

ON A MISSION: AN UPDATE FOR YWCA SUPPORTERS



Greetings and Gratitude

COVID-19 has forced us to shift the way we operate, but it has also made clear how needed our services are. Over the last few months we've seen many families in our community struggle to stay afloat. Some are navigating job loss, challenges with hybrid school schedules, and an uncertain housing market. These burdens continue to fall unfairly on low-income and BIPOC families and individuals, increasing the inequities that already exist.

We don't know what the next few months will bring. But at the YWCA we will remain steadfast and adaptable. This summer we leased additional rooms for homeless families in our emergency housing program and extended the length of stay in the program.

At our domestic violence shelter, we recently implemented staff cohort scheduling, in order to prepare us to continue operation if faced with a positive COVID case. We have maintained our cleaning and social distancing protocols for everyone's health and safety.

And after a hiatus this summer, GUTS! Is launching virtual programs this fall. While the platform will be different, young people will still have the opportunity to connect with peers and mentors, discover their personal strengths, and build community as they navigate the new normal. Staff and volunteers are working to make the groups as accessible and flexible as possible.

Thank you for your continued support as we adapt to meet the needs of our community.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cindy Weese'.

Cindy Weese
Executive Director

Who We Are



Clara Moser, Children's Program Coordinator

Clara comes to the YWCA after completing a year of service as the Americorps VISTA for Free Verse and the Missoula Writing Collaborative. She has also served as a VISTA with the GUTS summer program in 2019 and previously has worked as a Sexual Assault Victim Advocate while living in Iowa. Outside of work Clara can be found hiking in the woods with her dog, reading a good new novel or poetry book, and writing.

Program Updates



The Meadowlark

The Meadowlark, which will be home to our new domestic violence shelter, family housing center and YWCA service center starting early next year, continues to progress on schedule. The internal framing is nearly complete so you can see where all the different offices, sleeping rooms, and common areas will be located. In the next couple of weeks they will begin to hang dry wall, starting with the third floor and inside the elevator shaft.

Here is one of the framed sleeping rooms. Each family will have their own private sleeping room and bathroom. While this design was implemented prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, these spaces will allow families to self-isolate if needed.

Learn more about the project at [SeeThemHome.org](https://www.seeThemHome.org).



GUTS! Groups are Going Virtual

Registration is now open for fall online GUTS! groups. [Sign up here!](#)

Groups will meet weekly on Zoom and are open to girls and gender-diverse youth in grades 4-12 from any school. The format will look a little different than our regular in-person groups, but activities and games will still be centered around developing personal strengths and building positive relationships. FREE to participate!

To learn more, [email Tess](mailto:Tess) or call 543-6691.

Planet Kids Receives Justice for Families Grant

Our Planet Kids supervised visitation program was just awarded a \$500,000 grant (distributed over three years) from the Justice for Families Program to improve safety and stability for families impacted by domestic violence as they navigate the judicial system. This funding will allow Planet Kids to continue operating at full capacity, as well as provide trainings to local court-based personnel. Funds will also be used to support a relationship and sexual violence legal clinic inside The Meadowlark, which will be operated in partnership with UM Law School and local private practice attorneys.

[Learn more about Planet Kids' services here.](#)

Get Involved

Join us for the *Virtual Women's Justice Benefit Luncheon: October 27*

Our annual Women's Justice Benefit will be held on **October 27th as an online event**. We won't be gathering in person this year, but we look forward to offering a virtual event that can be attended by all. Registration info coming soon.

Become a Crisis Line Volunteer

We're looking for volunteers to answer our crisis line and provide support to domestic violence survivors. **Volunteer training will be held September 14, 16 and 17, 5- 9 PM, on Zoom.**

To sign up for training or learn more, [email Lacy](#) or call 543-6691.

Housing Advocates Needed

Missoula Interfaith Collaborative (MIC), our operating partner in the Meadowlark'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

Can you help us furnish two apartments? We will be leasing two additional apartments for families in our emergency housing program, until opening the doors to The Meadowlark next year. These are the household items we're looking for:

- 2 – small dining room tables with chairs
- 2 – queen or full size beds/frames
- 1 set of bunk beds
- 2 small couches
- Towels
- Bedding (twin, queen and full size)
- Pots, pans and dishes

Our programs are also 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 (\$45 unlimited 30-day plan)
- Crock-Pot
- Lysol spray
- Children's packaged snacks

YWCA Missoula | (406) 543-6691 | www.ywcaofmissoula.org

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

STAY CONNECTED

