



A Letter from Jen Euell, Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Every August, a new school year brings fresh hopes and a few nerves. For children staying at The Meadowlark, going back to school can be a bridge to normalcy—a chance to reconnect with friends, settle into a routine, and dream about the future. It's also a time when parents are carrying an enormous load: healing from trauma, searching for stable housing, and making sure their kids have what they need and are ready to learn.

This year, my own daughter—who was the office baby here at the YWCA, accompanying me to work each day until she was 9 months old—is starting her senior year of high school. Milestones like this remind me how vital it is for every child to have support, stability, and opportunity for growth and learning at every stage of life.

That's why the conversations happening in Washington right now matter so much. Congress is considering cuts—or even the elimination—of the federal funding that makes this work possible, including the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA), and housing programs through HUD. Without these grants, we couldn't meet the critical needs of children and families in crisis. YWCAs across the country depend on these resources to keep kids safe, help survivors find justice, secure homes for houseless families, and fund affordable childcare so families have a path to security and hope for the future.

This month, as we hand out **school supplies and backpacks** at The Meadowlark to kids who are making a temporary home with us, we're also **joining sister YWCAs nationwide** to say: Congress, don't cut the programs that help kids and families thrive.

Thank you for standing with us as a new school year begins, and always. Together, we can make sure every child walks into the classroom this fall with hope—and a future full of possibility.

With gratitude,
Jen



Jen and baby Amelia, YWCA Halloween 2008

New & Noteworthy

Create a Legacy Gift for Make-A-Will Month

August is Make-A-Will Month—a great time to think about the future and protect what matters most. By creating a will and including a legacy gift to YWCA Missoula, you can leave a lasting impact for women, children, and families in our community.

We're excited to offer a **free, easy online will-writing tool** that takes just about 20 minutes to complete. Whether or not you include a gift to YWCA Missoula (though we'd be honored if you do!), this tool can help you take an important step in securing your family's future.

[Get started here](#)

Looking to learn more about legacy planning? The Missoula Community Foundation is hosting a Make-A-Will Month free lunchtime event on **Tuesday, August 12** focused on non-cash charitable giving. **[Click here to learn more and register.](#)**

Now Accepting Board Applications!

YWCA Missoula is recruiting up to five new members to join our Board of Directors starting in January 2026. For the first time, board service is open to people of all genders, and we're committed to building a board that reflects the diversity of our community.

If you have experience in fundraising, finance, or nonprofit leadership—or a deep commitment to our mission—we'd love to hear from you.

[Learn more and apply here.](#)

Visit us at The Meadowlark for *YWConnects*

Join us for coffee and treats on the second Tuesday of each month at The Meadowlark, where you'll hear directly from program staff about the day-to-day realities of serving families, survivors, and individuals in crisis. These casual *YWConnects* sessions are a great way to learn about our programs, ask questions, and see how our mission comes to life.

Whether you're curious about our programs, considering volunteering, or just want to better

understand the challenges our community faces, we'd love to have you join us. Bring a friend or a small group!

[Click here to sign up for a visit](#)

Questions? Contact Diane at (406) 543-6691 or dadami@ywcaofmissoula.org.

Staff Spotlight

Destany Grauman, Housing Case Manager

Meet Destany, one of the dedicated case managers on our Housing Team! Destany supports families and survivors of domestic violence through our Rapid Rehousing and Transitional Housing programs, which provide up to two years of rental assistance and wraparound support for those rebuilding after homelessness or abuse.



Before joining YWCA Missoula, Destany worked with survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking as a legal advocate intern and later as a shelter advocate at Haven in Bozeman. She also conducted a community needs assessment with the Bozeman Warming Shelter to better understand and respond to the experiences of unhoused individuals.

What drives Destany in this work is a deep commitment to addressing the intersection of racial and gender inequities that contribute to housing instability. She believes that helping survivors and families secure safe, stable housing is a powerful step toward rebuilding lives with dignity and long-term security—a mission at the heart of the YWCA.

When she's not working alongside families, Destany loves international travel (Bolivia is a favorite!), rollerblading and ice skating depending on the season, hiking, and paddleboarding.

We're so grateful to have Destany on our team!

Program Updates

Summer Fun and Support with Youth Services

When school's out, The Meadowlark is a busy and energetic place—and our Youth Services program is here to keep kids engaged, supported, and having fun all summer long. From daily activities to special outings, our team has been creating joyful experiences for children navigating incredibly tough circumstances.

This summer, kids have enjoyed visits from therapy dogs (who are perfect reading buddies!), movie days at the Roxy Jr. screenings, adventures to Dragon Hollow and the Missoula Butterfly House, and even helping Family Promise volunteers prepare dinner for guests. These moments of play, creativity, and connection are vital for kids coping with trauma and change.

As we look ahead to the school year, our team is also supporting families with the back-to-school transition—and we'll be celebrating with a Back-to-School BBQ for Meadowlark families and alumni.

Want to help send kids back to school with confidence? [Donate school supplies through our Amazon Wish List.](#)

Thank you for making joy, healing, and growth possible for the children we serve.



Find Your "Y"

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

The Importance of Indian Education

Montana is the only state whose constitution promises all public school students will learn about the "distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians." The 1999 Indian Education for All (IEFA) Act was intended to make that a reality.

While important steps have been made toward educational equity for Indigenous students, the historical and ongoing impacts of a colonized education system—and persistent implicit bias—continue to create barriers and harm Indigenous learners today. For too long, IEFA funding has been unevenly used, and many students have missed out on authentic, meaningful lessons about Indigenous history and culture.

This spring's settlement between the Montana Board of Public Education, Tribal Nations, students, and families is a critical move forward: stronger accountability for funding, improved teacher training, and greater Tribal input in school curricula.

Why it matters: When Indigenous students see their culture truly respected and included—and all students learn the full, honest history of this land—it builds understanding, healing, and community for everyone.

Learn more in the NativeNews Project's [Indian Ed for Some](#).

Get Involved

Help Kids Start the School Year Strong

You can make a big difference for kids staying at The Meadowlark by helping them head back to school with the supplies they need to succeed. New backpacks, notebooks, pencils, and other essentials give children confidence and a sense of belonging as they start a new year.

We've made it easy to help—shop our Amazon Wish List and have items sent directly to us: [Donate school supplies here](#).

Thank you for making sure every child we serve can walk into the classroom ready to learn!



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! We're currently hiring for the following positions:

- Family Housing Center Advocate
- Secret Seconds Store Clerk

[Click here for job descriptions and instructions on how to apply.](#)



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