



WORD

Family Resource Centers

A Program of WORD-Women's Opportunity and Resource Development

Newsletter

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 6

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- WORD promotes and supports parent/family involvement in the schools
- WORD looks to increase literacy by sponsoring and coordinating the Western Montana Literacy Support Corps

Locations of Family Resource Centers

Missoula Area:
 Bonner
 Franklin
 Hawthorne
 Lewis and Clark
 Lowell
 Rattlesnake
 Russell
 Teen Family Resource Center

Bitterroot Area:
 Daly/Grantsdale
 Darby
 Florence
 Hamilton
 Kids First
 Lone Rock
 Ravalli Head Start
 Stevensville
 Washington

Flathead Area:
 Cherry Valley
 Ronan

For more information go to:
www.wordinc.org/frc

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 Stories by: Lindsey Rehder and Gwen Sutherland

Little Hands



Laura Pickett, as a mother of five (four are the same age), understands that learning begins with play. Watching her own children grow fed her fascination for child development. Recently, Laura created the "Little Hands" program for kindergarten readiness, playing five times a week with parents and preschool children in Missoula elementary schools. She is a mentor to many, helping parents learn how to prepare their children for success in kindergarten.

"Little Hands" is based upon the "Hands" program designed by occupational therapists to support fine motor skills in kindergarten students. When WORD received a grant to provide training in early childhood development, Laura modified the program to include

parents and preschoolers "so that parents can work and play with these skills at home. That's when "Hands" becomes "Little Hands."

The 10-session program is brimming with games and skills that parents can practice with their children. As the Technical Assistant for the Family Resource Centers program, Laura is doing what she loves—working with families.

"I want parents to understand how important they are in their children's learning," declares Laura. "They can come to the Family Resource Center, play games together, and get valuable information to use at home—all at once!" Currently, Laura is playing "Little Hands" at six Missoula schools—Lowell, Franklin, Russell, Lewis and Clark, Hawthorne, and Rattlesnake. From 11:00 am to noon, Laura conducts large and



small groups of children and their parents through activities that build hand and pincer strength, visual discrimination, eye to hand coordination, stability, trunk control, and language development.

Laura leads her groups in kinesthetic activities that require putting one's elbow and nose on the floor, simultaneously. One might find them moving their bodies to shapes or picking up cotton balls with clothespins. Matching mittens, tearing paper into a spring collage, hole-punching, or trunk balancing are all play activities that build control and strength. "We forget that children are just starting out and they need lots of practice. Play is so important, and children love to see their parents playing, too!" laughs Laura.



Family Resource Centers, a program of WORD, are a collaborative program between WORD and school districts and are funded by:

- Montana Office of Community Service
- The Engelhard Foundation
- Title I
- Early Learning Opportunities



Meet Your Family Resource Center Family

(Part six in a nine-part series on Family Resource Center staff)

“My goal is to be the catalyst for parent mentors,” admits Karin Schalm, the Family Resource Coordinator at Lewis and Clark School. At this Center, parents take leadership roles by sharing their passions

with the students. Last month a parent/artist created a hands-on world of Cubism with the community. Every week, a parent with a passion for chess, teaches 70 students during recess. Another parent, who takes joy in knitting, created a Knitting Club that meets every Monday. On “Footloose Friday” four parents, committed to the environment, become a “Walking School Bus,” escorting 40 children home safely. Then there is the Math Enrichment done each Tuesday and Wednesday with the whole third grade conducted by, of course, a parent. Karin’s gift, among many, is to excavate a personal niche for any and every parent at the school. She believes that “the best way kids learn is by interaction with passion.”

Karin juggles her responsibilities at Lewis and Clark with her husband and two children. Her professional goals changed when family life became her priority. The Family Resource Center position offered her the opportunity to walk her children to school and walk herself

to work, simultaneously. Lewis and Clark’s Center is one of the busiest. Karin welcomes parents, administrators, teachers, students, and co-workers with snacks, tea, and a vibrant environment that is most appreciated by the community.

Environment is one of the many degrees that Karin holds. She has three in all. The second is in creative writing, and the third is in Literature. Karen taught creative writing at the Sussex School, and was an adjunct professor in poetry. In fact, she was the 1987 Connecticut student poet laureate. She also has been involved with the Missoula Public Library writing programs for youth at risk, and performed horticultural therapy with people with disabilities. She worked to develop the Missoula Urban Demonstration Project.

Yet, Karin’s dream lies in writing. She is currently working on a young adult novel. Her writing process takes her from a stream of consciousness journal stage, to a discovery of self, and finally to the development of the story. She likes to call it “research of the mind.” Her depth of her knowledge and gifts to the community are evident in everything she does. Karin follows her passions and folks around her seem to find their own, as well.

A Note from the Director

It’s that grant writing time of year in the non-profit world. Although securing program resources is a year round process, this is an exceptionally busy time of the year. Many funding sources have spring deadlines for grant applications. Recently the staff of WORD’s Family Resource Centers program spent time away from the office to stand back from the forest, so to speak, and see what the trees look like. We discussed our strengths, challenges, opportunities, threats, staffing, training, funding, outreach, collaboration and program development. (We are a talkative group!) Then we all headed back to our work environment to begin our action plans.

Finding support for preventative programs is a challenging task. Intervention and crisis management programs call out loudly for many resources, and there is no denying the obvious need. I think it’s just part of human nature to be more inclined to react than to be proactive. Pain and fear are strong motivators. Our attention grows lax when we are comfortable. It takes commitment and dedication to advocate for and implement preventative measures, whether we’re working on our own individual lives or the life of our whole community. And so, this remarkable staff, committed to successful students, families, schools, and communities, is hard at it. All are busy researching, writing, editing and submitting proposals to strengthen opportunities for learning and working together through Family Resource Centers.

We are in the midst of a very difficult funding environment. Pain, fear, crisis and intervention draw government resources away from community prevention programs. For programs such as Family Resource Centers, support from the private sector and local community is essential. Please hold a good thought for us as we reach out to those who are comfortable, and hope we gain their attention and support.

-Jeanne Moon
Program Director

Rise and Shine



As Spring Break approaches and the schools and communities begin to feel the effects of spring, the Family Resource Center AmeriCorps workers are feeling the excitement as well! The excitement to finish this school year off strong. The excitement to leave a legacy for next year's Family Resource Centers! The excitement to...take one step at a time!



Events are planned by taking those steps one at a time. For Coordinators Jane Yungmeyer-Olson and Melissa Parrott some of these first steps that have been to gather donated eggs, pancake mix, bacon, muffins, fruit, and coffee. Why you ask are breakfast favorites such as these needed in the Family Resource Center? To cook breakfast for all the students and the important adults in their life!

Annual events such as the "My Main Man" breakfast at Rattlesnake and the "Bring Your Favorite Big Person to Breakfast" at Russell have taken place and have gotten rave reviews from the over 600 people from the school communities who have come to the events.

Seeing how many students and adults come out for both of the breakfasts makes the early wakeup calls worth it for all the volunteers. In addition stores and community resources gave over \$700 in food items to make these

events possible.

Fellow Family Resource Center Coordinators, friends, teachers,

and school staff all help to make these events possible. While many stay behind the scenes scrambling eggs and flipping the pancakes, teachers and other school staff help serve the hundreds of people who line up for these delicious morning meals and the opportunity to meet other families in the school community.

Both breakfasts were huge successes, due to the collaboration and partnerships that pull together events such as these. The donation of food items, drinks, and one's time are really what brings the community together.

Working together builds a strong sense of community benefiting all and opening possibilities for the future.

The Literacy Support Corps members in the Family Resource Centers throughout western Montana have accomplished

much in the first half of this school year. They have brought more than 9,000 adults and 12,500 children into more than 6,000 fun learning activities. Member have recruited and managed over 1,650 community volunteers who have given over 4,000 hours of their time to strengthen education and family support.

Community members and businesses have donated over \$17,000 in cash, goods, and services to the Family Resource Center activities. Their dedication to service and community involvement is building sustainability into the Family Resource Centers Program.

Next year's Family Resource Centers AmeriCorps members will pick up where others have left off and continue to keep building these networks of support for education, families, and communities.

Each year, the Literacy Support Corps members placed in Centers take the reins and move forward into unknown territory.

While these members are with us for only a brief time, community based programs and lives they touch continue to grow. What a true credit to the serving of one's community.



Locations of the Family Resource Centers:

Missoula Area:

Bonner School
PO Box 1004
Bonner, MT 59823
Sara Boyett
406-258-6151
family@bonner.k12.mt.us

Franklin Elementary
1901 S. 10th West
Missoula, MT 59802
Vickie Rectenwald
406-327-0483

Hawthorne Elementary
2835 S. 3rd West
Missoula, MT 59804
Mandy Hansen
406-327-6945

Lewis and Clark Elementary
2901 Park St.
Missoula, MT 59801
Karin Schalm
406-327-6946
frclewis@mcps.k12.mt.us

Lowell Elementary
1200 Sherwood
Missoula, MT 59802
Kasey Savage
406-327-0390
lowellfrc@mcps.k12.mt.us

Rattlesnake Elementary
1220 Pineview
Missoula, MT
Jane Olson
406-542-4914
resfrc@mcps.k12.mt.us

Russell Elementary
3216 Russell St.
Missoula, MT 59801
Melissa Parrott
406-728-2400 ext 4846
frcrussell@mcps.k12.mt.us

Teen Family Resource Center
1861 S. 12th St
Missoula, MT 59802
Essie Etchingham
406-542-4900

Bitterroot Area:

Daly/Grantsdale Elementary
778 Grantsdale St.
Hamilton, MT 59840
Rachel Martin
406-363-2122 ext 202
martin@hsd3.org

Darby Elementary
209 School Drive
Darby, MT 59829
Kelly Morris
406-821-3643
kmorris@darby.k12.mt.us

Florence Elementary
5602 Old Hwy 93
Florence, MT 59833
Elaine Copeland
406-273-6747 ext 117
copelande@florence.k12.mt.us

Florence Middle School
5602 Old Hwy 93
Florence, MT 59833
Christa Burns
406-273-0587
burnsc@florence.k12.mt.us

Hamilton Middle School
209 S. 5th St
Hamilton, MT 59840
Victoria Williams
406-363-2121
williamsv@hsd3.org

Lone Rock Elementary
1112 Three Mile Creek Rd
Stevensville, MT 59870
Nancy Preston
406-777-3314 ext 218
npreston@lonerockschool.edu

Ravalli Head Start
81 Kurtz Lane
Hamilton, MT 59840
Paula Wood
406-363-1217 ext 20

Kids First
Westview Center
103 S. 9th St. #105
Hamilton, MT 59840
Vicki Rivera
406-375-9588
vrivera@bitterrootkids.org

Stevensville Elementary
300 Park Ave
Stevensville, MT 59870
Wanda Stordahl
406-777-5613 ext 351
stordahlw@stevensville.k12.mt.us

Washington Elementary
225 N. 5th St.
Hamilton, MT 59840
Tara Gallagher
406-363-2144
gallagher@hsd3.org

Flathead Area:

Cherry Valley Elementary
111 4th Ave
Polson, MT 59860
Stephanie Noyes
snoyes@polson.k12.mt.us
Edna Lemm
406-883-6333

Ronan Middle School
421 Andrews NW
Drawer R
Ronan, MT 59864
Kathy Benedetti
406-676-3390
kathy.benedetti@ronank12.edu

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