



An update for YWCA Missoula supporters

As we recognize Domestic Violence Awareness Month this October, we want to highlight one of the most powerful, but most overlooked, forms of control in abusive relationships: financial abuse. Many survivors in our Pathways Program have experienced financial abuse, in which their abuser controls their access to money or resources—dictating how money is spent, taking away their income, and reducing access to other resources that might encourage independence. This form of abuse can leave survivors trapped, unable to leave an abusive relationship.

Financial abuse is not just a personal issue—it's rooted in systemic inequities. The persistent wealth gap in America disproportionately impacts women, and particularly women of color, reinforcing cycles of economic instability and trauma. From the legacy of redlining that segregated communities and blocked Black and Indigenous people from building wealth, to the harmful “welfare queen” stereotype that dehumanized women of color seeking public assistance, our financial system has been designed to marginalize. For Native American women, economic resource deserts on reservations exacerbate this injustice, creating further isolation from jobs, banks, and financial support.

At YWCA Missoula, we recognize that oppression—whether it's based on race, gender, or economic status—lies at the root of all forms of violence. That's why our mission to eliminate racism and empower women is so vital to the day-to-day work of our programs and efforts to dismantle the cycles of harm that trap so many women in poverty and violence.

I invite you to join us and YWCA chapters around the world for **Week Without Violence**, October 21-26, to learn more about financial abuse and how we can work to change the systems that perpetuate it. Together, we can push for policies that not only protect survivors but also provide the resources needed to rebuild their financial independence and create a future where everyone can thrive.

And speaking of systemic change, one of the best ways you can work to change policies in America is by researching political candidates, and voting for those who best represent your values and the future you want to see.

See you at the voter box! One more stop on the long road to justice.
Jen

New & Noteworthy

Sip for a Cause: Pearl Boba Supports YWCA

A big shout out goes to Pearl Boba for supporting YWCA Missoula's Pathways Program during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month! This October, try their delicious



Witches' Brew—a fizzy caramel apple lollipop-inspired drink, available with or without caffeine.

For every *Witches' Brew* sold at either location, \$1 will be donated to support survivors in our community through the Pathways Program. Don't miss out—stop by Pearl Boba at 420 N. Higgins or inside the UC on the UM campus.

10-Week Support Group for Survivors of Sexual Violence

We are offering a free, 10-week support group for survivors of sexual violence, open to all genders. This group provides a safe and supportive space to share experiences, navigate challenges, and work toward healing and growth together.

The group is set to start at the end of October, with the exact date(s) and time to be determined.

Pre-registration is required. To learn more or join the group, please contact Carol at croberts@ywcaofmissoula.org or (406) 543-6691.

Let's work together toward healing—you're not alone.

Staff Spotlight

Halle Long, Secret Seconds Assistant Store Manager

Before joining Secret Seconds Thrift Stores, Halle Long spent five years at Party America. When she came across the Secret Seconds job listing, she applied on a whim and quickly proved to be a great fit. Five years later, she's an essential part of the team and appreciates the trust general managers Jean and Ginny placed in her from the start.

Halle's dedication to Secret Seconds and its impact on the community is clear. She's passionate about the store's mission to support YWCA programs. "It's amazing to see the lives we're changing, one purchase at a time," she reflects. "Knowing that all the money we make stays local is a great feeling."

For Halle, the best part of working at Secret Seconds is the relationships she's built with her team, who have become her second family. From sharing laughs over the quirky donation items to supporting each other through tough times, these connections mean the world to her.

When she's not at the store, Halle enjoys spending time with her husband, sipping coffee while watching their "children" (two tortoises) roam around. She's also an avid card maker—always happy to craft something special for friends and colleagues.



Program Updates

Planet Kids: Providing Safety and Support for Families

Planet Kids is one of YWCA Missoula's lesser-known yet vital programs, offering supervised visitation and custody exchanges for families affected by domestic violence. Since opening in 2004, this program has ensured a safe environment for children to maintain relationships with both parents, while prioritizing their safety and well-being.

Last year alone, 119 children participated in Planet Kids, with over 900 supervised visits and 600 safe exchanges. The program plays a crucial role in reducing conflict during family transitions and is part of our broader commitment to serving domestic violence survivors and their children.

While it may seem counterintuitive, ongoing contact with both parents—when done safely—can be in the child's best interest. Planet Kids provides this safety by offering parents separate entrances, staggered arrival times, and other security measures, while promoting child-focused visits that allow families to recreate familiar routines.

By creating a safe space for positive parent-child interactions, Planet Kids helps parents build healthier relationships with their children and supports survivors as they navigate the complexities of parenting after abuse and separation has occurred.

[Learn more about our Planet Kids program.](#)



Find Your "Y"

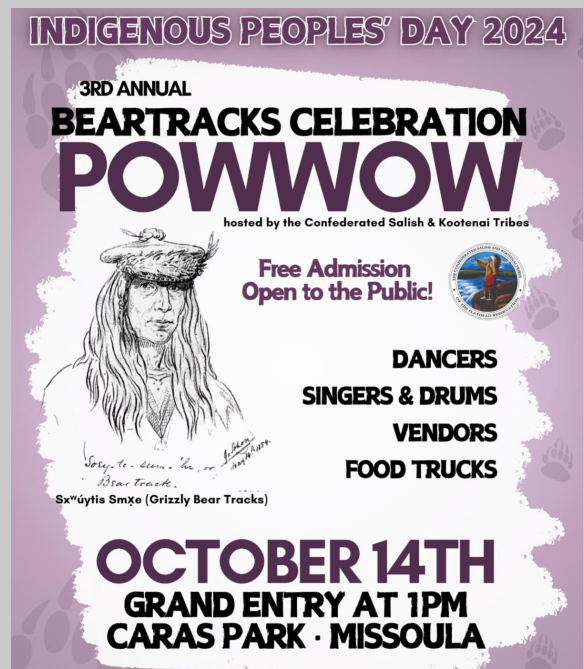
Each month, YWCA Missoula highlights events, debunks myths, explores important topics, and celebrates diverse cultures and identities.

Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebration - Monday, October 14th

Join us in celebrating Indigenous Peoples' Day at the 3rd annual Beartracks celebration powwow at Caras Park, hosted by the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes. The event honors the renaming and dedication of Beartracks Bridge, a tribute to the Vanderburg family, a deeply respected Salish family.

The event will feature traditional dancers, singers, drumming, Indigenous Made Montana vendors, and food trucks. Don't miss the Grand Entry at 1 PM!

Come celebrate, learn, and connect with our local Indigenous community!





Trailblazer Spotlight: Dwayne McDuffie

Co-founder of Milestone Comics in 1993, Dwayne McDuffie made a lasting impact on superhero media and BIPOC representation in pop culture. Milestone was the first Black-owned comic book company, created to give minority comic readers heroes who looked like them. Iconic titles like Static, Icon and Rocket, and Hardware introduced Black, Latino, Afro-Latino, Asian, and LGBTQ+ characters. Though Milestone ceased production in 1997, its characters became part of the DC Universe, with Static Shock—produced by McDuffie—becoming a beloved cartoon. Though McDuffie passed in 2011, his legacy lives on, with plans to bring Milestone characters to a new generation in the DC Universe franchise.



NEW Griz-Wear at Secret Seconds!

Add some Griz gear to your wardrobe without breaking the bank! Our Secret Seconds Thrift Stores have plenty of Griz-Wear, including new shirts and hoodies, all at thrift prices.

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

Help Us Provide Inclusive Hair Care for BIPOC Residents

We are seeking donations of hair care products specifically for our BIPOC residents in the domestic violence shelter and Family Housing Center. Most of our current donations aren't suited for textured, curly, or coiled hair, and we want to ensure all of our participants have the hygiene items they need to feel their best.

You can help by checking out our [Amazon wish list](#)—hair care products are at the top! Donations can also be dropped off at The Meadowlark, 1800 S. 3rd St. W., Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. Thank you for supporting our community!

[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
- Family Housing Center Program Manager
- Secret Seconds Store Clerk

[Learn more and apply](#)



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