



---

As summer comes to a close, and the school year begins, families staying at The Meadowlark face many challenges. Parents, already dealing with a lot, now have to navigate new routines and expectations. For children living in a shelter, back-to-school time can bring anxiety and uncertainty. They may worry about being judged or teased by peers. On top of these emotional hurdles, many students are behind academically due to the instability and trauma they've experienced, making it hard to keep up with their studies.

With recent changes in the school district and loss of funding, we no longer have an on-site Families In Transition (FIT) liaison at The Meadowlark. This role was crucial in helping our families with school enrollment, transportation, and other essential services. Without this support, getting ready for school this year may be a bit more challenging.

We are dedicated to helping these children and their families through this transition. Our advocates work closely with families to ensure their kids are enrolled in school and have access to laptops and quiet spaces for homework. This August, we are excited to be hosting a back to school barbeque for Meadowlark guests and past participants, at which we'll be building a community of support, and, thanks to the generous contributions from our community, we'll be providing school supplies, from backpacks to notebooks. (If you'd like to help, we're still in need of some supplies—[check out our Amazon wish list!](#))

Together, we can ensure that every child, no matter their circumstances, has the chance to succeed and feel proud and confident as they start the new school year.

Here's to the long road to justice, and the best of company along the way,  
Jen

---

## New & Noteworthy

### Create a Legacy Gift for Make-a-Will Month

August is Make-A-Will Month, a perfect time to think about the future and protect what matters most. By creating a will and including a legacy gift to YWCA Missoula, you can ensure that you leave a better world for women, children, and families.

We're excited to offer a free online will-writing tool that takes just about 20 minutes to complete. [Get started here.](#)

You can use this free tool to secure your family's future and make a lasting impact on our community! **It's available for you to use whether or not you include a legacy gift to YWCA Missoula** (though we'll be incredibly grateful if you do!).

## Join us for Volunteer Meet and Greet on Aug 12

Calling all past, present, and future YWCA Missoula volunteers! Please join us for a casual gathering at The Meadowlark with new Volunteer Program Manager, Alta Clark. You'll have a chance to meet Alta and YWCA staff and connect with other volunteers. Snacks and drinks provided.

Please RSVP to Alta at [aclark@ywcaofmissoula.org](mailto:aclark@ywcaofmissoula.org) or (406) 543-6691.

---

## Staff Spotlight

### Rocky Hage, AmeriCorps VISTA Outreach Specialist

Rocky Hage has recently begun his year of service as the AmeriCorps VISTA Outreach Specialist with YWCA Missoula. In his role, Rocky will focus on strengthening partnerships with community organizations, increasing outreach and public awareness, and building internal capacity to better serve the needs of our constituents.

He brings valuable experience from his time volunteering at a food bank in San Diego and serving as a Community Representative during college, where he facilitated communication between student residents and housing staff.



Rocky is deeply committed to the YWCA's mission and efforts to support individuals at their lowest points, helping them escape domestic violence and find safer living environments. In his free time, Rocky enjoys reading history books, watching baseball, and going fishing.

Welcome, Rocky!

---

## Program Updates

### A Family's Story to Recovery and Housing

Kayla and James (*names have been changed*) entered the Family Housing Center (FHC) at The Meadowlark in December after spending four months at the Johnson Street shelter, following recent felony charges. At six months pregnant and newly sober, Kayla and James were determined to change their lives. They enrolled in a 24-hour per week intensive outpatient treatment program, successfully completed it, and later became mentors for newcomers. James secured employment at the Johnson Street shelter, working overtime to save money as they prepared for their baby's arrival. Meanwhile, Kayla diligently worked with the YWCA housing case manager, staying on top of housing applications.

During their time at FHC, the family achieved several milestones: they opened their first bank account, purchased a car, regained custody of their 2-year-old daughter, and closed their Child and Family Services case with full agency support. The family moved out of The Meadowlark and into a local apartment, paying three months' rent upfront. With the help of the case manager, they furnished their new home. The staff at FHC recognized their dedication, positivity, and love

for their children.

The family expressed immense gratitude to the FHC for the support they received and pride in overcoming their past, achieving sobriety, and finding stability. They now enjoy a fulfilling life surrounded by supportive family members. [Learn more about our housing programs.](#)



## Find Your "Y"

Each month, YWCA Missoula highlights events, debunks myths, explores important topics, and celebrates diverse cultures and identities. For August, we have some enriching learning recommendations:

**Podcast:** The Stoop, **Episode 19: "Summer Series~ Buffalo Soldier."**

Hosts Leila Day and Hana Baba explore BIPOC experiences and history through genuine conversations, including discussions on dismantling stereotypes.

**Film:** **When They See Us** (Netflix). This series chronicles the notorious case of the Central Park Five. Trigger warning: Contains scenes and language that may be triggering. Please consider this when deciding when, where, and with whom to watch.

**Book:** **Lies My Teacher Told Me** by James W. Loewen. This book examines how history textbooks often propagate false, Eurocentric views of American history and aims to promote a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to history education

### Trailblazer Spotlight: Lonnie Johnson

Born on October 6, 1949, Lonnie Johnson is an aerospace engineer who not only made significant contributions to NASA but also changed the world of toys forever. In 1995, while working on a heat pump he accidentally discovered that the tube he was using shot out a powerful stream of water, sparking a new idea. This unexpected twist led to the creation of the Super Soaker, a water toy that became an instant sensation. Johnson's invention has earned him millions, and today he holds over 100 patents, making him one of the most celebrated African American inventors.



In honor of Johnson's innovative spirit, the YWCA Youth Advocates will lead a fun water rocket activity with the kids during our back-to-school BBQ at the end of the month. *It's sure to be a blast!*

---

## Get Involved

### Help Kids and Families Transition Back to School

Support kids and families in our shelter by donating school supplies. We are currently in need of **new backpacks, folders, notebooks, and mechanical pencils**. You can order directly from our [Amazon wish list](#) and select the YWCA Missoula shipping address at checkout, or drop off donations at The Meadowlark front desk, 1800 S. 3rd St. W., Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. Your generosity helps ensure a smooth transition back to school! [View wish list here](#)

## Become a Volunteer!

At YWCA Missoula, we offer engaging volunteer opportunities that foster personal and professional growth. Put your passion into action and help serve our community. **Our next volunteer training session is coming up next month (dates TBD)** for those interested in supporting residents in our domestic violence shelter or family housing center, or working with kids. To learn more about these rewarding opportunities, [visit our volunteer page](#). Your involvement can make a meaningful difference!

## Pampered Chef Fundraiser

Join us for a special **Pampered Chef fundraiser** hosted by longtime supporter and volunteer extraordinaire Cindy Nesselroad! Throughout August, 30% of all purchases will be donated to the YWCA. Shop for top-quality kitchenware, bakeware, and more. You can also contribute directly to our families by purchasing **items from the "registry,"** with 30% of those sales benefiting the YWCA as well. It's a great way to support our programs and find something special for your kitchen!



## Get a Family Housing Center License Plate

Make a difference in our community by purchasing a YWCA Missoula + MIC Family Housing Center license plate. With its simple, starry mountain design, the plate represents your commitment to investing in families and children and helps fund essential services and support to unhoused families at

The Meadowlark.

[Learn more](#)

## Employment Opportunities

Join our team and make a difference in the community! We're currently hiring for the following positions:

- Pathways Advocate (two positions)
- Family Housing Center Advocate
- Director of Finance
- Planet Kids Program Manager
- Housing Stabilization Case Manager

[Learn more and apply](#)





Try email marketing for free today!