



About WV FREE

WV Focus: Reproductive Education & Equality (WV FREE) is the leading reproductive health, rights and justice education and advocacy organization in West Virginia. Our vision statement sums up our work well: *WV FREE envisions the elevation of all West Virginians through the promotion of dignity and autonomy of women and families.*

We work on state and local levels on reproductive health and the intersectionality of social justice issues. Through education, advocacy, programmatic and policy work, we work every day for West Virginia women and families.

We can cover interview topics such as:

- Reproductive justice in marginalized communities
- Consent
- Contraception and emergency contraception
- Safe sex and STD protection
- Reproductive choices including whether a person decides to parent, adopt or have an abortion
- Women's issues in West Virginia Legislation
- Reproductive justice and the intersectionality with other social justice issues
- Civic engagement and West Virginia youth
- Grassroots organizing

WV FREE is based in Charleston, WV.

Find us online at wvfree.org as well as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat. @WVFREE

In this press kit:

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For Media Inquiries Contact:

Julie Warden – Communications Director – julie@wvfree.org – 304.342.9188



Mission and Vision

Vision Statement: WV FREE envisions the elevation of all West Virginians through the promotion of dignity and autonomy of women and families.

WV FREE's mission is to:

- (1) seek legal protection at state and national levels guaranteeing the right to decide whether, when and how to have children; the human right to bodily integrity and control over one's body and the ability to parent children in healthy and safe environments;
- (2) broaden the base of active, vocal and community support for and understanding of reproductive rights, health and justice in West Virginia;
- (3) ensure accessibility to and affordability of reproductive health care for all West Virginians, including the right to abortion, birth control, adoption, prenatal care, sexuality education, birth options as chosen by women, prevention of sexually transmitted infections, with a special focus on teens and those with a low-income, rural women and women of color;
- (4) develop and expand a system that is rooted in the strength of the most disadvantaged West Virginians; and (5) inspire, lead and participate in a broad, inclusive and energized movement for reproductive health, rights and justice to promote sustainability through alliance building and shared learning.

Our History

WV FREE was founded in 1989 as a coalition, by a group of 'SHROES' and 'HEROES' from the Women's Health Center of West Virginia (Then and now the state's only non-profit clinic that provides abortion), the WV-National Abortion Rights League (NARAL) and the WV Chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women. The women witnessed first-hand the urgency to address West Virginia's high rate of unintended teen pregnancies, low infant birth weight, high infant mortality and late access to prenatal health care. The group also saw it as imperative to combat the growing fundamentalism in the state, and increasing power and influence of anti-choice factions that seek to disempower the women of West Virginia.

Since its inception, WV FREE has changed leadership in both the board of directors and staff and has grown from an organization with no staff to a strong team of eight. We are a leader in West Virginia's social just employers and are more stable and influential than ever before. Our network of members and supporters continues to grow every day and has now surpassed over 10,000 people statewide.

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Staff Bios

Margaret Chapman Pomponio, Executive Director

Margaret is a seasoned advocate and leader in social justice work with a BA in Sociology and MA in Political Science. She has led WV FREE since 2002 when she began to earnestly expand reproductive health, rights and justice work in her home state. She has received recognition for her work, including a “Woman of Vision” award from Gloria Steinem through the Ms. Foundation for Women. Her career has been varied, from serving in AmeriCorps, working with the Lummi Nation in Washington to teaching Political Science in West Virginia. She deeply values working in coalition and is called upon regularly to speak around the state and country. Margaret serves on the Board of Directors of West Virginians for Affordable Health Care and the Groundswell Fund Advisory Board. She is also a founding member of OneKanawha, a community-based anti-oppression group and is active in St. John’s Episcopal Church of Charleston, a parish that actively engages in social justice outreach and ministry.

Julie Warden, Communications Director

Julie has a BS in Journalism with a minor in Communications from West Virginia University, where she was an athlete on the women’s track team. She came to WV FREE with over 10 years of experience in public relations, communications, marketing, branding, and outreach. Julie is a former Mrs. West Virginia International and dedicated a year to traveling the state of West Virginia to promote a positive image for WV. She volunteers with the WV Arthritis Foundation and the Jackson County Animal Shelter, and she is the co-founder of “The 100” – a group dedicated to giving to charitable organizations in Charleston, WV. She serves on the Board for the WV Faith Foundation, the Steering Committee for Our Children Our Future, and is the State Coordinator with Raising Women’s Voices. Additionally, she was a member of the Leadership WV Class of 2013 (the best class ever!) Julie is passionate about using her skills to move West Virginia forward and promoting equality for all people in the mountain state. She resides in Jackson County with her husband and three—year-old daughter.

Caitlin Gaffin, Director of Operations

Caitlin studied at Columbia University and University of Maryland, focusing on human rights, sociology, and psychology. She holds an MA in education and has worked extensively throughout inner-city schools in NYC, Baltimore, and DC. Caitlin has always valued working within the realm of advocacy, education, and leadership - whether that's been through fighting to reduce juvenile recidivism for those under 18 tried as adults, teaching job and life skills to incarcerated pregnant youth, creating alternative delivery strategies for a national organization to support underserved and at-risk girls throughout Appalachia, or even developing youth leadership for Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. Caitlin shares her home with one husband, three cats, and three dogs, including WV FREE's very own Director of Barketing, Augie.

Carrie Meghan Quick-Blanco, WISE Program Manager

Carrie-Meghan received her BA in International Studies from Ohio University and a Masters Degree in Naturopathy from Clayton College of Natural Health. She has over 10 year experience in business, management and professional development. In the past she provided professional development on 21st

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century education, global studies and STEM topics helping to found the Harless CREATE Satellite, a branch of Carnegie Mellon University's CREATE Lab at Marshall University's June Harless Center. She also works as a DONA Certified birth doula and a Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC). She is passionate about choices in childbirth and providing women with evidenced-based information to make the best choices for themselves and their families.

Anduwyn Williams, Director for Reproductive Health Access

Anduwyn received her BA in Psychology from Lee University. She has always been passionate about reproductive justice which has followed her through ten years of work ranging from domestic violence prevention and support to mental health counseling. Anduwyn came to WV FREE from the WV Department of Health and Human Resources Office of Maternal, child and Family Health Program's Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Initiative as an adolescent pregnancy specialist. At WV FREE, Anduwyn leads our unintended pregnancy referrals training initiative and works with partners to ensure proactive women-focused policies exist throughout our state programs.

Ciera Pennington, Outreach Director

Ciera grew up in North Central WV, where she graduated from Philip Barbour High School in 2011 and went on to attend West Virginia University. She is currently taking a break from school, but plans to return in the future and finish her undergraduate degree in Multi-Disciplinary Studies with focuses in Women's and Gender Studies, Political Science, and Strategic Social Media. Ciera returns to WV FREE as our Outreach Director after 2 years away working as a Field Organizer for the Democratic Party of VA and Field Director of WV Citizen Action Group. Additionally, she has had experience managing and/or consulting on social media accounts for candidates, projects, and organizations, including in her current role as the Fundraising and Marketing Coordinator for the WV International Film Festival. Currently, Ciera serves on two Board of Directors – President of the West Virginia Environmental Council and Communications Director of Regenerate WV PAC. In her spare time, you'll most likely find her spending time with her dog (Cali) and three cats (Micio, Koal, & Bellamy).

Chela Barajas, Outreach Coordinator

Chela has worked with WV FREE as a Canvasser, Canvass Lead, Intern, Organizing Fellow and is now the Outreach Coordinator. She has extensive experience in organizing, canvassing and outreach, as well as database management. She went to Marshall University and studied History. With a passion for reproductive justice, Chela enjoys traveling the state of West Virginia to engage others and to educate them so they can be equipped with knowledge to make their own reproductive healthcare decisions.

Amanda Schwartz, Operations Coordinator

Amanda has a BA in Creative Writing and a minor in Women's Studies from Marshall University, where she was a Yeager Scholar. She first came to WV FREE as a canvasser and intern, before taking part in WV FREE's Young Women's Leadership Academy and being honored as the 2016 WV FREE Intern of the Year. Amanda then came on as a part-time Administrative Assistant, before moving into her full-time role as

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Operations Coordinator. Amanda was named the 2017 Undergraduate Woman of Marshall and her writing has been featured in *Et Cetera*, *Thoreau's Rooster*, and *Huffington Post*.

Judi Nuckolls, Executive Coordinator

Judi Nuckolls has over 20 years' experience working with nonprofits in West Virginia. Though she originally received her BS in Secondary Education from Bluefield State College, she found her passion in nonprofit work, lending her expertise to organizations such as the WV Nurses Association, Consulting and Professional Engineers, WV Women's Commission, and the American Heart Association. Prior to joining the WV FREE team, Judi was part of the Bureau of Public Health's Family Planning Program, where she worked with more than 160 clinics throughout the state to train providers and monitor compliance with Title X Family Planning Guidelines. She also worked closely with the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Initiative, sat on the "Reconnect McDowell County Program" on the teen pregnancy board, and was an active member of the statewide Leadership to Prevent Teen Pregnancy Task Force.

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