

# ON A MISSION: AN UPDATE FOR YWCA SUPPORTERS



## Greetings and Gratitude

Survivors of interpersonal violence deserve to have their needs and experiences valued and represented by those elected to public office-- especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, survivors may face unique obstacles and barriers when it comes to voting. For survivors who are Black, Indigenous or People of Color, these barriers are compounded by systemic racism.

Survivors are often isolated from election information and voting materials by their abusers through restriction of phone, internet, or social media access. Abusers may also use intimidation or threats to prevent their partners from voting, or to force them to vote in a specific way.

Concerns about privacy may prevent survivors from voting. Public voter registration lists include names and addresses; a survivor who has left an abusive partner might feel unsafe disclosing this personal information through voter registration. While Montana does have an address confidentiality program for survivors, navigating this program can be confusing and complex.

Policies like early voting and same-day voter registration can help reduce barriers to voting for many people, including survivors of violence. It's also important to ensure that election information can be made readily available to survivors so they can be empowered to participate in the electoral process. Their voices deserve to be heard.

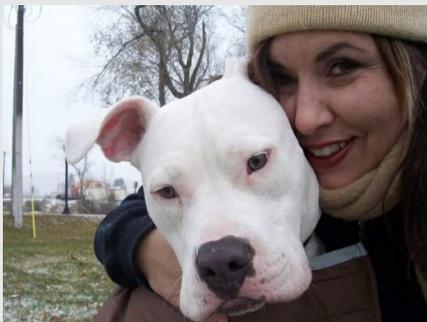
With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Cindy Weese'.

Cindy Weese  
Executive Director

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## Who We Are



### Melissa Thompson, Ada's Place Program Manager

Melissa joins the YWCA as manager of the Ada's Place Housing Programs. She has over 15 years experience in community corrections, where she served as a domestic violence and sexual assault specialist. In this role, she was passionate about making sure that survivors felt heard and empowered as they navigated the criminal justice system and other related challenges.

In her free time Melissa enjoys playing and listening to music, spending time outdoors, and finding solitude at her rustic one-room cabin. She is an animal lover and advocate, and has two hilarious rescue dogs and one bossy rescue cat.

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# Program Updates

## The Meadowlark



This month there has been a lot of progress on the third floor, which includes the sleeping rooms (pictured) in the domestic violence shelter wing. Individual heating and cooling units have been installed, so that each family will be able to control the temperature in their room. Drywall has also been installed. It's exciting to see the building's interior take shape!

Learn more about the project at [SeeThemHome.org](http://SeeThemHome.org).



## GUTS! Virtual Groups

GUTS! is in its third week of virtual groups for the fall semester. There are seven groups that meet weekly, serving about 50 participants in total.

It's been great for our GUTS! youth to have a chance to connect, navigate challenges together, and identify strengths-- which is especially important during this time. Thank you to all of our amazing volunteer facilitators for their dedication and work adapting the GUTS! curriculum to the new online platform.

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## Get Involved



**JOIN US.**

**VIRTUAL  
WOMEN'S  
JUSTICE  
BENEFIT  
LUNCH-IN**

**Tuesday, 10.27.20**

### Join us for the *Virtual Women's Justice Benefit Lunch-In: October 27*

Our annual Women's Justice Benefit will stream live **Tuesday, October 27th, 12-12:30 PM**. This fundraiser helps secure critical funding for all of the YWCA programs. Now, more than ever, your support is needed to ensure that people experiencing violence, discrimination and homelessness have a safe place to turn.

[Click here to learn more or register!](#)

### Housing Advocates Needed

Missoula Interfaith Collaborative (MIC), our operating partner in the Meadwolark's Family Housing Center, is looking for volunteer housing advocates. Advocates will support families in our emergency housing program as they navigate a highly competitive housing market that can pose many barriers. This may include assisting with housing search, accompanying families to meet with landlords, and providing friendship and a listening ear. [Contact Zeke at MIC](#) to learn more!

### Donate Items to Families in Crisis

Our programs are in need of the following items, which are provided to families and individuals in crisis as they work to get back on their feet:

- Straight Talk phone cards (\$35-45 unlimited 30-day plan)
- Diapers size 4-6
- Deodorant
- Up-to-date parenting books
- Bath towels/ hand towels/ wash cloths
- Twin comforters
- Toilet paper
- Cleaning supplies

### Employment Opportunities

Join our team! We're currently hiring for the following positions:

- Planet Kids visit monitors (part time)
- Pathways overnight advocate (part time, temporary)
- Secret Seconds store clerk (part time)

[Find job descriptions and application instructions here](#)

YWCA Missoula | (406) 543-6691 | [www.ywcaofmissoula.org](http://www.ywcaofmissoula.org)

Crisis line: (406) 542-1944 or (800) 483-7858

STAY CONNECTED

