



Empower youth. Engage parents. Eliminate substance misuse & abuse

MARCH NEWSLETTER

VISION

A healthy and safe Beaverhead County

MISSION

To increase healthy opportunities and decrease substance misuse among youth through collaboration, education, and advocacy

Upcoming Events & Activities

- 3.1 High School Coalition meeting BTC office 12:00
- 3.1 Registration open: ReACT Youth Summit
 - Carroll College (June 12-14th)
- 3.6 Middle School Coalition meeting DMS 11:30
- 3.8 Game Night (open to any youth grades 6th-12th)
 - Be the Change 406 office 7-8pm
- 3.22 Art Workshop BTC office 3-5pm

Let us know if you'd like to get involved in any way!

Stop by anytime! 124 South Montana Street

or reach out:

Project Coordinator: Brooke Hill: (406)-925-2912

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BTC Board Chair: Erin Montgomery: (406)-594-1352

emontgomery@madisoncountymt.gov





February Recap

We had our 2nd monthly Friday Night Game Night on Feb 9th. 11 youth attended again! They played “Backwards Charades” & “What do you Meme?”



2.16 was our Beaverhead Community Dance at City Hall. It was a great turnout and a ton of fun! This summer, we’re planning an outdoor dance themed: “Sneaker Ball”. Which will take place on a basketball court, instead of in a ballroom :)



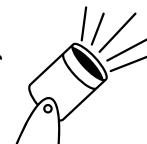
Our Open House was Monday night from 5:00-7:00pm. We also had a Ribbon Cutting ceremony to celebrate Be the Change 406 becoming a 501c3 in October. Thank you to Rebecca & the Chamber of Commerce for coming to do that! And thank you to everyone who stopped by to celebrate with us, or just to say hello!



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Tribune Spotlight!



DC trip helps local youths be the change

M.P. REGAN
Dillon Tribune staff

A pair of area youths recently traveled a long way out of the area.

And returned home with with a wider perspective and an enhanced supply of ideas and inspiration to bring about positive changes in their hometown.

“It was so much fun, a really cool experience,” stated Beaverhead County High School sophomore Briley Alberi of the journey she took to Washington D.C. a few weeks ago, along with Amelia Maki, as local representatives of the BetheChange406 Youth Coalition.

“I learned how to make a difference in our community,” stated Maki, a Dillon Middle School eighth



COURTESY PHOTO/ERIN MONTGOMERY

Local students Amelia Maki and Briley Alberi (third and fourth from the right) listen to Sen. Jon Tester and some fellow attendees during a recent trip to Washington D.C.

grader, of one of the many things she brought home from the cross-country journey to attend a forum in the nation’s capital put on by CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America).

“I learned how we can pass laws and make the world and our town

safer,” added Maki, whose BetheChange406 Youth Coalition earlier this year wrapped up a successful effort to convince the Dillon City Council to enact a new tobacco-free policy for a city park frequented by youths.

“When I first went to those city hall

meetings, personally I felt intimidated,” recalled BetheChange406 Youth Coalition President Adlais Chagua of attending city government meetings about tobacco use in Vigilante Park across the better part of a year.

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Trip/ from A1

“But once we spoke about what we wanted to do, I felt more like I could speak my mind. I felt like we gained confidence as we spoke,” added Chagua of an essential life skill that Alberi and Maki got to develop further in front of a US senator.

“We were all kind of standing around, and he immediately directed us to the chairs and the microphone and made sure we were all taken care of,” said Maki of her introduction to Senator Jon Tester at the start of a presentation in Washington DC late last month.

“This was us showing what we do for our community,” stated Maki, who made the presentation with Alberi, in a session during which youth from Frenchtown and Deer Lodge also got to talk about what they were doing to improve their areas.

Maki and Alberi got to meet another member of Montana’s Congressional

delegation during their time in Washington D.C.

“When we first got into Ryan Zinke’s office, he comes up to us and says, ‘So, Dillon, you guys are pretty good at football—state champs this year,’” smiled Alberi, of their meeting with the representative of Montana’s First Congressional District.

“It was definitely intimidating at first because they’re looked up to by so many people, and they are in positions of high power. But after talking to them and getting to know them, you realize they are people, too,” said Alberi, who gained confidence and know-how through interacting with IPs during the trip to DC.

“It was really cool to do that and see how kind and understanding they are. They asked us questions and just didn’t kind of blow off our ideas. They seemed really interested,” nodded Alberi.

The idea for the work to make local parks safer

for kiddos came from a BetheChange406 Youth Coalition member’s trip to Washington DC in 2023.

“Braelynn went to Washington DC last year,” said Erin Montgomery, a prevention specialist for Beaverhead and Madison Counties who acts as an adult leader for BetheChange406 Youth Coalition.

“And then she kind of initiated the park stuff,” said Montgomery, of Dillon Middle School’s Braelynn Baldwin, who visited Washington DC in 2023.

“My parents never wanted us to go to the skate park, because if you go there, there’s broken beer bottles and cigarette buds and broken branches kids bring down,” said Baldwin, who saw her little brother almost suffer a serious laceration from a broken beer bottle in the skate park.

So, then we went to DC, and I heard all the Frenchtown kids talking about all the things they were making a difference doing, and that’s when we kind of got the idea,” revealed Baldwin of one idea she brought home last year from the nation’s capital—where Alberi and Maki this year gained ideas and information at CADCA conferences.

“We went to youth conferences where we learned about different drugs and leadership,” said Alberi.

“We learned a lot about opioids and the effect those can have on the body—and how seven out of ten pills you buy on the streets have Fentanyl in them,” recalled Alberi of the synthetic opioid that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) lists as 50 times more powerful than heroin.

“A lethal dose of fentanyl!”

added Maki of the menace that’s made its way onto streets throughout the US, where more than 100,000 people a year die of drug overdoses, according to the CDC.

“The idea to help people and stop the opioid crisis and help the community,” said Maki of work she is trying to further in Dillon since returning earlier this month from the trip to Washington DC.

“We have some presentations we’re going to be doing to the fifth graders to tell them what we do and how drugs can affect their lives,” said Alberi.

“They’ll be sixth graders next year, so they can join the Youth Coalition then. We can educate them on how much they can help,” said Alberi, who hopes to help further the group’s work and build its

membership through those talks and other efforts by the BetheChange406 Youth Coalition—such as art projects, red carpet events, barbecues, dances.

“I heard about the parks work and realized how much of a difference the group was making,” said Sage Rhodes, a new member of the BetheChange406 Youth Coalition who’s already helping the group continue to live up to its name.

“It feels really good. I’m really proud of it and it helps me see good things happening for the community,” said Rhodes.

“It’s been really great to be able to help our community,” said Alberi, “and feel like you’re making an impact.”

M.P. Regan can be reached by email at mregan@dillontribune.com.



If you have an interest in a diverse and stable food supply