

HEAD START HAPPENINGS

#YELLGIVELOCAL AND HELP HEAD START

On May 3, Head Start, Inc. will participate in the national Give Local America Day, a 24-hour on-line fundraising event designed to motivate every one to support local nonprofits and strengthen the foundation of communities across the country.

The Billings Community Foundation is the local sponsor for the event, and Head Start, Inc. will join more than 30 nonprofits in the area to raise awareness and community support. This year will mark the first year that the Yellowstone Valley area has participated; last year, communities across Montana raised more than \$600,000 through this event.

On May 3, everyone in the Yellowstone Valley will be encouraged to make a small donation to the local nonprofit of their choice—and we will be doing our part to persuade the community to choose Head Start! Events will take place around the community to build momentum all day long.

You can help Head Start, Inc. make May 3 a successful day by taking a few simple steps:

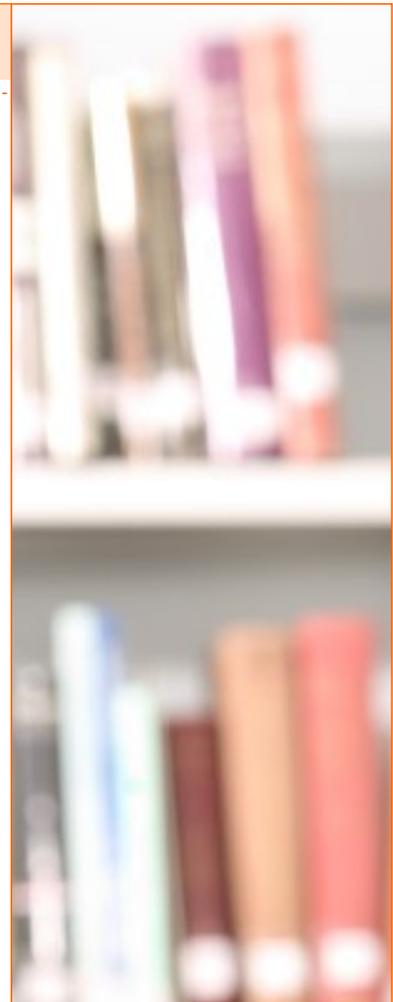
- ⇒ Like Head Start, Inc. on Facebook (facebook.com/billingsheadstart/). Already a fan? Share our page with your friends and help us build awareness!
- ⇒ Share your story! If Head Start has made a difference in your life, or the life of a child you know—share that story with us! Post a review on Facebook, or contact us at 245-7233 if you would like to participate in video and photo testimonials.
- ⇒ On May 3, watch our Facebook page. Like, share, and comment on our posts to encourage people to donate to Head Start. Head Start, Inc. can win additional cash prizes throughout the day, so we need your help all day long!

WEAR ORANGE TO FIGHT CHILDHOOD HUNGER

On April 13, Head Start, Inc. will join with community organizations across Montana to raise awareness about childhood hunger in our state. In Montana, more than 48,500 children are facing food insecurity, meaning they don't know where their next meal will come from.

As a part of Fight Childhood Hunger Week, Head Start encourages employees, parents, children, and community support to wear orange on Wednesday, April 13 to show that you stand united in the fight against childhood hunger. Post your Wear Orange Wednesday photo to Montana No Kid Hungry and Head Start, Inc. on Facebook to show your support.

Head Start, Inc. has established childhood hunger as a priority issue for the agency, as malnutrition in early years can have lifelong consequences. Children who are food insecure can have learning delays, increased absenteeism due to illness, higher rates of medical and dental problems, and higher rates of behavioral issues that inhibit learning, such as hyperactivity, aggression and anxiety. In recognition of the critical role that proper nutrition plays in child development and school readiness, Head Start, Inc. launched its Friday Food Pack program this year to provide supplemental foods for preschoolers facing weekend food insecurity. During the week, Head Start students receive two meals per day, meeting or exceeding federal food program requirements.



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MISSION

Head Start, Inc. provides comprehensive services for young children and their families to achieve school readiness and lifelong success.

VISION

Encourage, Empower, and Educate All Children

VALUES

Children First
Respect
Positivity
Empathy
Competence



THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

National Volunteer Week is April 10-16, and here at Head Start, we are so thankful for the thousands of hours donated to our program every year by parents and community members who work to make our program great. Here is just a small sampling of the generosity of the community that benefits young children:

- Head Start Board Members and Policy Council Members, who serve without pay to lead our program
- R.E.A.D. dog volunteers, who bring trained therapy dogs to our program to read to kids
- Anytime Fitness employees who do physical fitness activities with our kids
- RSVP volunteers who knit hats and mittens for our students
- Golden Kiwanis members who read to our children
- Community members who serve on advisory committees that strengthen our program
- Volunteers who pack and deliver food packs to more than 80 families per week
- First Interstate Bank employees who give us their time as well as donations — and meeting space!

On April 13, Head Start will host a volunteer luncheon to thank the many people who give to our program every year. Thank you for all you do!

GET READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

With just a few weeks left in the school year for Head Start students, planning for kindergarten transitions is already underway. More than 200 students will graduate from Head Start in May and head off to kindergarten in the fall, armed with critical school readiness skills to help them succeed.

Head Start, Inc. invests significant time in helping students and families prepare for the transition to kindergarten. Beginning with home visits in the spring, Head Start teachers talk with parents about their child's progress and readiness for school. Parent-Teacher Conferences will begin at the end of April, and will go into more detail on each child's individual progress, as well as provide parents information on registering their children for kindergarten. Family advocates engage families in thinking about well child visits, immunizations, and kindergarten registration as well.

Head Start sends transition packets for all children in Head Start to the school districts where the children enroll. These informational packets help kindergarten teachers get to know each Head Start child, so they can meet the individual needs of students coming into their kin-

dergarten classes. All children receiving special education or mental health services have individual transition meetings to ensure that services continue without interruption in kindergarten.

In the program, teachers and teaching assistants are starting to talk to children about the exciting move to kindergarten. Throughout the spring, the program works on practical skills that are necessary for success in school. Family style meals begin to incorporate lunchroom standards, like cartons of milk and packaged cereal, so that young children learn to open containers. Activities to build independence and increase time on task support our soon-to-be graduates in getting ready for school. Emerging readers are supported in developing their early literacy skills, and intervention services increase for students who aren't quite ready for kindergarten yet. Social skill building, such as making friends and playing fair, remains a staple of the daily classroom.

Parents, if you have questions or concerns about your child's transition to kindergarten, contact your teacher or family advocate today. Mark your calendars for graduation ceremonies the week of May 16!

NEW STAFF MEMBERS



Olivia Johnson is the new Teacher in Room 203P at North Park. Olivia has a Degree in Education and worked at Bright Little Stars Daycare as well as Billings Public Schools. Olivia is also a Head Start parent.



Diane Standley is the new Accounts Payable/Benefit Specialist in Accounting. Diane has many years of experience in accounting, and will also be assisting employees with signing up for employee benefits.



Ken Carlson has joined the transportation staff as a bus driver. He comes with over 8 years of driving and mechanic experience. Ken will be driving Bus 13 for the Midwest morning run and the South Main afternoon run.

PARENT CHALLENGE: WIN A DOLLHOUSE!

Head Start, Inc. depends on the support of parents and community members to make our program great. This spring, Head Start, Inc. is offering a special incentive to parents who volunteer their time at any one of our five sites—Billings, Lockwood, Laurel, Joliet, and Red Lodge. For every hour of volunteer service in the program, parents will receive one raffle ticket to be entered in a drawing for the beautiful dollhouse, pictured right, generously donated by Costco. The more hours volunteered, the more chances to win! The challenge runs from April 4 to May 12, and the drawing will take place on May 13.

Parents can volunteer time in the classroom, work on special projects at each site, help with garden planting, do administrative work, and more. Parents interested in volunteering can speak to their classroom teacher or call Tera Clough, Community Relations Director, at 869-1220.



Head Start, Inc. benefits from more than 10,000 hours of volunteer service every year. Volunteers help in the classroom, on field trips, in the kitchen, on the bus, and throughout our program.

CHANGES AT HEAD START, INC.

Head Start, Inc. is a federally funded program. With those funds comes the expectation that our program will comply with an extensive list of federal regulations, including the requirement that every three years, programs will conduct a community needs assessment. The needs assessment is designed to identify where the greatest number of children and families live that may be eligible for Head Start services. Head Start programs are expected to use the data in the community assessment to determine the appropriate location for centers that allow recruitment and enrollment of the greatest number of eligible children in Head Start services.

Head Start, Inc. serves children and families in Yellowstone and Carbon Counties, so we are required to assess the scope of need across these two counties. This year, our community assessment showed a relatively small number of eligible children in Carbon County compared to the number of enrollment slots that we have in the county. This confirms our program's experience in recent years, as we have struggled to enroll eligible children at both our Red Lodge and Joliet sites. Our

assessment showed that there are greater numbers of eligible children in the rural parts of Yellowstone County than all of Carbon County, and our program currently does not recruit in these communities.

Based on the expectation that Head Start programs will locate their centers where the largest number of eligible children and families can be enrolled, our agency will close both the Joliet and Red Lodge sites at the end of this program year, and move those classrooms to locations in Yellowstone County where more eligible children and families can be recruited.

Families in Carbon County who wish to continue in the program will be bussed from a group stop in Rockvale into the Laurel site. Parents may also transport their children to either Laurel or Billings. Head Start, Inc. will open a third classroom in Laurel to serve Carbon County as well as nearby independent schools in Yellowstone County. Head Start, Inc. is actively seeking facilities in the Billings Heights area to serve families in the Shepherd/Huntley Project area, as well as families in the Heights.



EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

- ⇒ Congratulations to Cooks **Patty Williams, Elly Boggio,** and **Kristen Torgerson** who all received their ServSafe Manager's certification in March.
- ⇒ **Gloria Boyd, Jennie Busenbark** and **Lauretta Adolph** attended the AWARE Early Childhood Consortium on Preschool Expulsion and Prevention on April 1st in Bozeman.

HELP WANTED

- ⇒ NOW RECRUITING FOR FALL 2016! Head Start, Inc. is seeking teachers, teaching assistants, bus drivers and bus aides for program year 2016-2017. Details available at: www.billingsheadstart.org/employment-opportunities/

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- ◇ March 31: Reception at the YAM for Head Start families
- ◇ April 8: Read to Me, Daddy at the Joliet Library
- ◇ April 11: Program Closed/Staff Work Day
- ◇ April 12: North Park Parent Committee, 4:30 p.m.
- ◇ April 16: Move with Me, Mommy at ZooMontana
- ◇ April 21: Head Start Night at The Reef
- ◇ April 30: Read to Me, Daddy at the Audubon Center
- ◇ May 2: Hawaiian and Polynesian Cultural Celebration
- ◇ May 3: Yellowstone Valley Give Local Day
- ◇ May 7: Montana Women's Run
- ◇ May 19: Last Day of School!
- ◇ May 20: Staff Appreciation Day

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