

ON A MISSION: AN UPDATE FOR YWCA SUPPORTERS



Greetings and Gratitude

One of the most common questions asked of domestic violence survivors is: *why did you stay?* It's a question asked by law enforcement, judges, family, and friends. Asking why they stay, however, assumes that victims are somehow responsible for the abuse they endured. It also fails to hold perpetrators accountable for their actions.

There are many challenges that prevent domestic violence victims from leaving relationships. Women of color and other marginalized populations often face increased barriers to seeking help. Many of these barriers are exacerbated by long-standing inequities in public policies and social safety nets, including lack of financial resources, lack of adequate childcare, skepticism of social service institutions, lack of trust in law enforcement and the justice system, and lack of access to housing.

YWCA Missoula works hard to overcome every barrier that might prevent survivors from seeking help, healing and thriving in the future. Providing 24-hour crisis response, connecting survivors to the resources they need, and advocating for them through the complex systems they must navigate are just the start.

At YWCA, we know that all violence is not acknowledged or responded to equally and that some victims go unrecognized altogether. That is why we also firmly support legislation and policies that are inclusive of all victims and survivors, particularly survivors of color, those who are immigrants, or who are part of the LGBTQ+ community. [You can learn more about YWCA's legislative priorities and take action to end gender-based violence here.](#)

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and we encourage you to join us in learning and acting to support survivors and prevent domestic violence in the future: believe survivors, hold perpetrators accountable, and celebrate healthy relationships.

Here's to building a brighter, safer and more just future together,

Jen

What's New



YWCA Honors Frankie Flaherty

We are incredibly saddened by the loss of Frankie Flaherty, a longtime, dedicated volunteer and generous supporter of YWCA Missoula. Frankie was part of one of the original groups that provided meals for Tuesday night support groups, and she and her family were closely involved in many ways with the organization for years. Frankie will be dearly missed and remembered.

[You can read more about Frankie's life here](#)

New Volunteer Opportunity to Support Kids at The Meadowlark

Calling all community members who love spending time with kids! We are looking for volunteers to lead activities, such as arts and crafts, cultural activities, and story time at The Meadowlark. This is a great opportunity to positively impact children and families in our programs. **Volunteer training is being held November 1st and 2nd.** [Learn more here.](#)



Canvas Hair Studio Supply Drive

Big thanks to Andrea and the team at Canvas Hair Studio for hosting a hygiene supply drive for residents of The Meadowlark. They collected tons of hair products and other essential items for survivors and families. Thank you so much for the generous support!

Volunteer Pet Advocates Needed

We are recruiting a few pet advocates to foster pets for up to 60 days (with possible extension) while their owners reside at The Meadowlark. (While the domestic violence shelter can accommodate some pets, space is limited).

This service is crucial to the community as many survivors and families will not leave dangerous situations without their pets. Pet advocacy allows survivors and unhoused families peace of mind while seeking the services they need to find healing and sustainable living situations.

[Email Katie](#) or call (406) 543-6691 to learn more about becoming a volunteer pet advocate!

Program Updates

GUTS! Fall Groups



Our [GUTS! leadership and empowerment program](#) fall semester action groups have started! Groups are held at Missoula schools, as well as one on-site at The Meadowlark and one that will be starting soon in Arlee.

The first few weeks of the program focus on strengths, mentors and diversity. One activity is called "Cool People Molds," and provides an opportunity for the groups to talk about some influential people in history, and expand the participants' views of who can have power and be a role model. (For the sake of this activity, "cool people" are folks who identify as female, queer, non-binary, two-spirit, etc.) Then the participants think of "cool people" in their own lives and make a sculpture out of playdoh to represent them!

Shop Halloween at Secret Seconds

Find Halloween costumes and decorations at Secret Seconds Thrift Stores! We have child and adult sizes. As always, *all purchases from Secret Seconds directly support all YWCA Missoula programs* Visit either store location, 920 Kensington and 1136 W. Broadway. Open Tuesday- Saturday, 10 AM- 6 PM.

Follow Secret Seconds on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to learn about special inventory or upcoming promotions!

Who We Are

Stacy Varkuza, Fund Development Coordinator

Stacy is the newest member of the fundraising team at YWCA Missoula and appreciates the opportunity to have an impact on the community, especially



amidst the current housing crisis. Stacy brings two decades of experience in administrative and finance roles—including previous work at another local nonprofit, Blue Mountain Clinic—as well as an academic background in psychology and sustainable food systems to their role. Stacy also facilitated support groups at the YWCA during college; being a domestic abuse survivor has influenced their interest in helping other survivors. Beyond work, you can find Stacy gardening, camping, crafting, rock climbing, and shopping at Secret Seconds, especially during the spooky season when they dive into costume projects.

Get Involved

Tour The Meadowlark

Join us for an informational tour and learn about the impact of YWCA's programs on families, youth, and domestic violence survivors.

UPCOMING DATES:

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

Tuesday, December 12th, 12:30-1:30 p.m.

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

Tuesdays at 12:30 don't work for you? [Contact Diane](#).

Donate Pillows (and Other Items on Our Wish List)

Our domestic violence shelter and family housing center are both greatly in need of **basic bed pillows**. Donations can be dropped off at The Meadowlark, Monday-Friday, 9-5.

Do you have other items you'd like to donate? Check out our complete [program wish lists here](#).

You can also order wish list items (including pillows) from our [Amazon wish list](#) and have them shipped to us directly - just select YWCA Missoula shipping address at checkout!

Employment Opportunities

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

- Secret Seconds Store Clerk (part/full time)
- Pathways Evening Advocate (part time)
- Family Housing Center Evening & Weekend Advocate (part time)
- Family Housing Center 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

