



---

September is National Recovery Month, and at YWCA Missoula, we're taking this time to recognize the strength and resilience of individuals and families on their paths to recovery. Recovery is a process that involves overcoming not only addiction but also the complex challenges that often accompany it, like housing instability and the stigma surrounding substance use.

For many survivors of domestic violence and homelessness, substance use is connected to their experiences of trauma and can create additional barriers to safety and housing stability. In order to better address some of these barriers, we've been working hard to increase our supports and resources. We are building our capacity for intensive case management, wrap-around care, and clinical therapeutic services, as we know this will give survivors and families the best chance at healing and a successful future. It is our privilege to accompany them on their journeys of recovery.

We're also proud to have recently joined the **Recovery Friendly Workplace (RFW) Initiative** through Recovery Friendly Montana, where we work to create a healthy, supportive environment for staff, volunteers, and program participants. This aligns with our core values of empowerment, equity, and integrity, and we're committed to breaking down stigma and providing the support needed to help people thrive.

We invite you to join us in celebrating recovery and resilience this month. Check out the **Recovery Palooza website** for local events that bring our community together to celebrate healing and growth!

Here's to building a brighter future... together,

Jen

---

## New & Noteworthy

### Thanks to the PaddleHeads for Partnering with Us!

A big thank you to the Missoula PaddleHeads for choosing the YWCA as one of their nonprofit partners this season! We're grateful for their generosity and commitment to helping our community. The funds donated will directly support our Pathways Program, helping us "Strike Out Domestic Violence" by providing critical services to survivors. We appreciate the PaddleHeads' dedication to making Missoula a safer, more supportive place for everyone.

---

## Staff Spotlight

## Kelsey Johnson, Family Housing Center Advocate

Born and raised in Missoula, Kelsey attended the UM School of Journalism and worked in marketing before joining the YWCA, seeking a role with more personal connection. At the Family Housing Center, she enjoys the fast-paced environment and values getting to know the families and kids staying there. Kelsey finds it rewarding to witness the growth families experience—not just in securing housing, but in the relationships they build with staff and each other. In her free time, Kelsey enjoys playing music, reading, hiking, biking, and crafting.



We're so lucky to have her on our team!

---

## Program Updates

### A Survivor's Story of Courage and Community

Over the past few years, YWCA Missoula has seen a startling rise in the number of survivors of human trafficking in our Pathways program. In 2019 and 2020, we provided services to six or seven trafficking survivors annually through our shelter, crisis line, and walk-in peer counseling. By 2021, that number had doubled to 14—and **last year, we served 50 survivors of trafficking**.

Izara's story (*name changed*) is one of the most complex and extraordinary cases we've encountered. After fleeing an arranged marriage and trafficking, she took a daring leap for freedom. She escaped from her abusive husband and eventually made her way to the YWCA domestic violence shelter, where she stayed for three months. Originally from West Africa, Izara had limited understanding of English, and she worked closely with advocates who provided both logistical and emotional support. The fear of returning to her abusive partner—and the certainty that she would be killed if she returned—was overwhelming for Izara. Yet, our advocates, alongside Ries Law Group, tapped into legal networks and helped Izara seek asylum in Canada. Key partners, including YWCA chapters in Helena and Great Falls, played vital roles in providing shelter along her journey. A cab driver even transported her across the Canadian border to reunite with family.

Months later, Izara's younger sister Esi, a "backup bride" for the same arranged marriage, arrived at YWCA Missoula. Our team helped her gather the necessary documents and ensured her safe travel to Canada to join Izara.

This story reflects the determination and resourcefulness of our advocates, who continually go above and beyond to solve complex problems. With the support of dedicated community partners, they ensure that no survivor falls through the cracks. When abusers tell their victims, "No one will help you," our Pathways advocates are there ready to prove them wrong—providing not only safety but also hope and the belief that everyone is worthy of dignity and care.

[Learn more about our Pathways domestic and sexual violence programs .](#)



## Find Your "Y"

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

In September, we recognize National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, also known as **Orange Shirt Day**, on the 30th. This day honors First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Survivors of the Residential

"School" System and their families. It serves as a solemn reminder of the Indigenous children taken from their communities and the lasting impacts on their families and cultures. The orange shirt became a powerful symbol of this, inspired by Phyllis Jack Webstad's story. On her first day of residential school, her new orange shirt was taken from her and never returned. This symbol reflects the system's attempt to erase Indigenous identities through forced assimilation.

To learn more, we recommend watching the CBS news special on the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation [here](#).

For those looking to explore Indigenous-centered stories in film and TV, here are some recommendations:

- **Echo** (Disney+): A mini-series following a deaf Native American superhero's fight against evil.
- **Dark Winds** (AMC+, Netflix, Prime): A thriller about two Navajo police officers confronting spiritual beliefs in a double-murder case.
- **Basketball or Nothing** (Netflix): Follows a Navajo Nation high school basketball team's pursuit of a state championship.
- **Fancy Dance** (Apple TV): A powerful film about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, starring Lily Gladstone.



## Griz-Wear and Halloween Costumes at Secret Seconds

Get ready for fall at Secret Seconds Thrift Stores! We've got plenty of Griz-Wear, including new shirts and hoodies, all at thrift prices. Plus, we have a great selection of Halloween costumes in stock, perfect for the spooky season. Shopping at Secret Seconds not only gets you great deals but also supports YWCA Missoula—100% of proceeds fund our vital programs. Don't forget to follow Secret

Seconds on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to stay updated on new arrivals!

Shop both store locations! 1136 W. Broadway and 920 Kensington. Open Tuesday-Saturday, 10 AM- 6 PM.

---

## Get Involved

### Donate Baby Supplies on Wish List

Our shelters are full, and we need your help with essential items—especially **baby supplies like bottles, wipes, formula, and baby monitors**. By ordering from our [Amazon wish list](#) and selecting the YWCA Missoula shipping address at checkout, you can directly support families in need. Donations can also be dropped off at The Meadowlark, 1800 S. 3rd St. W., Monday-

Friday, 9am-5pm. Your generosity makes a real difference for those we serve!

[View wish list here](#)



## 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.

[Click here to learn how to get your plate](#)

## 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
- Rapid Rehousing Program Manager

[Learn more and apply](#)



YWCA Missoula | 1800 S 3rd St W | Missoula, MT 59801 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!