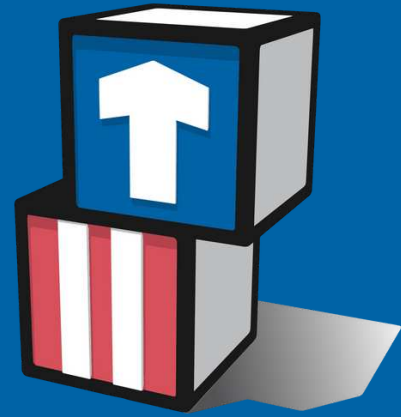


2023-2024

ANNUAL REPORT



Head Start, Inc.

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



Testimonials

I really appreciate how compassionate and patient the staff is with our boys. They are so excited and happy to go to school everyday.

The time and effort given by our teachers towards the growth and positive life enrichment and healthy experiences of my foster daughter in the classroom. The staff are friendly and committed to the betterment of the children they serve.

Because of Head Start Inc, my older two boys are now at the top of their class and my daughter has become much more social.

I feel like the program has given my girls the best start before entering elementary school. They've already learned so much and they are always excited to go to school. The teachers and staff are incredible!

I love that my children have had the opportunity to go to preschool and learn from people that love them as much as I do. Head Start has been a blessing and I am so appreciative of this organization.

I love the love and support the teachers give! They always go out of their way!!



Our Management Team

A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.

-John C. Maxwell



Janice King
Executive Director



Tamara Mitchell
Finance Director



Brittany Dimitryev
HR Director



Christopher Belcher
Operations Manager



Megan Martin
Child & Family Services Manager

Enrollment

at Head Start, Inc.

297

Children
Served

276

Families
Served

90%

Average
Monthly
Enrollment

26%

At or Below
Poverty
0-100% FPL
(Federal Poverty Level)

10%

Just Above
Poverty
101-130% FPL
(Federal Poverty Level)

6%

Over
Income
<131% FPL
(Federal Poverty Level)

10%

Foster Care

13%

Homeless

35%

Public
Assistance

Head Start, Inc. applied for an Enrollment Reduction from 360 children to 264 children in April 2023. This Enrollment Reduction was approved by the Office of Head Start in October 2023.

Spotlight on School Readiness

True to our mission, we aim to prepare children and their families for Kindergarten and beyond.



Head Start, Inc. is dedicated to preparing children for success in kindergarten and beyond by partnering with families and local school districts. Our comprehensive program ensures each child and family receives individualized services that cater to their unique needs. To monitor and continuously improve our processes, we created our School Readiness Committee.

Our School Readiness Committee is composed of staff, Policy Council and Board of Directors members. The committee includes a variety of staff including Teachers, Family Advocates, Health and Leadership personnel. While our School Readiness Committee was established years ago, this year we focused on developing a purpose statement and short- and long-term goals.

School Readiness Committee Purpose Statement:

The School Readiness Committee aims to ensure every Head Start child enters kindergarten ready to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. We accomplish this goal through prioritizing learning objectives, fostering community collaborations, supporting smooth child transitions, and providing guidance and support to staff and families.

School Readiness Committee Goals:

- 1. Utilize program data to prioritize learning objectives*
- 2. Continue to foster the relationship between community public schools and Head Start prioritizing communication with school administrations*
- 3. Continue to improve child transitions to kindergarten by increasing the number of children registered for kindergarten by the end of the school year and connecting families and elementary schools*

School Readiness Committee prioritizes building strong partnerships with local public schools and fostering a collaborative approach to early education that benefits both children and their families. This year, we hosted a meeting for local kindergarten teachers and our committee to engage in partnership building. People shared ideas, asked questions and explained processes. We used information gathered from the meeting to adjust our transition practices for children going to kindergarten.

Head Start, Inc. provides comprehensive training for teachers and family advocates, focusing on effective teaching strategies and family engagement techniques that promote child and family school readiness. Through these efforts, Head Start, Inc. is helping to lay a strong foundation for children's academic and social growth.

Story by: Megan Martin, Child & Family Services Manager

This is Goddi

As told by Teacher Kassidy Green

This is Goddi. I have had the absolute pleasure and privilege of watching this boy's personality unfold day by day for the last two years. Before I tell you about his story at Head Start, I should say that the truth is that I have tried to get out of sharing this story. The reason being that I really didn't think I had a success story to tell. The thing is when I thought about what a success story was, I thought about those massive accomplishments where someone was receiving some sort of award or recognition. But, when I began to reflect on the last two years, I realized that the story of Goddi doesn't have just one massive success story but instead many small ones.



Before I tell you about Goddi's story, you should know some of the history of mine. There was a lot of things in life that I was naïve too. My parents sheltered me from a lot growing up. I didn't have to worry about when my next meal was, who was watching me and keeping me safe when my parents had to work, whether or not the bills were getting paid. I had stability, I got to just be a kid. And like many of the children we serve, this wasn't the case for Goddi. The first time I met Goddi was also the first time I was up close and personal with poverty, food insecurities, and homelessness – and oh, what a cruel monster it is! It became very evident from the moment I stepped into their home that Goddi did not have the same luxuries I had growing up. Without going into much detail of another's home I will say this - In order for us to get to the couch, we needed to climb over miscellaneous objects and piled up furniture. When we made it to the couch, we had to be very careful to not step on a mattress. A mattress that didn't have the luxuries of sheets, and only held a single pillow and blanket. This was the bed Goddi and his mom shared. Not in a bedroom, but the living room floor. But, right in the center of the mattress sat a toothless, curly headed little boy watching TV while eating Burger King chicken nuggets.

At first, Goddi was nervous about the new intruders in his home, but in true Goddi fashion, he quickly demanded the attention. Within 10 minutes of being in the household Goddi had taken his shirt off and climbed up to the highest point in the living room, beating on his chest before promptly screaming "HULK SMASH!" Now – if you have seen any of the Hulk movies before, you should know that nothing ever good happens after those two words are said. Taking a leap of faith Goddi had launched himself into the air only to hit the ground HARD and continued to summersault. I sat and watched in horror that I surely just watched this kid get severely injured.

Story continued on next page

Goddi continued . . .

I watched Goddi bounce back up and take off down a hallway only to return with a Febreze can and a mischievous grin that only meant I was in trouble. Like a stink bomb, Goddi had emptied the entire Febreze bottle not in another room, but directly into the faces of my FA and I. Two years later I still cannot stand the smell of Hawaiian Aloha Febreze.

When I had asked mom about the things she wanted us to know about Goddi, she used words like “emotional, tantrums, screaming, behavioral, has a fear of redirection.”

The last two school years have been anything but easy with Goddi, Goddi spent a lot of time trying to hurt his peers through his actions or words, kids feared Goddi and other parents complained about him. You see, the thing that makes Goddi so special is that he feels so deeply. That Fall, Goddi had lost a family member. Goddi was hurting, but he was also carrying the feelings of the rest of his family. Goddi lived in his survival state all the time. So anytime he felt a sense of rejection, it would resort in our classroom being destroyed. He didn't care if it made peers upset because he was hurting.

Goddi created quite the reputation for himself. Things like bad, violent, mean were often words associated with him. It became very evident that Goddi needed connection. He needed to feel like he belonged. We often forget to prioritize connection and focus on things like meeting their basic needs such as food, shelter, clothes. But in safety and connection, we find that it allows children to build the self-regulation skills they need to succeed.



Goddi

Goddi today has connection with teachers and peers and a sense of belonging in his school community. Goddi helps soothe friends when they have had a hard transition. Goddi helps friends take off their snow gear, before helping himself. Goddi comforts peers after moments of disagreement. Goddi cleans my glasses when they become covered in tiny fingerprints. Goddi uses the safe place to safely handle his feelings.

Goddi is far from perfect and he still feels so deeply. But he asks for help, he stands up for injustices, his peers are excited to see him, and he builds strong relationships with everyone he meets.

Allow me to reintroduce you. This is Goddi. Goddi is kind, empathetic, smart, hilariously funny, a protector, a leader, and a caretaker. Goddi is why I stay teaching at Head Start. He is a success story.

45%

Families disclose concerns with their child's development, health, and/or mental health at enrollment.

Spotlight on Conscious Discipline

It all starts with connections: Implementing Conscious Discipline to Strengthen the Head Start School Family

Conscious Discipline is an evidence-based social-emotional methodology that helps adults and children develop the self-regulation skills they need to be resilient. Rather than teaching social-emotional skills with lessons alone, Conscious Discipline helps adults strengthen their own skills so that they can coach and support children during moments of upset. This year we focused our efforts on strengthening our school family.

Fostering a nurturing and welcoming school family is essential to social-emotional wellness and development. According to Conscious Discipline, "The School Family systematically bonds all members to each other with a sense of belonging. This felt sense of belonging opens the door to problem solving, permanent behavior change, and social-emotional and academic success" (Conscious Discipline: Building Resilient Classrooms). Our brains are designed to thrive with connection. When we feel a sense of safety and belonging, our brains are ready to learn and we can be the wisest, kindest versions of ourselves.

During the summer of 2023, a group attended the Conscious Discipline Institute. This team now forms our Conscious Discipline Action Team and are leading the implementation process. The CDAT led books studies for education and family services staff and staff-wide trainings to introduce the core concepts of Conscious Discipline. They established structures to promote a sense of connection and belonging among the staff including a Friends and Family Board and ways to share celebrations and offer support to each other. It is essential that the adults in our program feel connected and supported so that they are resilient and able to connect with and support the children and families we serve. As the cliché goes: you can't pour from an empty cup.

In a survey at the end of the year, staff feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Staff were grateful for the book studies and opportunities to learn new skills, and reported feeling more connected to their colleagues. One staff person wrote, "I think C.D. approaches and skills will be highly beneficial in feeling a sense of unity, and willingness to help co-workers as we build our school family." Another person put it this way: "I enjoyed the school family. It makes the work environment feel like I am someone who belongs." When we asked staff about their hopes for Conscious Discipline next year, the resounding answer was, "More!"

Moving forward we will continue to foster school family. We will send additional staff to the Conscious Discipline Institute so that more staff are fully trained and can mentor their coworkers. The CDAT will continue to provide staff-wide trainings to deepen our agency's understanding of Conscious Discipline's skills and mindsets, and book studies will continue by building on what we learned in order to help direct-care staff begin to use Conscious Discipline with the students and families we serve. While implementation is just beginning, we are proud of the progress we are making to foster a supportive school community and to bolster our staff's skills.

Story by: Jessie Sherman Pekins, Health Services Coordinator



Health & Wellness at Head Start, Inc.

• The Children

Head Start, Inc. prioritizes child health and wellness through comprehensive services, including health screenings, nutritious meals, and connections to medical and dental care, all while promoting healthy habits and supporting families' understanding of their children's health needs. We believe healthy children are able to learn and thrive.

During the 2023-2024 program year:

- **98%** of enrolled children were covered by Medicaid or other insurance plans
- **99%** of enrolled children were up-to-date with age recommended immunizations
- **98%** of enrolled children had access to on-going and regular medical care
- **65%** of enrolled children were current on preventative and primary well-child care recommendations
- **90%** of enrolled children had access to ongoing and regular dental care
- **78%** of enrolled children were current on preventative and primary dental care recommendations

• The Staff

Staff Wellness is a priority at Head Start, Inc. We believe healthy staff are able to provide quality services to the children and families who depend on us.

Head Start, Inc. offers the following benefits to all employees:

- Health Insurance with a \$744 employer contribution towards employee health benefits
- Dental Insurance
- Vision Insurance
- Short Term Disability & Long Term Disability Coverage
- Employee Assistance Programming
- Accident and Critical Illness Benefits
- Flex Plan coverage for medical and/or childcare expenses
- Paid Program Holidays
- Paid Time Off
- Flexible Work Schedules
- Summers Off
- On-site Health & Wellness Activities
- 401k with a 5% employer match

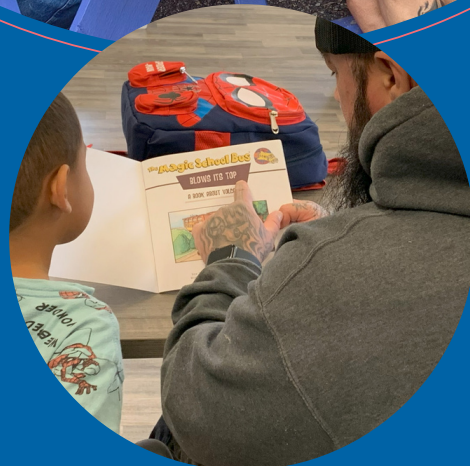


Family Involvement at Head Start, Inc.

Family involvement at Head Start, Inc. means building relationships with families that support family well-being, strong parent-child relationships, and ongoing learning and development for both parents and children.

During the 2023-2024 program year, Head Start, Inc. offered the following activities to promote family engagement and involvement:

- 2 Educational Home Visits
- 2 Family Outcomes Assessment & Goal Setting Meetings + individualized follow-up
- 2 Family/Teacher Conferences
- Monthly Policy Council Meetings
- Bi-monthly Parent Committee Meetings
- 2 Parent Committee events at each center
- Family-Child Activities in Classrooms
- Family Orientation
- Family Open House
- Conscious Discipline Open House
- Conscious Discipline Mini Sessions
- Conscious Discipline Workshops
- 1:1 Parenting Support
- Yellowstone Art Museum Reception
- Scholastic Book Fair
- CPR/1st Aid/AED Certification
- Annual Holiday Give
- Parent & Caregiver Appreciation Day
- Budgeting Workshop
- Community Resource Fair
- Spring Fling Family Dance
- 3 Read to Me, Daddy Events
- Kindergarten Registration Assistance Event
- End of Year Classroom Celebrations
- Program End of Year Celebration at Zoo Montana



Our Policy Council

The Policy Council at Head Start, Inc. gives program parents and community representatives a formal role in shaping our program, recognizing them as critical partners in early childhood education. We not only commend them for trusting us with the care and development of their child, we value the tremendous commitment parents make to serve.

Brittany Henderson
Community Representative

Donny White
Secretary

Sammy Ray Head
Chair

Chris Head
Parent Representative

Kari Boiter
Vice Chair

Pam Logina
Parent Representative

Josefa Wolf
Treasurer

Victoria Robinson
Parent Representative

**“At the end of the day, the most
overwhelming key to a child’s
success is the positive
involvement of parents.”**

Jane E. Hull

Financials

Head Start, Inc.

Statements of Financial Position

As of June 30,	2024	2023
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash	\$ 466,515	\$ 345,477
Restricted cash	85,444	284,142
Grant receivables	-	22,969
Total current assets	551,959	652,588
Property and equipment, net of accumulated depreciation	2,341,487	2,423,825
Total assets	\$ 2,893,446	\$ 3,076,413
Liabilities and net assets		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$ 92,060	\$ 22,046
Accrued payroll and benefits	120,113	134,573
Advances from grantors	129,100	-
Current portion of notes payable	30,910	29,503
Total current liabilities	372,183	186,122
Long-term liabilities		
Notes payable, net of current portion	396,151	429,425
Total liabilities	768,334	615,547
Net assets		
Without donor restrictions		
Undesignated	2,039,668	2,176,724
With donor restrictions		
Purpose restrictions	85,444	284,142
Total net assets	2,125,112	2,460,866
Total liabilities and net assets	\$ 2,893,446	\$ 3,076,413

Audit Results

Head Start, Inc. contracts with Wipfli to complete an independent audit on internal control and compliance required by Uniform Guidance for major federal programs.

It is Wipfli's opinion that Head Start, Inc. complied, in all material aspects, with all types of compliance requirements that could have a direct and material effect on its major federal program for the year ending June 30, 2024.



Financials continued . . .

Head Start, Inc.

Statement of Activities

<i>Year Ended June 30, 2024</i>	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenues and support			
Grants	\$ 4,333,013	\$ 37,391	\$ 4,370,404
Donated goods and services	343,265	-	343,265
Contributions	79,905	114,002	193,907
Interest income	8,633	-	8,633
Net assets released from restrictions:			
Satisfaction of donor-imposed restrictions	350,091	(350,091)	-
Total revenues and support	5,114,907	(198,698)	4,916,209
Expenses			
Program services	4,667,520	-	4,667,520
Management and general	584,443	-	584,443
Total expenses	5,251,963	-	5,251,963
Change in net assets	(137,056)	(198,698)	(335,754)
Net assets, beginning of year	2,176,724	284,142	2,460,866
Net assets, end of year	\$ 2,039,668	\$ 85,444	\$ 2,125,112

<i>Year Ended June 30, 2023</i>	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
Revenues and support			
Grants	\$ 3,994,605	\$ 274,265	\$ 4,268,870
Donated goods and services	318,896	-	318,896
Contributions	290,329	51,043	341,372
Net investment income	3,828	-	3,828
Net assets released from restrictions:			
Satisfaction of donor-imposed restrictions	85,807	(85,807)	-
Total revenues and support	4,693,465	239,501	4,932,966
Expenses			
Program services	4,234,298	-	4,234,298
Management and general	493,064	-	493,064
Total expenses	4,727,362	-	4,727,362
Change in net assets	(33,897)	239,501	205,604
Net assets, beginning of year	2,210,621	44,641	2,255,262
Net assets, end of year	\$ 2,176,724	\$ 284,142	\$ 2,460,866

Head Start, Inc.

Sources of Funding

ACF/DPHHS/Office of Head Start:	\$4,122,310
Child & Adult Care Food Program:	\$248,094
Private & Business Donations:	\$435,535
Interest Income:	\$8,633



Our Board of Directors

At Head Start, Inc., we sincerely appreciate the many contributions our Board members make in helping our organization run smoothly. We thank them for their visionary guidance, expert advice, exceptional leadership, and unconditional commitment to children, families, staff, and our community.

Daniel Brooks

Business Advocacy Director,
Billings Chamber of Commerce

CHAIR

Genia Castro Waller

Owner,
Graphic Finesse

PAST CHAIR

Dylan Meccage

Commercial Lender,
Stockman Bank

VICE CHAIR

Sarah Moyer

Volunteer & Community Engagement
Coordinator, Lutheran Family Services

TREASURER

Sofia Anderson

Teacher,
Billings Public Schools

MEMBER

Kody Johnson

Architect,
EEC Inc.

MEMBER

Jordan Hennessy

Vice President,
Summit National Bank

MEMBER

Craig Botnen

Learning & Development Specialist,
Alternatives

MEMBER

Kasodie West

Attorney,
AVA Law Group

MEMBER

Kristen Bonner

Director of Health Provision & Public
Health Nursing, Riverstone Health

MEMBER

The best way to find yourself is to lose your self in service to others.

-Mahatma Gahndi

Community Partners



CORPORATE PARTNERS

First Interstate Bank
Stockman Bank
Western Security Bank

MEMBERSHIP GROUPS

Billings Chamber of Commerce
Billings BIRD
Montana Head Start Association
Region 8 Head Start Association
National Head Start Association

HEALTH PARTNERS

Rimrock Pediatric Dentistry
Trailhead Pediatric Dentistry
Otto Bremer Foundation
Billings Clinic
RiverStone Health
Pediatric Dental Specialists

FOUNDATION SUPPORT

Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation
Montana Community Foundation
Billings Education Foundation

As a non-profit agency, Head Start, Inc. relies on support from our community to provide the highest quality services and make lasting impacts on the lives of our children and families. The support we receive by the generous individuals and business in our community is what makes our program successful. The list of community partners providing opportunities for our children is continually growing!

Support from our incredible community partners makes it possible for us to provide quality education and family services to our children and families. Our partners provide monetary, material and volunteer donations to ensure our children have what they need to succeed. They support us buy purchasing needed supplies, sending volunteers to complete projects and funding program initiatives.

EDUCATION &

FAMILY SERVICE PARTNERS

AWARE Early Head Start
Lockwood Public Schools
Billings Public Schools
Adult Resource Alliance
Billings Golden K Kiwanis
Billings Symphony
Elevation Church
Harvest Church
American Lutheran Church
MSU-Billings
Rocky Mountain College
United Way of Yellowstone County

DISCOUNTED SERVICES

Benedicts Affordable Cartridges
Child Plus
Conditioned Air Systems, Inc.
Entre' Technology Services
Yellowstone Art Museum
ZooMontana
Allegra Printing

GOLF TOURNAMENT SPONSORS

Alpha Omega Disaster Restoration
AVA Law Group
Briggs Distributing
Marsh McLennan
Something Chic
EEC
Bumps & Bundles

MISCELLANEOUS DONORS

Stink Blossom
Hooligan's
TDS Fiber
King's Ace Hardware
Doris Slavin

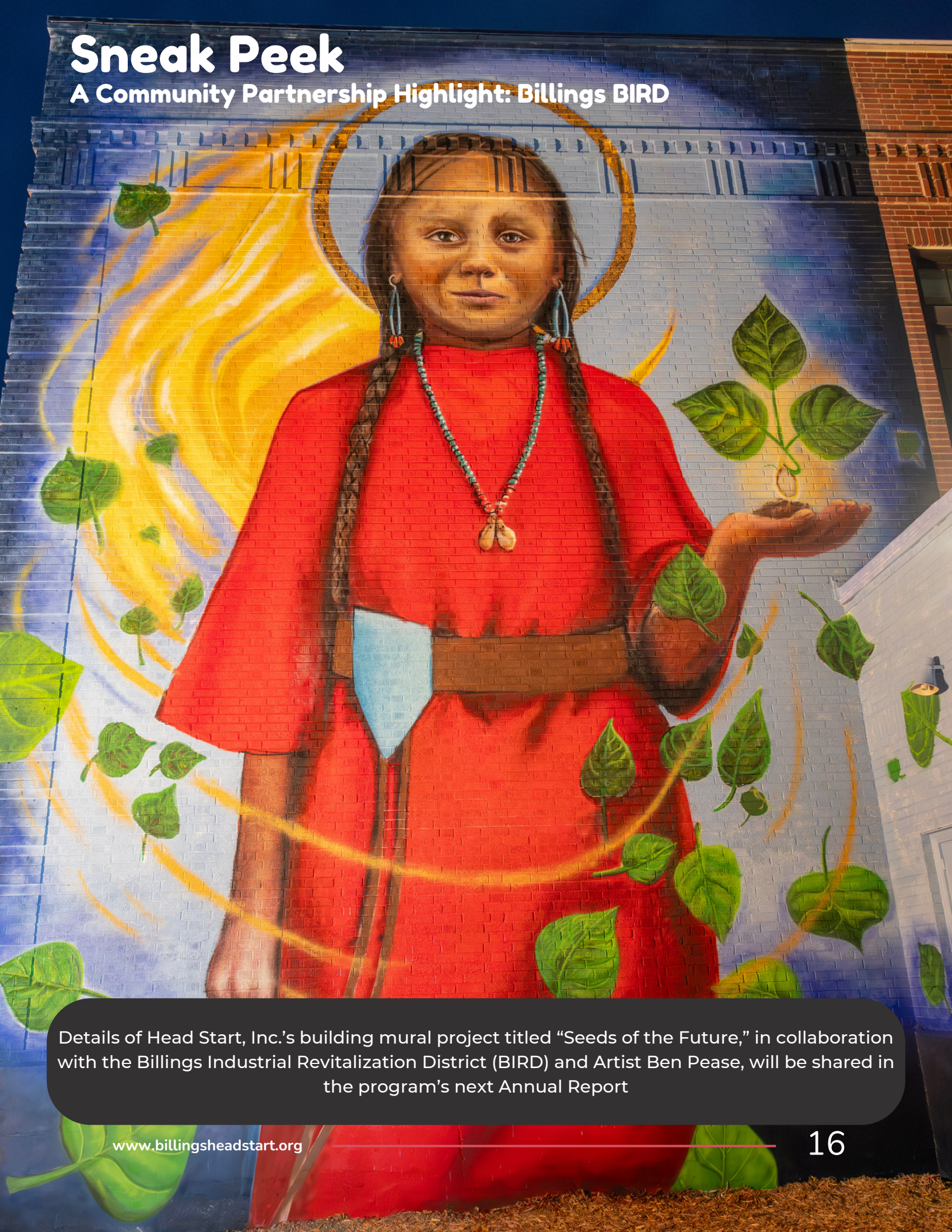
**With sincere appreciation to
those in our community who
give so generously - You are
making a difference!**



Thank You!

Sneak Peek

A Community Partnership Highlight: Billings BIRD



Details of Head Start, Inc.'s building mural project titled "Seeds of the Future," in collaboration with the Billings Industrial Revitalization District (BIRD) and Artist Ben Pease, will be shared in the program's next Annual Report