETES

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can learn to minimize its impact in their daily lives.

They want West Virginia to create a network of anti-diabetes programs. "Churches like Little Dove can be an important part of that, because people already support each other," Marshall University's Richard Crespo, a diabetes specialist, told the group.

After the officials left Little Dove, they drove to Lenore K-8 School, where eighth-graders told about their new running/walking competition, sponsored by the Mingo Diabetes Coalition. "If we can get these kids active now, we stop diabetes before it starts," said coalition chairwoman Vicki Lynn Hatfield.

The next day, the officials met with the new Logan County Diabetes Coalition. One in six Logan residents has diabetes, but the county has almost no diabetes education classes. The new coalition aims to change that.

Later that day, at a Charleston conference center, Albright cited Little Dove and Logan and urged about 60 state health leaders to join forces to declare war on diabetes.

## How to attack it?

Albright sees the National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) as the major weapon. The 16-week program teaches people how to avoid harmful foods, create a personal exercise program and find new ways to relieve stress. It lowers seniors' diabetes risk by 70 percent, studies show.

Wood County's health department

has people signed up for it in senior centers.

"In Mingo, it's going to be hard to get people to come 16 times," Hatfield said. At her diabetes clinic, she requires only two group sessions, then people meet with her individually. "I've found the times have to be flexible. People's transportation and child-care problems and job schedules change from week to week."

"Ideally, West Virginia should have a choice of programs," said Nidia Henderson, wellness director of the Public Employees Insurance Agency, "but if we don't get something going soon, we're going to be in big trouble."

PEIA's diabetes claims jumped 44 percent in the past two years. "Whatever will slow this epidemic down, I'm in favor of," she said.

Henderson wants to offer a modified

NDPP class at government offices at lunchtime. The CDC says they can't cut the class time from two hours to one if they want to call it NDPP and use CDC materials.

"We need a little flexibility from [the] CDC if they want to work with us," Henderson said. "Providing the service to people and getting good outcomes is what matters most."

Meanwhile, the network is forming. In December, the Bureau of Public Health trained 65 West Virginians to lead NDPP classes. About 100 others will be trained to lead the 6-week-long Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, for people who have any kind of disease.

Jessica Wright, who oversees the bureau's chronic disease efforts, says she hopes that a year from now, classes will be offered all over the state.

"The bottom line is, we want to help people improve their health," said Gina Wood, director of the state's Diabetes Prevention and Control program. "We will keep doing our darndest to promote the NDPP, but if people can get good results doing something else, then God bless them."

The Little Dove Baptist Church will start up again after Christmas. It might plug in a diabetes program at some point, Pastor Maynard said, like its members incorporated the Arthritis Foundation's five-week Walk with Ease program last summer.

"The important thing is to keep the fellowship and include anyone who wants to come," he said. "That makes it work for us."

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