

NOVEMBER 2025

THE CHARLES TOWN INITIATIVE

Monthly Newsletter



DEAR CHARLES TOWN,

As fall winds down, we're excited to share what's been happening with The Charles Town Initiative team! From our festive Trunk or Treat event and Red Ribbon Week activities to celebrating Danielle's licensure exam success, it's been a season full of growth and connection. In this issue, you'll also find team updates and a quick "Myth vs. Fact" feature on substance use prevention. Thank you for being part of our community's commitment to safety, wellness, and resilience! Together, we're building a stronger, more connected Charles Town.



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October 2025

Charles Town Police Support Specialist

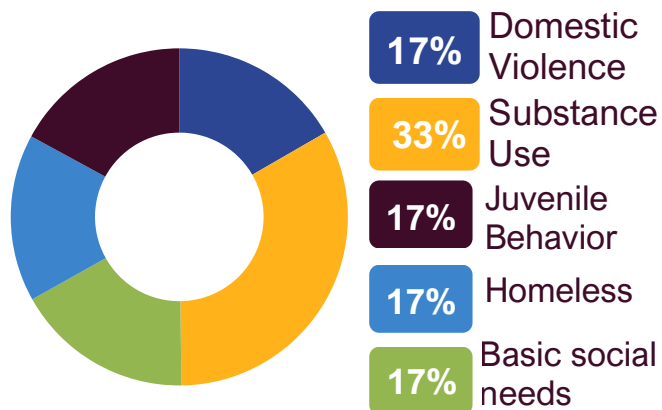
Number of Referrals to the PSS

3

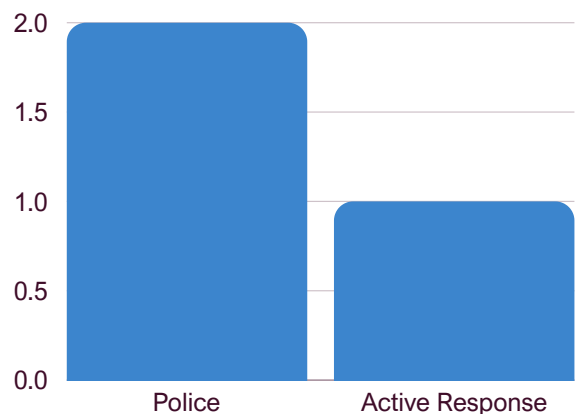
Number of Overdose Screenings

1

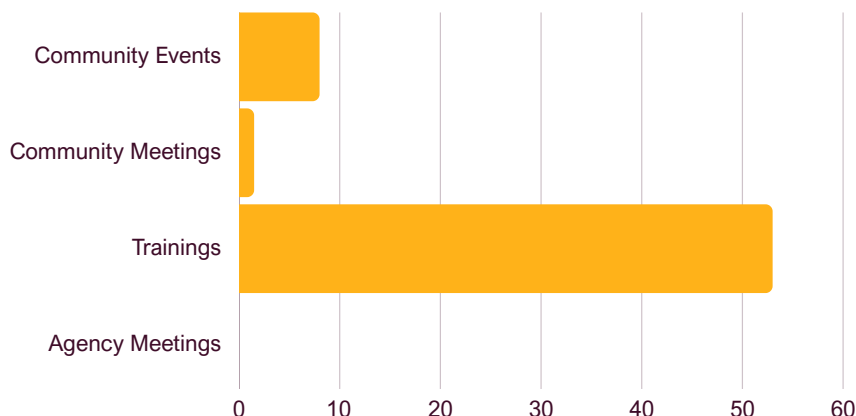
Reasons for New Referrals



Source of Referrals



Hours Spent at Community Events, Meetings, and Trainings



Specialized Skills Building Interventions to Moderate and High Risk Children

3

Indirect Case Management for Moderate and High Risk Children

2

TRUNK OR TREAT

On October 23rd, the Charles Town Initiative joined the community for the 2nd Annual Trunk or Treat — a safe, festive alternative to traditional Halloween celebrations. CTI School Support Specialist Danielle helped spread cheer while sharing resources and connecting with families throughout the evening.

Twelve decorated trunks filled the space with music, treats, and interactive displays, creating a lively atmosphere for the nearly 90 children and families in attendance.

Events like these model what prevention looks like in real time — offering kids positive, memorable experiences in safe community spaces. We're grateful to all the staff, volunteers, and partners who made the evening possible — and to Danielle for representing CTI and helping strengthen cross-county collaboration.



CONGRATULATIONS TO SCHOOL SUPPORT SPECIALIST, DANIELLE!

Huge congratulations to Danielle, CTI's School Support Specialist, on passing and earning her Licensed Graduate Social Worker (LGSW) licensure in West Virginia — what an incredible milestone! This reflects not only her hard work and dedication, but also her commitment to showing up for our community with professionalism and care. We're proud to celebrate this achievement and excited to see the impact she'll continue to make.



RED RIBBON WEEK

This year's Red Ribbon Week (October 23–31) provided powerful opportunities to engage our youth in conversations about healthy choices and self-discovery.



The Charles Town Initiative's Drug-Free Communities Coordinator, Tom Kearns, spoke with students at Wildwood Middle School and Driswood Elementary about the pitfalls of alcohol, vaping, and drug use. He encouraged them to identify their "anti-drug": the passions, hobbies, and connections that give life meaning, whether it's sports, music, math, or friendship. These early prevention efforts are at the heart of what we do and help young people find purpose and belonging before harmful choices take root.

WHAT ELSE HAS THE TEAM BEEN UP TO?

Danielle (School Support Specialist) and Misty (Police Support Specialist) have been busy strengthening partnerships and deepening their work across schools and the community. Danielle has been meeting with new community partners and is now receiving referrals from multiple sources—including schools, local organizations, and even self-referrals, a strong sign of growing community trust in CTI's support services. She recently began her first round of initial interventions and, alongside Brian (Lead Mentor), visited social studies classrooms to introduce their roles and share how they can support students. Danielle is also completing Ukeru training, a restraint-free crisis intervention approach that emphasizes safety, empathy, and understanding in school settings. Misty has been

working side by side with Danielle on several school and community cases while continuing to follow up on police referrals to ensure families receive the help they need. She recently participated in a Crisis Intervention Team Coordinator Training with Danielle and is traveling to Morgantown for "Train-the-Trainer" CIT certification, which will allow her to help lead future trainings here in our region. Together, Danielle, Brian, and Misty are a vital part of CTI's mission—building bridges between law enforcement, schools, and families to create safer, more supportive pathways for our youth.

CIT COORDINATOR

TRAINING



MYTH VS. FACT



Myth: *"Kids are too young to experience real stress or trauma."*

Fact: Even very young children can be affected by traumatic experiences and chronic stress. **Takeaway:** Validate children's emotions and create predictable routines—they help build resilience early.

Myth: *"Talking to teens about drugs will just make them more curious."*

Fact: Open, age-appropriate conversations actually reduce risk. Silence creates stigma and misinformation. **Takeaway:** Start honest conversations early and revisit them often. Kids are listening—even when they act like they're not.



Myth: *"That kid is just acting out to get attention."*

Fact: Behaviors often reflect unmet needs, not defiance. Trauma can change how kids respond to stress and relationships. **Takeaway:** Instead of punishment, ask: What happened to this child? not What's wrong with them?



Myth: *"If a parent used substances, their kids will too."*

Fact: Genetics play a role, but risk is not destiny. Protective factors like connection, support, and skill-building matter enormously. **Takeaway:** Resilience can be nurtured. Every caring adult makes a difference.



MYTH VS. FACT



Myth: *"They're just being dramatic—it's not real anxiety or depression."*

Fact: Mental health disorders often start in childhood or adolescence and deserve the same care as physical health. **Takeaway:** Take concerns seriously. Don't wait to seek support.

Myth: *"Trauma-informed care means letting kids get away with bad behavior."*

Fact: It means understanding behavior through a lens of safety, connection, and regulation—not lack of accountability. **Takeaway:** Trauma-informed = high expectations + high support.



Myth: *"You can spot which kids are struggling just by looking at them."*

Fact: Many children hide distress behind achievement, humor, or withdrawal. Trauma is not always visible. **Takeaway:** Build trusting relationships with every student—especially the ones who “seem fine.”

Myth: *"School discipline keeps students safe and in line."*

Fact: Exclusionary discipline (like suspension) increases risk of dropout, substance use, and justice involvement—especially for marginalized students. **Takeaway:** Restorative, relational approaches keep schools safer and more connected.



LOVING OUR COMMUNITY

a free event for everyone

Dinner



Clothes & Hygiene Items



Lots of Free Services



Music

Children's Activities



**Friday
November 21
5 - 7 pm**

**St. Thomas
Lutheran Church
111 S. Seminary St.
Charles Town**

For more info, call/text 304-676-7138