



WORD

# Family Resource Centers

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

## Newsletter

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 5

FEB 18, 2005

- 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](http://www.wordinc.org/frc)

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## I Love to Read!

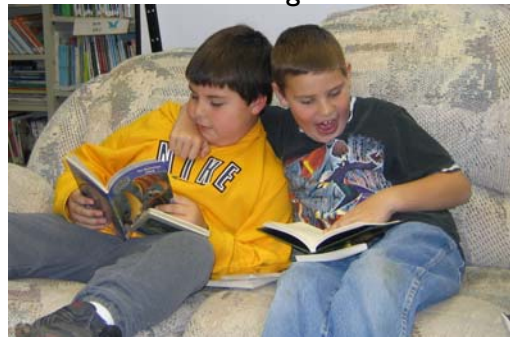
February may be "I like to read month," but throughout western Montana schools, children like to read every month—with their parents! Parent-Child Book Clubs promote a love of reading and a nurturing bond between parent and child. Current research from *Education World* online has some startling discoveries concerning children who read each day with a parent. Many times, these children exhibit higher than average reading scores, a life-long love of literature, and improved family communication.

Bonding with books through Book Club is an activities that can be done at home, at school, or both. It involves reading and discussing books together for a total of 15-30 minutes each day, depending on the age of the child. Parent-child reading builds confidence and allows children to read a text more difficult than they could alone. It also helps parents to support reading comprehension, listening skills, and vocabulary development with their children. As the child gets older, the parent and child can read independently. As themes are discussed, creativity blooms.



At the Franklin Family Resource Center, Coordinator Vickie Rectenwald facilitates the Book Club and participates in it with her 3rd grade daughter. She began the Book Club when, "the

parent surveys came back and 50% of them wanted a Book Club at school." Vickie has been hosting them since November with the 2nd-5th grades. The Book Club meets



two times per month, after school for about 90 minutes.

Each parent-child takes a turn running a

discussion group. The focus questions revolve around the book themes and issues. There are no wrong answers, and often times a book-related game and prizes are included in the Book Club activities. Some of the national award-winning selection read this year were: *Esperanza Rising* by Pan Munoz Ryan, *Tiger Rising* by Kate DiCamillo, and currently, *The School Story* by Andrew Clements.

At Lowell School, *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson, was the kid's choice by popular demand. Parents and children will be following the sea-faring adventures of Long John Silver. With the support of Librarian, Andrea Phillip, Book Club will begin at the end of February. Every other Wednesday night from 6:00-7:00 pm, parents and children will meet together and discuss questions, issues, and themes of the book. Some older children who have already (continued 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 five in a ten-part series on Family Resource Center staff)*

At Futures, the Teen Family Resource Center, Essie Etchingham utilizes her skills and knowledge in a myriad of arenas. Serving about 50 clients from 15 to 21 years old, the Teen Family Resource Center provides support to teenage mothers and fathers and their children in the Missoula area. The generosity of the Missoula community “is really the strength of the program,” Essie notes. Businesses from all over the valley donate to the different programs and needs of the teen parents. We get everything from vacuum cleaners, to diapers, to pizzas, to books,” remarks Essie. During the holidays, the kids, moms, and dads received gifts and donations.

Essie works with two family advocates at the Center. Her duties may include writing newsletters, taking parents bowling or to a job interview, or helping them fill out a housing form. Her focus this month is the organization of the upcoming program called “Parent Time.” This will be a Monday afternoon program in which young parents can get together in a guided class toward a

self-care issue. The first one will be a stretching class.

Another Teen Family Resource Center program is Parents as Teachers (PAT). This helps teen parents learn strong parenting skills and develop positive relationship building. Essie notes that the Center helps people in every small way and there are many rewarding experiences. “Watching a dad get his GED, or having a mom come back and offer to help other moms are ways that the program sustains and builds itself. The clients feel invested enough to give back.”

Originally from Bozeman, Montana, Essie moved to Missoula after finishing a psychology degree at Indiana University in Bloomington. “I went there on a ballet scholarship and even taught ballet to younger students.” Essie is interested in returning to Bozeman and pursuing a master’s degree in nutritional science. The experience with Americorps has been invaluable. She notes, “I have learned so much this year about teamwork, goals, the strength of the Missoula community, and the joys of little accomplishments each day. This is one of the most enriching things I have ever done.”

### *A Note from the Director*

There’s hardly a thing I like better than to sink into a soft chair, in a beam of sunlight on a cold February day and get lost in a good book. It’s like a mini vacation to where ever I choose to go. Delying into a good book is something I’ve cherished since I was a child. Each summer we would head to the cabin, each family member with a heavy bag of library books checked out for the summer. I had a quiet secluded spot where I could snuggled in on a mossy bank of a northern Minnesota lake, my back against a birch tree with the sound of waves lapping the shore, undisturbed for hours (somewhat of a miracle in a rambunctious family with ten kids). There I solved mysteries with Nancy Drew, learned everything I needed to know to care for the horse I longed for, traveled through jungles, and had my romantic young heart pierced.

Experiencing, learning and traversing life through books is a gift and a privilege I don’t take lightly. I know that that I’m one of the fortunate few in this world who are able to open this gift. Some do not know how to read, some do not have access to books, and some leave the book unopened, not knowing what they are missing. So how did I come to appreciate and use this gift? People around me had it and shared it with me. They were lively, engaging, interesting, and funny talking about what they read. Adults in my life taught themselves how to do amazing things with books. Through their literary travels they knew a lot about places I knew they had never actually visited. They held beliefs and opinions backed by great thinkers. I wanted what they had. I wanted a rich full life, in spite of my lack of material resources. I found it in books and continue to.

Today’s mass media casts a long shadow on the cover of books. They look boring sitting there next to the multi-sensory competitors. I often think of how hard it might have been for me as a child to recognize the gift before me if the adults around me hadn’t.

-Jeanne Moon

### *I Love to Read continued...*

read it are coming back because they enjoyed the story so much. There are snacks and food for parents and children.

Last fall, the Lowell Book Club read *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls. This immortal dog story is set in the Ozarks of Oklahoma in the 1920s. Kasey Savage, the Family Resource Center Coordinator says, “I still can’t read that book without crying. My kids and I get so involved with the story because it is so moving.” There is always room for more parents and children to join the Lowell Book Club.

Setting aside a special parent-child time to read builds a strong and personal relationship, as well as a life-long enjoyment of reading. As conversation grows from reading together, bonds

are built and ideas are explored. The greatest legacy one can leave children is a happy memory and Book Clubs in the schools are a venue to build those memories that will last a lifetime.



# Parent Connection at Cherry Valley



Ever have a question about something that is going on in the schools, but don't really know when or where a good time to ask it is? AmeriCorps members, Edna Lemm and Stephanie Noyes are working to make those opportunities more available through Parent Connection at Cherry Valley Elementary up in Polson. "Parent Connection is a great opportunity to create a welcoming environment for parents and adults from the community to come in and get answers to questions they might have," stated Edna Lemm.

Parent Connection is a time that has been created once a month for a hour and a half to two hours for parents to come in and discuss topics they have concerns about. "The Parent Connection offers an informal way for parents to learn together and builds relationships between parents, also," said Principal Elaine Meeks. Topics thus far have included, the grading system, how to deal with bullying in school, and even an art history lesson on Henri Matisse that several of the art docents are doing in the classrooms. "By giving the same art lesson to the parents and adults that the children receive, the adults are able to understand the comprehend what the kids are learning. Plus they get to play with art supplies!" said Stephanie Noyes.

In addition to organizing time for parents to connect and ask questions, Edna and Stephanie also organized a parent work party that painted and redecorated not only the Family Resource Center but also the Teachers' Lounge! Teachers, staff, and parents all appreciate the efforts these two remarkable women are continuing to make to increase the parent involvement in the school.

Working as an AmeriCorps member in the Family Resource Center was a very natural step to continue Stephanie and Edna's involvement in the school. By already being familiar with the school, taking this next step

to becoming AmeriCorps members, they were able to continue what they were doing while also have the knowledge of what has worked in the past on their side.

Stephanie, PTO President and mother of four, has been volunteering at the school since her children have been there and also helps organize events through the PTO. In addition to all these activities, Stephanie is also very active in the Cherry Valley Indian Parent Group, which gives her the chance to encourage more parents to become involved in the Family Resource Center activities. Edna has been involved for several years as well since her children entered the school. She

began and continues to be the director of the Art Docent program, which recruits volunteers to come into the classrooms and helps teach the students different lessons on past and present artist. "This program allows the students to express themselves through art and also increase their abilities."

By working in the Family Resource Center both Stephanie and Edna have been so impressed and amazed by all the volunteers who has been involved. It has really opened their eyes to continuing to do things outside of their program. "We have fallen in love with Cherry Valley Elementary even more than could be imagined. Meeting with other parents and adults and seeing how their skills can be best used in the school has been great," said Edna.

So, as the Cherry Valley Parent Connection continues to be a huge success, speakers on topics parents and adults in the school are concerned about will be addressed as well as building and bringing the community together.



## *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  
martinr@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 ext 154  
burnsc@florence.k12.mt.us

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

Hamilton High School  
327 Fairgrounds Rd  
Hamilton, MT 59840  
Heidi Tosini  
406-375-6060 ext 6222  
tosinih@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  
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