



A Letter from Jen Euell, Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Families come to our Family Housing Center during some of the most uncertain moments of their lives. The program offers what every family deserves: a safe place to sleep, a kitchen to cook in, and people who walk alongside them as they figure out their next steps.

Shelters like ours work best when they're part of a well-functioning, larger housing system—one that includes truly affordable rentals, subsidized housing, and supportive services. When those options are limited, shelters can't always be the short stop on the way to permanent housing they're meant to be. Families often stay longer than they should, and not every family leaves with a new lease. Over the past year, about 45% of households moved on to stable housing directly from shelter. For families who didn't, our team worked hard to make sure they didn't end up sleeping in cars or outside—helping them find motel stays, reconnect with relatives or friends, or identify other safe temporary options.

Even when permanent housing isn't immediately available, time spent in shelter still matters. Living without shelter is linked to serious health risks, including higher rates of illness, violence, sleep deprivation, and early death. Shelter reduces those harms. We also use that time to help families connect to long-term resources like Medicaid, SNAP, and subsidized housing, while rebuilding support networks and community. This month, we're hosting our first Family Dinner—inviting former residents back to share a meal and stay connected.

There is also real progress to celebrate. In the past three months, **eleven families** from the Family Housing Center have moved into—or are on the cusp of—permanent housing, after weeks and sometimes months of hard work!

Emergency shelter alone can't solve homelessness, but it remains a vital part of how we respond as a community—providing stability in moments of crisis and helping families move forward. I'm grateful every day for the staff, partners, volunteers, and supporters who make this work possible.

With gratitude,
Jen

New & Noteworthy

Women's Law Caucus Silent Auction

Join us for the 27th annual University of Montana Women's Law Caucus silent auction to support the YWCA domestic and sexual violence programs. Enjoy complimentary appetizers and bid on art, local food items, experiences, and more!

WHEN: Friday, April 10th, 5:30- 8 PM

WHERE: Alexander Blewett Law School on UM campus

RSVP on [Facebook event page](#).

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, with sessions on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. 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).

Staff Spotlight

Jack Hanson, Family Housing Center Advocate

At the Family Housing Center, Jack spends his days supporting unhoused families as they work toward stability. Jack joined the team after several years of volunteering with organizations across Missoula, including the Poverello Center, the American Red Cross, and the East Missoula Fire Department.



Since graduating from college in 2023, Jack has also worked as a wildland firefighter with the Forest Service. He enjoys direct service roles and values the opportunity to support people in tangible ways.

Jack believes strongly in building a safe and equitable community. He's passionate about supporting families affected by the housing crisis and appreciates being part of a program that helps families move toward stability.

Outside of work, Jack enjoys running, skiing, and reading—activities that make the most of life in and around Missoula.

Program Updates

Secret Seconds Monthly Flash Sales

Secret Seconds is introducing monthly flash sales! During the first week of every month, we'll feature a new in-store deal you won't want to miss. Follow Secret Seconds on [Instagram](#) or



Facebook, or stop by the store to see what the latest sale is—you never know what great finds might be waiting!

Pathways Program

In the past month, the **Pathways domestic violence shelter** has celebrated several milestones. Two survivors moved into permanent housing here in Missoula, and one survivor was able to relocate to Arizona to reunite with family—important steps toward safety and stability.

Our shelter continues to be a busy and supportive community. Currently, 15 adults and 6 children are staying in shelter, along with a few beloved companions: two cats and one very special rat.

As always, our staff and volunteers are working closely with residents to support their next steps, whether that's securing housing, reconnecting with support systems, or accessing community resources.



Kiwanis Club Supports Planet Kids

This month, the Kiwanis Club generously provided a meal for Planet Kids, supporting the program's ongoing work. Planet Kids Supervised Visitation and Exchange Center offers a safe, child-friendly environment for noncustodial parents to visit with or exchange their children when domestic violence has occurred within the family. Contributions like this help ensure that children participating in the program have access to nutritious meals during their visits.

Community Clothing Swap for LGBTQ+ Youth

YWCA Missoula's GUTS program is partnering with Empower Montana to host a Community Clothing Swap for LGBTQ+ youth on **March 21** from 12–3 PM at The Center (500 N Higgins Ave, Unit 105). Youth are invited to refresh their wardrobe, find something special for Queer Prom, and connect with other queer young people in a welcoming space.

Bring clean, gently used clothing or accessories to swap, and don't forget your own shopping bag. You're also welcome to attend even if you don't have items to bring.

Questions? Reach out to youth@empowermt.org

Find Your "Y"

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



Join the *Until Justice Just Is* Challenge

This spring, YWCA Missoula is joining YWCAs across the country in the **Until Justice Just Is (UJJI) Challenge**, a national learning experience led by YWCA USA. The 2026 UJJI Challenge runs from April 6 through May 4 and invites participants to spend 21 days exploring issues connected to voting rights and civic participation.

Throughout the challenge, you'll learn about the history and future of voting rights, how voter suppression impacts communities, what's happening right now in voting access, and what each of us can do to help strengthen democracy.

Think of it as cardio for your brain—and an opportunity to exercise your civic muscles, too. Participants receive daily emails with short articles, podcasts, videos, and reflection prompts, along with action steps to defend voting rights and resources that help make sense of the past, present, and future of American democracy.

Sign up to receive the daily challenge content and join thousands of participants nationwide in learning and taking action together.

Get Involved

Provide a meal for survivors and their families

Looking for a meaningful way to get involved? We're seeking a small team of volunteers to provide a monthly meal for survivors and their children in shelter on the first Wednesday of each month throughout 2026, starting in April.

Volunteers work together to prepare a meal for about 25–30 people (a main dish, sides, and dessert). Meals are dropped off by Monday afternoon so our staff can serve them during the shelter's weekly house meeting. The meal team collaborates to plan, shop, and cook, so the effort is shared.

If you're interested in being a meal volunteer, email Tara, twaselhead@ywcaofmissoula.org.

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 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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