



WORD

- **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**

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Family Resource Centers

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

Newsletter

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2

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Reading Is Fundamental!!

The fourth graders at Hawthorne School love to read. They even have a list of their favorite good books to share (see list on page 3). On a beautiful day in October, the Hawthorne library was abuzz with excited voices as the students crowded around the many tables heaping with books. Now books in a library is not a novel idea, but that day the children were able to choose from a wonderful array of titles a book for their own, to keep and to cherish, or to swap with a friend as several were going to do.

These students of all ages were part of a national program entitled Reading is Fundamental



(RIF) which seeks to promote the love of reading and to give children the joy of owning their own books. RIF was in five Missoula elementary schools the week of October 25th giving away over 1600 free books. There will be similar book giveaways in January and April.

RIF began in the early 1970s by a teacher, concerned that her students did not have many books at home so she gave each child a book. The students were thrilled and excited by the idea of having their own book. The idea quickly spread to her fellow teachers and then to teachers across the country. Today, the RIF Foundation is the largest non-profit family literacy program in the US, providing children with free books in all 50 states.

RIF is one of those highly successful partnerships between the community, businesses, and the schools. Book publishers offer a substantial discount on their books, the RIF Foundation provides 75% of



the cost of the books while the local community fundraises the remaining 25%. Staff and volunteers helped to select, sort, and distribute the books, hosts activities to promote the giveaway, and develop literacy awareness with parents at school-wide Family Fun Nights hosted by the school's Family Resource Center. This year, according to Missoula RIF Coordinator Laura Pickett, over 200 volunteers helped to distribute the books, UM athletes and cheerleaders were on hand to autograph books, the Missoula Calligrapher's Guild created free bookmarks, and several (cont. on page 2)

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 two in a ten-part series on Family Resource Center staff)



Some people are born with a predisposition to philanthropy. As a 25-year-old graduate student, Melissa Parrott has already volunteered more than most people will in a lifetime. Her experience in service began in high school when she worked with “Habitat for Humanity.” During her college years, she joined the National Civilian Community Corps, (NCCC), worked in a Coney Island public school, and helped build a bereavement center in the Washington DC area. A move west and a continuing dedication to children and families brought her to Russell School, as the Family Resource Center Coordinator.

“I first saw Missoula through the fires of 2003 and I fell in love with the area.” Melissa had already spent one

year as an AmeriCorps volunteer and hoped to continue her AmeriCorps service with the Western Montana Literacy Support Corps. Russell School and Melissa are a perfect match. She is thirsty to develop community partnerships, such as the money and banking program between Russell students and Missoula Federal Credit Union. She is also working with non-profit organizations to create service activities for the monthly Family Fun Nights. These are well-attended events and draw parents and children from the school community. The focus is on reading, writing, and mathematics, in a cross curricular atmosphere, providing as much fun for parents as for the children.

Melissa’s goal is that the Family Resource Center, “be sustainable beyond the AmeriCorps volunteer. That happens when parents have ownership of their center.” Melissa reaches out to

all parents with myriads of programs through the Family Resource Center. These occur throughout the day and evening, giving parents opportunities to spend time with their children.

The Family Resource Center is a welcoming environment, complete with children’s books and toys, as well as, support and advocacy materials for parents. Melissa’s wish list for her center includes newer children’s picture books. “Healthy refreshments for the families would be wonderful, too,” reflects Melissa. For the future, Melissa would like to remain in the Missoula valley and pursue her graduate degree in printmaking at the University of Montana. It appears that volunteering with parents and children will also be a part of her future. “Being a child is beautiful,” she muses, “the world is small, safe, and the goals are always attainable.”

RIF cont.

businesses allowed their employees off from work to read with the children.

The RIF program will distribute 4,800 books in three book giveaways throughout the year. The foundation provides \$9,748 matched by \$2,437 from the Missoula community. The program is coordinated by the Family Resource Centers program directed by Women’s Opportunity and Resource Development (WORD).

“It is a really huge deal,” says Hawthorne School librarian, Michele Nokleby. “They are thrilled with their new books. They have a real sense of pride, in owning their own books. For some kids, this is the only book they will own.”

“It’s really fun that you get to pick your own book,” enthuses Jonathan, a Hawthorne fourth-grader. His friend Brett agrees, “I think it’s cool because there are a lot of good books to choose from.” Colter, another advocate muses, “I think that this (idea) should go around the world. A lot of schools and kids don’t have a lot of money.” Building bridges and book lovers all in one fell swoop.

A Note from the Director-

Jeanne Moon

As this edition of our newsletter goes to press we have 29 members serving in the Western Montana Literacy Support Corps this program year. This is WORD’s third year managing the Literacy Support Corps, and each year I am completely humbled by the people who apply to serve their country and their community through AmeriCorps service. The wealth of education and experience they bring to our communities is an extraordinary gift. Many of this year’s Corps members are college graduates, some carry masters degrees. Most are parents, step-parents, or grandparents. Many have traveled abroad and bring knowledge of other cultures with them into their work. They all bring a willingness to take risks and try something new, a genuine caring for people and a determination to “get things done”. This is no small thing.

Each year I learn and grow with these extraordinary people. Their efforts uncover the rich resources right here in our midst, ready to support students, families, schools and whole communities. This year of service is their gift to us. They give the time and energy it takes to discover who has the knowledge, who has the time, who has the need, who has the material resources, and help connect people to each other. They are building learning communities that benefit us all. I cannot say thank you often enough for the good work they do.

Funding for the Centers

Partnership. The very vital and viable Family Resource Centers that the schools have established and nurtured over the years exist only because of partnerships. When it comes to stable funding for the Centers, there is no silver or magic bullet, says Jeanne Moon, Family Resource Centers Program Director. Instead, the Centers will always depend upon an ever-changing array of partnerships within the community.

“We are a rich community,” claims Moon, “rich in resources. Each individual school works in partnership with many different community resources to fund its Family Resource Center and the activities at their school.”

At the heart of the partnerships are the AmeriCorps positions that staff the Centers. The Office of Community Service in the Governor’s Office directs Montana’s AmeriCorps federal grant. Local non-profit organizations such as Women’s Opportunity and Resource Development (WORD) and Kids First contribute training and

technical assistance to the volunteers. Schools offer space and infrastructure, such as telephone and Internet service, also with day to day supervision.

Grants from a variety of sources, provide not only much needed revenue but are used as a match for federal grants. The Engelhard Foundation has, for many years, been a significant source of financial support for WORD’s Family Resource Centers Program.

The business community is generous with a myriad of in-kind contributions, scaling from advice, equipment, and services to food and supplies for family fun nights, materials for crafts and activities, clothing, food and person items for families in need.

Each school community is rich in people resources. The parents and staff give generously of their time and talent to organize family night and community events, volunteer in the classroom, welcome new families, donate clothing,, toys, and games, hold book exchanges, furnish the center, and share their expertise in classes.

No, there is not one magical funding source, says Moon,. There are a myriad of them, right in your own school community. “It simply takes a strong desire and commitment to partner. When you have that vision and determination, you will find the resources,” Sage advice, indeed.

Books recommended by Hawthorne’s Fourth Graders

Jeremy Thatcher, Dragon Hatcher (Bruce Coville)
Eragon (Christopher Paolini)
Junie B. Jones Books (Barbara Park)
Dragon Rider (Cornelia Funke)
The Island Series (Gordon Korman)
Charlotte’s Web (E. B. White)
Captain Underpants Books (Dav Pilkey)
The Hatchet Series (Gary Paulsen)
Just So Stories (Rudyard Kipling)
Magic Treehouse Series (Mary Pope Osborne)
The Girl With 500 Middle Names (Margaret Peterson Haddix)
The Mysterious Island (Tony Abbott)
Searching For Dragons (Patricia Wrede)
Sign of the Dove (Susan Fletcher)



Left: Police Officer, shows Sala and mom, Brook about the patterns of fingerprints at Hawthorne’s Mystery Family Fun Night.

Right: Mom stands by as her son tests out his vision at Russell’s Family Fun Night.



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 190
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.org

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

WORD-Family Resource Centers

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