



A Letter from Jen Euell, Executive Director

Dear Friends,

February is a time to celebrate Black history, honor the leaders—especially the women—who paved the way, and reflect on the courage and creativity that continue to inspire our work at YWCA Missoula.

Black people have been part of Montana's history since at least 1805, and many have been trailblazers in their communities. Mary Fields, "Stagecoach Mary," became one of the first African American women mail carriers in the country, earning respect and recognition in Cascade, despite enormous barriers. Sarah Bickford rose from enslavement to become the owner of the Virginia City Water Company. Their stories are just a couple examples of the leadership Black women have contributed to Montana's history.

At the national YWCA, Dr. Dorothy Height laid the groundwork for the mission we carry forward at YWCAs across the country. As the first Director of Racial Justice, she fought for racial and gender equity at a time when many YWCA chapters were still segregated. Her vision lives on in our mission—eliminating racism and empowering women—the words proudly displayed on the side of our building and at the heart of everything we do.

Our community is enriched by organizations like the **Montana Black Collective Missoula**, that are working to increase cross-cultural understanding and combat racism in all its forms. This month, I hope you'll take time to celebrate, reflect, and connect. Attend events like the **Black Solidarity Summit**, listen to local stories, and think about how we can all show up for one another and support equity in our community.

In Solidarity,
Jen

New & Noteworthy

Our 2025 Annual Report is Here

Our FY25 Annual Report is now available, and it tells the story of what we made possible together over the past year. Inside, you'll find highlights from our programs, reflections on the challenges our community is navigating, and the collective impact of your support across Missoula. We're deeply grateful to everyone who walked alongside families, survivors, and children this year—thank you for being part of this work.

[Read the full FY25 Annual Report here.](#)

Upcoming Volunteer Training - Starts March 16

Looking for a meaningful way to get involved? Our next volunteer training begins March 16 and runs for three weeks (specific dates and times coming soon!). This training prepares volunteers to provide direct support in our shelters, offer advocacy to survivors, support kids staying in shelter, and even help answer our crisis line.

If you're ready to show up for families and survivors in our community, we'd love to have you join us! [Sign up here](#).

Questions? [Email tweaselhead@ywcaofmissoula.org](mailto:tweaselhead@ywcaofmissoula.org).

YWCA in the News

Check out this recent NonStop Local story, '[From Survival to Advocacy](#),' featuring YWCA Missoula and highlighting a local survivor's journey. The piece also shines a light on the ongoing issue of domestic violence in Montana and the critical role of community support in helping survivors heal and thrive.

[Watch the story here](#)

Staff Spotlight

Alyssa Martinez, Youth Services Specialist/ Jesuit Volunteer

Alyssa moved from Texas to Montana last year to serve as a volunteer with JVC Northwest and brings a big heart for service to her work at YWCA Missoula.

She holds a bachelor's degree in biomedical science and previously worked as an EMT, as well as a swim and dance instructor. She now works closely with the Youth Services team, supporting kids at The Meadowlark.

The mission of the YWCA closely aligns with Alyssa's personal values and commitment to compassionate service. Her lived experiences have shaped the empathy and resourcefulness she brings to her work with youth and families each day.

Outside of work, Alyssa enjoys reading, crocheting (one completed project so far!), Pilates, road trips, and trying new things with friends. She's also discovered there's a special kind of beauty in falling while learning to cross-country ski.



Program Updates

Secret Seconds Half Off Sale is February 13 & 14

This Friday and Saturday only... get **50% off all clothing, shoes, and accessories** at Secret Seconds!



Shop both store locations: 920 Kensington and 1136 W. Broadway.

As always, all purchases directly support all YWCA programs. Don't miss the winter sale!

Movement, Creativity, and Fun at The Meadowlark

Last week, we were thrilled to welcome volunteers from **Turning the Wheel Missoula** to lead movement and creative expression activities for kids—and even parents—at The Meadowlark. They spent five afternoons engaging children in playful, imaginative activities that got everyone moving, thinking, and having fun. It was a joy to see the kids exploring new ways to express themselves and connect with each other!



Find Your "Y"

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

This February, in honor of Black History Month, we're spotlighting ways to learn, connect, and stand in solidarity. From Feb. 19–22, the University of Montana's Black Solidarity Summit—organized by the **UM Black Student Union**—brings together students and community members for workshops, speakers, panels, art, and celebrations of Black history, culture, and excellence across campus and beyond. [Find details on all the events here.](#)

We're also lifting up *Can't Drink Salt Water*, a powerful play by a local playwright Kendra Mylnechuk Potter that addresses the ongoing crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People. The play follows intertwined stories of identity, resilience, and community care. Tickets are on sale for several performances this month at the Montana Repertory Theater. [Learn more and get tickets here.](#)

Get Involved

Help stock our shelters: Donate from the Wish List

Every day, practical items help our shelters run smoothly and feel more like home. Right now, we're especially in need of **baby wipes, shampoo, conditioner, and other shelter essentials like towels, pillows, and cleaning supplies.** These everyday items make a big difference for the families and young people we serve.

Donating is easy: you can [order directly from our Amazon Wish List](#) and have items shipped straight to YWCA. *You can also drop off new items at The Meadowlark front desk (1800 S. 3rd St. W.) during business hours.*

Every item on the list helps create safe, comfortable spaces for families while supporting the day-to-day work of our programs. Thank you for helping meet these ongoing needs!

Visit us at The Meadowlark for *YWConnects* Tour

Join us for coffee 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 tour](#)

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



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