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## A Letter from Jen Euell, Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Recent cold snaps have pushed our Family Housing Center to full capacity some nights. On the coldest evenings, our team has gone above and beyond, opening our conference room as an emergency overflow space to ensure no family is left out in the cold. Their flexibility and dedication have been crucial in providing warmth and safety to those who need it most.

At the same time, recent events have underscored the uncertainty we face. The brief—but deeply concerning—federal funding freeze was a stark reminder that the programs we provide depend on stable funding, which can't be taken for granted. About 30% of our operating budget comes from federal sources, and disruptions to these grants could impact vital services like our Rapid Rehousing rental assistance, Planet Kids supervised visitation, and our 24-hour Pathways domestic and sexual violence services. These programs save lives, and without them, too many of our neighbors would be left without anywhere to turn.

Despite these challenges, we remain steadfast in our mission. For over 110 years, YWCA Missoula has been here, evolving to meet the needs of this community. **We are not going anywhere.**

This is a critical time to get involved. It's going to take all of us. One big thing you can do is join us as a volunteer... and our **advocate training begins in just a few weeks!** If you're able, please consider making **a financial contribution**. And if you have other ideas or ways you'd like to contribute, I would love to hear from you.

We know that in uncertain times like these, one constant we can always depend on is that the Missoula community shows up for each other. Thank you for being a vital part of this work!

In Possibility,  
Jen

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## New & Noteworthy

### Become a Volunteer Advocate - Training Starts March 3!

YWCA Missoula's free, six-week Volunteer Advocate Training is an immersive program that equips community members to support survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and homelessness. Whether you'll answer crisis calls, work with shelter residents, or provide outreach, you'll gain the skills to serve with empathy and expertise. Starts March 3; two evening sessions per week.

## Staff Spotlight

### Brooke Nicklay, Youth Advocate & GUTS! Advocate

Brooke Nicklay first joined YWCA Missoula as a Pathways volunteer before stepping into her current role as a Youth Advocate as the program expanded. She holds a degree in Psychology with a minor in Human and Family Development from the University of Montana.

Brooke is passionate about working with kids, building connections, and creating safe spaces where they can express themselves. One of her most meaningful experiences was leading a GUTS! group at The Meadowlark, where girls had the opportunity to support one another and share their experiences of living in shelter.

Outside of work, Brooke enjoys knitting, baking sourdough, camping, and spending time with her dog. A lifelong choir kid, she also loves to sing!



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## Program Updates

### Support Group: Healing After Sexual Violence

If you've had a sexual experience that didn't feel fully consensual—whether recently or long ago—and it's affecting you, you're not alone. And you deserve support.

YWCA Missoula is offering a free, 8-week support group. This is a space to process and heal from sexual assault, coercion, or non-consensual experiences, and to connect with others who understand. The group is open to all genders.

Group begins March 12th and meets Wednesdays at 6 PM.

**Pre-registration is required!** Contact Carol at (406) 541-4006 or [croberts@ywcaofmissoula.org](mailto:croberts@ywcaofmissoula.org) to register or learn more.

### Helping Families Find Stability Through Rapid Rehousing

For families experiencing homelessness, securing stable housing is a critical first step toward rebuilding their lives. YWCA Missoula's Rapid Rehousing program helps families move out of crisis and into permanent homes with short-term rental assistance and supportive services, funded by a federal HUD grant. Once housed, families continue working with case managers to find jobs, childcare, and other resources to maintain long-term stability.

**In 2024, the program housed 48 families**, including 135 individuals. Of these families, 39 had

previously stayed in YWCA's Family Housing Center emergency shelter, highlighting the crucial role of emergency services in bridging the gap to permanent housing. Additionally, 48% of participating households had experienced domestic violence.

By offering safe, stable housing, the program empowers families to focus on employment, education, and well-being.

Learn more about our [housing programs](#).



## Find Your "Y"

*Each month, YWCA Missoula highlights events, debunks myths, explores important topics, and celebrates diverse cultures and identities.*

### Black Solidarity Summit - All are Welcome!

Join the University of Montana Black Student Union for the 8th Annual Black Solidarity Summit, a powerful celebration of Black history, culture, and community. This year's event features keynote speaker Helena Mayor Wilmot Collins, reflections from BSU alumni on the organization's legacy, student presentations, a BIPOC art showcase, and an exciting round of Musical Jeopardy.

Don't miss this opportunity to engage, learn, and celebrate during Black History Month!

February 27 | 5:00-7:00 PM | University Center Ballroom  
February 28 | 3:00-9:00 PM | University Center 330/331 & Theater

[RSVP and find more details here.](#)

### Building Workplaces of Belonging Workshops

YWCA Missoula is excited to announce our new **workshops** designed to help businesses and organizations build inclusive and productive workplaces. From understanding microaggressions to exploring the intersection of trauma-informed care and cultural competency, our experienced facilitators guide participants through knowledge-building, reflection, and actionable strategies to create lasting change.

Ready to transform your workplace culture? [Learn more about our workshops](#) and customize a training for your team! [Email Chris Young-Greer](#) with questions.

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## Get Involved

### Help Provide Essential Baby Items

Support babies and parents in our shelters! Right now, we're in need of essential baby items for families staying at The Meadowlark. Our biggest needs include:

- Formula
- Baby monitors
- Baby wipes

You can order directly from [our wish list](#) or drop off donations at The Meadowlark front desk during business hours. Every item makes a difference for a parent working hard to create a safe,

stable future for their little one.

## Vote for YWCA Missoula on Target Circle

We're excited to announce that we're featured as one of the nonprofits in Target Circle this quarter! *Vote for us to direct Target funds towards our work.*

Here's how:

Step 1: Choose 'My Target' in the Target app or 'Account' on [Target.com](https://www.target.com)

Step 2: Tap 'Cast votes'

Step 3: Find YWCA Missoula and vote

\*To vote, you need a free Target Circle membership. Purchases made in-store or online before March 31 will earn votes.



## Get a Family Housing Center License Plate

Make a difference in our community by purchasing a YWCA Missoula + MIC Family Housing Center license plate. With its simple, starry mountain design, the plate represents your commitment to investing in families and children and helps fund essential services and support to unhoused families at The Meadowlark.

[Click here to learn how to get your plate](#)

## Employment Opportunities

Join our team and make a difference in the community! We're currently hiring for the following positions:

- Pathways Advocate
- Secret Seconds Store Clerk

[Learn more and apply](#)



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