



A Letter from Jen Euell, Executive Director

Dear Friends,

You may not know this, but May is Supervised Visitation Awareness Month—a time to spotlight programs that make court-ordered visitation and custody exchanges safer for children and survivors. This year, that recognition lands close to home, as Planet Kids is facing ongoing uncertainty because our federal funding is delayed, with no clear timeline for the next cycle.

This work exists because we understand something that's often missed: the period after a survivor leaves an abusive relationship is when risk can increase, not when it ends. Survivors—both adults and children—deserve a place where they feel seen, heard, and protected as they navigate what happens next. Planet Kids provides that place: a structured, supervised setting where families can follow court orders while safety, dignity, and care guide every interaction.

I also want to lift up the importance of listening to the people most impacted. A recent local story features a survivor sharing what Planet Kids has meant for her family and why supervised visitation matters. [You can watch it here.](#)

As you'll see below, we're continuing to ask our community to **help bridge this gap**, so families don't lose access to this critical support. Thank you for standing with survivors and children—not just in moments of crisis, but in the long, complex work of building safety and stability after separation.

In Possibility,
Jen

New & Noteworthy

Planet Kids: Continuing the Work

Planet Kids provides life-saving protection for children and survivors of domestic violence during some of the most dangerous moments they may face.

With federal funding still delayed, **we are working to raise an additional \$10,000 to keep this critical program operating without interruption.**

Thanks to the incredible generosity of this community, nearly \$30,000 was raised for Planet Kids during Missoula Gives. A generous donor has also offered a \$2,500 match, doubling gifts up to that amount.

Every gift helps keep children safe.

[Give to Planet Kids here](#)

Building Honored Spaces for Healing and Connection

Last month, we shared the opening of the new Honored Spaces at The Meadowlark. Since then, the spaces have officially been blessed by elder Alan Pierre of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and Dr. Annie Belcourt, an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes (Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Blackfeet and Chippewa descent). They are now available for residents to use for spiritual and cultural practices such as smudging, prayer, reflection, and healing.

The Honored Spaces were created through the guidance of Indigenous residents, staff, and community partners who emphasized the importance of culturally grounded spaces during times of trauma and transition. We are deeply grateful to everyone who helped bring this vision to life and honored to offer spaces centered on healing, connection, and respect.

[Read more and see photos from the ceremony on our website.](#)

Horizon Credit Union Supports the Family Housing Center



We're grateful to Horizon Credit Union for a recent grant supporting our Family Housing Center shelter for unhoused families. YWCA Missoula received \$8,574 through the Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines Member Impact Fund—powered by Horizon's \$2,500 contribution and a \$6,074 match.

We're especially honored that this gift was made in memory of Alita Billington, Horizon's former regional director and a devoted advocate who also served on the YWCA Missoula Board.

[Learn more here.](#)

Staff Spotlight

Lamb Bruce, Youth Advocate

Lamb joined YWCA Missoula in 2021 in their first professional role in the field, bringing meaningful lived experience and personal insight to their work with youth in our programs. Having navigated significant challenges in their own upbringing, they bring empathy, steadiness, and understanding to supporting young people and families. Lamb has also served the YWCA in a variety of roles, including as a domestic violence advocate, giving them a broad perspective in their current work as a Youth Advocate.

The YWCA mission is deeply important to Lamb, and they are passionate about helping create a more just and supportive future for youth. In their role, they focus on supporting young people in breaking cycles of trauma and staying connected to their compassion and empathy.

Outside of work, Lamb is a self-described "collector of hobbies," with favorites that include drawing, cooking, writing, and hiking—plus anything involving the arts, animals, nature, or food.

Recently, they've also started voice lessons to improve their singing.



Program Updates

Shelter Residents Building Financial Skills

We're excited that **Homeword** has recently been offering financial skill-building classes and budgeting support to our domestic violence shelter residents. Nearly all survivors in our programs have experienced some form of financial abuse—such as having money controlled or monitored, being blocked from working or accessing accounts, or having debt created in their name—so access to practical tools like budgeting, goal-setting, and planning for next steps is an essential part of rebuilding independence and long-term stability. Thank you, Homeword, for showing up for survivors in such a meaningful way.



Volunteer Program

A huge thank-you to **Serve406** for showing up on May 2nd with a group of volunteers and doing an incredible deep clean and organization refresh at Planet Kids. Your time and energy made a real difference—our spaces feel brighter, calmer, and more ready for the kids we serve.

Looking ahead, we're also gearing up for our annual Meadowlark Spring Cleaning project on Tuesday, June 24, 2026, from 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. We're looking for both individual volunteers and groups to help us tackle cleaning, organizing, and sprucing up the space. If you're able to lend a hand for any part of the day, please **email Tara** to confirm your participation.

Find Your "Y"



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

AAPI Heritage Month

This May, for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, we're leaning into stories that are rooted here in Missoula—and that help us connect local history to the larger work of eliminating racism and building belonging.

One place to begin is Missoula's own reckoning and remembrance. [The documentary "The Bodies Beneath Us"](#) helped spur renewed community attention to forgotten burial sites, including a Chinese cemetery in the Lower Rattlesnake—history literally under our feet—and the [recent installation of an informational plaque in Gregory Park](#).

We can also learn from what happened at Fort Missoula during World War II, when it operated as an Alien Detention Center holding large numbers of Japanese resident aliens (along with others), and where people were subjected to loyalty hearings despite no charges of disloyalty. The Historical Museum at Fort Missoula offers background and a virtual walkthrough of the barracks exhibit, and Montana PBS's special "An Alien Place" provides a strong overview.

For a national "herstory" thread, meet Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, a Chinese American suffragist who helped lead New York City's 1912 suffrage parade at 16—yet was barred from voting under exclusionary law.

Try this short watch/listen/learn set:

- Watch: ["An Alien Place" \(Montana PBS\)](#)
- Visit: [Fort Missoula Alien Detention Center exhibit](#)
- Listen: [They Call Us Bruce podcast](#)
- Read: [short article about Mabel Ping-Hua Lee](#)

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 **twin and full size sheets and mattress covers**, as well as **hygiene items like shampoo, conditioner, and body wash**. These everyday items make a big difference for the families 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.*

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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