

ON A MISSION: AN UPDATE FOR YWCA SUPPORTERS



Greetings and Gratitude

You may not think relationship violence is an issue that often affects teens. However, it's an experience that we commonly hear about from the adults and young people in our programs, and which is also echoed in national statistics: *1 in 3 teens will experience physical, sexual, or emotional abuse from someone they're in a relationship with.* February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, an effort to highlight these issues and prevent dating abuse.

At YWCA Missoula, one way that we work to prevent harm is through our GUTS! program, which provides a safe space for girls and gender-diverse youth to discuss important issues in their lives, including relationships, identity, and personal values. As some of you know, it was my work with hundreds of women in the YWCA shelter that truly inspired me, along with a group of brilliant Missoula women, to build the program that is GUTS! today. Because so many women who sought shelter with us were some of the most amazing, strong individuals I had ever known, but they did not believe themselves to be worthy of respect and safety. And I thought, what if we had the ability to work with women earlier in their lives—when they were just forming their sense of self? And that is truly how GUTS! was born. Since then, the program has grown and evolved. In fact, spring groups begin in just a couple weeks! You can read about them later in our newsletter. Please consider inviting a youth you know to join us.

Let's continue to have courageous conversations about healthy relationships and boundaries, so we raise a generation that doesn't tolerate abusive behavior, a generation that can live free from violence, a generation that will lead us all to a brighter future.

Thank you for joining us in working toward peace, justice, dignity and freedom for all,

Jen

What's New

Annual Meeting and Report

Thank you to everyone who attended the annual meeting last week to learn more about YWCA Missoula's successes and challenges from last year! Jen Euell shared her vision for the future and plans for our programs in the coming year. You can read the [2022 Annual Report](#) on our website.



8-Year-Old Fundraises for the YWCA by Dog-sitting

This year, 8-year-old Missoula community member, Sky Warren, decided that she wanted to raise \$2,000 for the YWCA. She met her goal in a matter of weeks, thanks to birthday fundraising and dog sitting.

Sky said, "I met some friends this summer that don't have a place to live and I miss them. I hope they're doing ok. I'm so thankful we have a YWCA in our town to help them out and I want to help too."

We're so grateful to Sky for her generosity, empathy, and hard work—and for the reminder that together, we really can make a difference.

Program Updates

Family Housing Center

There are currently 22 families, including a total of 43 children, staying in the Family Housing Center at The Meadowlark. The Family Housing Center, a program jointly run by the YWCA and Family Promise, offers short-term emergency housing to local families who are unsheltered. The average length of stay is three months. During that time, residents work with case managers to find permanent housing, which can include rent assistance from the YWCA's Rapid Rehousing program.

Learn more about YWCA housing programs [here](#).

Domestic Violence Shelter

The domestic violence shelter at The Meadowlark currently has 12 adults and 16 children, who range in age from two months to 18 years old. Shelter is available to single adults and survivors with children who need immediate safety. While residing at the shelter, residents work with advocates to find safe, stable housing, get connected to resources, and heal from trauma.

Learn more about the Pathways domestic and sexual violence program [here](#).

GUTS! Spring Groups

GUTS! is gearing up for spring semester groups, which begin this month. GUTS! is a leadership program for girls and gender-diverse youth in the community. Groups meet weekly and discuss topics ranging from healthy relationships to body image to long-term goals and values. You can learn more about the GUTS! program [here](#).

For the first time, GUTS! will be holding a middle school group at YWCA's home base, The Meadowlark! This group will be offered in addition to groups at several elementary schools. The middle school group is open to 6th-8th graders from any Missoula school. It will meet Tuesdays, 4-5:30 PM, starting February 21st. [Register and learn more here](#)

Who We Are



Danielle Bowman, Pathways Advocate & Pet Program Coordinator

Danielle has been a Pathways Advocate for the past year, supporting survivors who seek safety in the domestic violence shelter. Recently she also became the coordinator of the [new pet program being implemented in our shelter!](#) Danielle is excited about this transition, which will include remodeling several rooms to accommodate pets. Allowing survivors to escape abuse together with their pets will remove a barrier for survivors coming to shelter, as well as provide extra comfort and support during a time of crisis. Danielle is passionate about the mission of the YWCA and she loves working with survivors and their families. She is a military spouse, an animal-lover, and enjoys art, yoga, and spending time outdoors.

Get Involved

Tour The Meadowlark

Join us for an informational tour and learn about how YWCA's programs benefit families, youth, and domestic violence survivors.

UPCOMING DATES:

Tuesday, March 14th, 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 11th, 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Limited space. Please [RSVP here](#) to confirm availability.

Questions? [Contact Diane](#).

Donate Items on Our Wish List

Your donations of basic necessities can help families through everyday challenges. *We are currently only accepting new/ unused items that are on our wish list.* We accept donations Monday- Friday, 9am- 5pm.

- [Domestic Violence Shelter needs](#)
- [Family Housing Center needs](#)
- [Youth Services needs](#)

Employment Opportunities

Join our team! We're currently hiring for the following positions:

- Planet Kids visit monitor (part time)
- Youth Advocate (part time)
- Secret Seconds store clerks (part time/ full time)
- Support Specialist (full time)

[Find job descriptions and application instructions here](#)

YWCA Missoula | (406) 543-6691 | www.ywcamissoula.org

Crisis line: (406) 542-1944 or (800) 483-7858

STAY CONNECTED

