



A Letter from Jen Euell, Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As we step into the new year, I'm filled with gratitude for this community, the YWCA Team, and the possibilities that lie ahead. At YWCA Missoula, we are embarking on 2025 with a renewed focus on our mission and core values. We are building a strategic plan to ensure we remain responsive to the evolving needs of those we serve. Our Strategic Planning Design Committee is currently deep in the data-collection phase, gathering insights to shape our priorities and the future of our organization. Our hope is to have a completed plan to share with you this spring.

We're also actively engaged in community conversations about houselessness and growing challenges in Missoula. The number of unhoused individuals, including families and children, has increased as families get priced out of their homes, and there is a significant lack of transitional housing or truly affordable options available, which means our shelters have been at capacity for much of the last year. While there are no easy solutions, we know that addressing these challenges will require creativity, collaboration, and strong partnerships with community organizations, local leaders, and neighbors to ensure our most vulnerable have the support they need.

In the spirit of collaboration, we invite you to join us in making an impact this year. Whether as a **GUTS! group facilitator** for the spring semester, or through one of the many other volunteer opportunities we offer, your time and talents make a difference. **Visit our website** to learn more and complete a volunteer application.

Thank you for your unwavering support. Together, we can build the community we desire, and continue to provide hope and create meaningful change for our neighbors who need it most. Wishing you a fresh and promising New Year—I'm excited to see what we can accomplish together!

In Possibility,
Jen

New & Noteworthy

Community Celebration for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Everyone is invited to join the annual community celebration for Martin Luther King Jr. Day, on **Monday, January 20th at 4 PM** at St. Anthony's Parish, presented by the MLK Planning Committee. The celebration will include musical performances, speakers, and a community dinner. See you there!

You can find all the event details [here](#).

Thank You for Supporting Families this Winter!

We are overwhelmed with gratitude for everyone who contributed to our **Nights of Winter Shelter campaign**. Together, we raised nearly \$30,000 to provide warmth, safety, and hope to families in crisis during the coldest months of the year. If you missed the campaign and still want to give, it's not too late! [Learn more and donate](#).

We are also so grateful to all the generous donors who helped bring joy to the children and families at the YWCA for the holiday season. This holiday season, *we fulfilled wish lists for 83 children currently in shelter*—up from 48 at this time last year. Thank you to everyone who helped make the holidays magical!

Join us for our Annual Meeting on Feb 6th

All YWCA Missoula supporters and are invited to join us for our annual meeting and a light buffet breakfast on Thursday, February 6th. You'll hear about our successes and challenges of the last year and plans for 2025.

We're very excited to welcome **Amber Shaffer as our guest speaker**. A proud Missoula native and enrolled member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, Amber is a community organizer and entrepreneur with a background in history and Native American studies. She facilitates trainings with Common Good Missoula and serves on the Missoula Food Bank's Anti-Racism Task Force. Amber is also the interim Board President for Catalyst Montana, bringing her passion for equity and community to all she does.

Amber's talk and FAQ will conclude the meeting.

[Please RSVP for the annual meeting here](#).



Staff Spotlight

Trish Aviña, Director of People and Operations

Trish Aviña brings an impressive 16 years of business administration experience to her role at YWCA Missoula, with a strong focus on human resources in both the private and nonprofit sectors. Her expertise spans multi-state compliance in California and Montana, making her a vital asset to our team.

Trish's commitment to the YWCA's mission is deeply rooted in her personal experiences. As a survivor of domestic violence and houselessness, she is passionate about the work we do to support individuals and families. Her lived experience enables her to connect with and advocate for the people we serve, as she once stood in their shoes.

Outside of work, Trish enjoys exploring local hot springs, discovering live music spots, and tattooing. She has been a self-taught tattoo artist for 12 years.



We're grateful for Trish's leadership and the unique perspective she brings to YWCA Missoula!

Program Updates

Spring GUTS! Groups Starting Soon

GUTS! is a community-based leadership and empowerment program for girls and gender-diverse youth ages 9–14. Through fun activities and meaningful discussions, GUTS! helps participants build confidence, develop leadership skills, and make positive changes in their communities.

Our spring session runs February 10 to May 2, with groups meeting weekly at the following schools:

- Hellgate Elementary
- Target Range
- Paxson
- Franklin (in partnership with Parks and Rec)
- Lowell (in partnership with Parks and Rec)
- CS Porter (in partnership with Parks and Rec)
- DeSmet
- Arlee

Participation is **free**, and spots are limited! If you're interested in signing up your student, email us at guts@ywcaofmissoula.org.



Your Gently Used Housewares Can Spark Joy Twice!

Are you de-cluttering after the holidays? Donate your pre-loved kitchenware, art, knick-knacks and furniture to **Secret Seconds Thrift Stores**. Your items get a second life, and the proceeds empower YWCA Missoula's vital programs for unhoused families, domestic violence survivors, and children in our community.

Drop off your donations at either Secret Seconds location, 920 Kensington and 1136 W Broadway. Donation hours: Tuesday- Saturday, 10-5.



Find Your "Y"

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

Upcoming Event: Hasan Davis Brings York's Story to Life

The Montana Black Collective-Missoula is hosting Hasan Davis for two exciting, family-friendly events in February. Davis will bring to life the story of York, the Black man who played a pivotal role in the success of Lewis and Clark's journey, yet whose contributions are often overlooked in history.

Friday, February 7, 2025, at 4:30 PM: Join us at the Missoula Public Library for a reading of Davis's picture book, where he'll perform in period attire and share York's story from York's perspective.

Saturday, February 8, 2025, at 11:00 AM: **Davis will perform at Travelers' Rest State Park** in Lolo. A Q&A session will follow his engaging portrayal.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn about an essential yet underrepresented figure in American history. Hasan Davis's dynamic storytelling and historical insight are sure to captivate audiences of all ages!

NEW Racial Equity Workshops Available!

YWCA Missoula is excited to announce our new **racial equity trainings** designed to help businesses and organizations build inclusive and productive workplaces. From understanding microaggressions to exploring the intersection of trauma-informed care and DEI, our experienced facilitators guide participants through knowledge-building, reflection, and actionable strategies to create lasting change.

Ready to transform your workplace culture? **Learn more about our workshops** and customize a training for your team! **Email Chris Young-Greer** with questions.

Get Involved

Volunteer with GUTS! and Empower Youth

Looking for a meaningful way to inspire and empower youth in our community? Our GUTS! Program is seeking volunteer Action Group Facilitators for the spring semester!

Facilitators lead weekly groups for girls and gender-diverse youth (ages 9–14), creating a supportive and fun environment to explore leadership, build confidence, and spark positive change. Training will take place the week of January 27, and groups run February 10 through May 2.

Help shape the next generation of leaders! **Learn more and apply to volunteer.**

Shop Our Wish List for YWCA Families

You can make a difference by donating items from our wish list to support residents at The Meadowlark shelters. Simply order from our **Amazon wish list**, select "YWCA Missoula" as the shipping address at checkout, and your gift will be sent directly to us.

Thank you for helping provide comfort and care to families and domestic violence survivors!

View wish list

Vote for YWCA Missoula on Target Circle

We're excited to announce that we're featured as one of the nonprofits in Target Circle this quarter! *Vote for us to direct Target funds towards our work.*

Here's how:

Step 1: Choose 'My Target' in the Target app or 'Account' on **Target.com**

Step 2: Tap 'Cast votes'

Step 3: Find YWCA Missoula and vote

*To vote, you need a free Target Circle membership. Purchases made in-store or online before March 31 will earn votes.



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
- Family Housing Center Overnight Advocate
- Secret Seconds Store Clerk

[Learn more and apply](#)



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