



Casey Sturgill of Mt. Vernon and Jacob McKay of Mayslick were named Morehead State University's 2013 Homecoming Queen and King Saturday, Oct. 26. Sturgill is the daughter of Angela Johnson and Steven Sturgill. A senior criminology/pre-law major, she was sponsored by Delta Zeta Sorority. McKay is the son of Leo and Helen McKay. A junior elementary education major, he was sponsored by Delta Tau Delta Fraternity. The announcement of the Homecoming Court was made during halftime ceremonies of the football game against Dayton.

One ton of medications removed from UNITE drop box locations

More than one ton of outdated or unwanted medications was collected by Operation UNITE as part of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's seventh National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day this past weekend.

A total of 2,021.5 pounds of prescription and over-the-counter drugs were collected from permanent drop box locations in 34 southern and eastern Kentucky counties – an increase of 850.3 pounds from the Take-Back Day held this past April.

This total does not include any medications brought to other special locations – such as Kentucky State Police posts – established for the four-hour take-back event.

"We are very pleased with the response from citizens who wanted to get rid of their outdated or unwanted medications in a safe and responsible way," said Dan Smoot, UNITE's president. "Getting these pills out of the medicine cabinet will reduce the potential for their abuse and misuse."

According to the 2011 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration's National Survey on Drug Use and Health, more than 70 percent of people abusing prescription pain relievers got them through friends or relatives, a statistic that includes raiding the family medicine cabinet.

That study also found that twice as many Americans regularly abused prescription drugs than the number of those who regularly used cocaine, hallucinogens, heroin and inhalants combined.

With the abuse comes a corresponding increase in drug-related deaths.

A report released earlier this month by the Trust For America's Health found that Kentucky had the third highest mortality rate of prescription drug overdoses in 2010 (23.6 per 100,000), with the number of all drug overdose deaths more than quadrupling since 1999 (4.9 per 100,000). Nationally the

rate has doubled, with 50 people dying from an overdose of prescription drugs every day.

Another benefit of the drop-box program is protecting the environment.

For years, the generally accepted method for disposing of old or left over medications was to flush them down the toilet. This practice, however, has been strongly discouraged because of concerns about potential health and environmental effects of antibiotics, hormones, painkillers, depressants and stimulants making their way into our water system and soil.

It's Not Too Late

Operation UNITE has helped establish 41 permanent medication drop box sites in 34 counties that are available free to citizens during operating hours that vary by location.

Residents are asked to please remove all identifying labels from prescription bottles before bringing them to the drop-off sites.

"Every county in our region has at least one permanent drop-off site that can be used year-round," Smoot noted. "We hope more and more people will take advantage of this service."

With this weekend's collection, UNITE has collected 4,614.7 pounds of medications since the drop boxes were first established October 1, 2012.

• For a list of permanent drop box locations in the UNITE service region visit <http://operationunite.org/investigations/med-drop-box-sites/>.

• For a list of permanent drop box locations statewide visit the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy website at <http://odcp.ky.gov/Kentucky+Prescription+Drug+Disposal+Sites.htm>.

The National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day, which began in October 2010, aims to provide a safe, convenient and responsible means of disposal, while also educating the general public about the potential for abuse of these medications.

While totals from this past weekend were not yet available, more than 2.8 million pounds (1,409 tons) of pills were removed from circulation in the first six DEA Take-Back Days.

For more information about Operation UNITE visit their website at www.operationunite.org



RCMS Unite Club member Evan Hendrickson is shown holding a lantern during the UNITE ceremony and balloon launch at halftime of the UNITE Bowl last Friday night. UNITE collected 6,400 rolls of toilet paper that were taken to three different centers: Chad's Hope in Manchester, Oasis Center in Somerset and Hope in the Mountains in Prestonsburg.



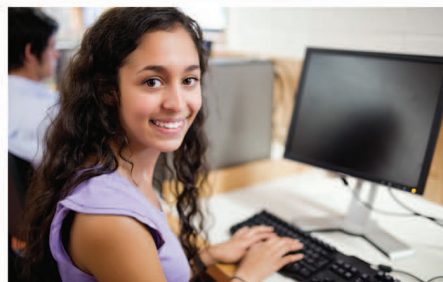
State Senator Jared Carpenter, Operation UNITE President Dan Smoot, State Representative Jonathan Shell, Western Rockcastle firefighter Jessica Clark, State Senate President Robert Stivers and District Director for Congressman Hal Rogers Karen Kelly are shown walking onto the field for the UNITE festivities.



Rockcastle EMS, and several other local Rockcastle volunteer fire departments, honored Whitley City fallen fire fighter Arlie (Pooh) Hill as his body traveled through the county from Cincinnati, Ohio to Whitley City Tuesday. Hill died on Sunday from burns he suffered over ninety percent of his body when he made entry into a burning home to look for victims on August 30th. Memorial Services for Hill are this Saturday at 2 p.m. at McCreary County High School.



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