

West Mont Times

2nd Biannual Newsletter 2023

Editor: Janelle Egli

A Message from the President: Creative Solutions with the Help of Donations

Across West Mont, we're working towards transitioning away from the traditional, large-group day programs to smaller settings where people spend much of their time in the community, engaged in various activities. You have seen this with the changes that have been made at West Mont Flower Shop. We want to celebrate experiences with our clients and to engage our community in what being a part of the life of someone with a disability looks like.



We also know it is important for our clients to spend part of their day in a small group setting where they work on life skills as designated by their individualized care plan. That includes things like writing, cooking, and safety skills, such as what to do in a fire or when there's a tornado warning. One of our tagline words is #independence and so this is important for our work here at West Mont. To make these settings happen, we need donations.

Charitable gifts help with a variety of needs at West Mont, including things such as specialized therapies and adaptive equipment that Medicaid doesn't pay for and specific items that people may not be able to afford on their own. Gifts also help with the extras, such as tickets for entertainment outside of their day-to-day activities like a sporting event, concert, or movie. The impact of these gifts for those that West Mont supports is often life changing. Gifts also impact the success of the organization. West Mont is 90% funded by Medicaid and other government sources, but that funding will never be enough for people to have everything they need. Gifts, grants, and estates allow West Mont to invest in the future, such as through new technology, quality improvements that increase personalized services and expanding the mission to serve more people. The added financial stability also allows West Mont to remain an independent, nonprofit organization.

Gift dollars have purchased many of the following items for people: adaptive equipment, outdoor patio furniture to enjoy Montana summers, modified eating utensils, clothing, coats, footwear, furniture, communication devices to connect with family, and personal hygiene items.



As we near the end of the year we are looking for ways to create more community experiences for our clients. We are asking for donations to support the costs of getting our clients out in the community. These donations can look like suggestions of events we could attend, tickets for these events, volunteering to help us create an experience, or cash funds to help along the way.

To be a partner in creating positive change, here's the QR code for our donation page.

Direct Support Professional of Excellence Award

A BIG congratulations to our very own Joaquin Jesus for receiving recognition from Lt. Governor Kristen Juras and Department of Public Health and Human Services Director Charlie Brereton for his work as a Direct Support Professional (DSP) at West Mont.

DSPs are a critical part of our work here at West Mont, and we echo Lt. Governor Juras who said, "These professionals are truly unsung heroes who are dedicated to this vital profession and the people they serve."

Please help us recognize Joaquin's good work by reading his nomination letter below.



Joaquin has many excellent qualities. He always shows up to work with a smile. He is a fast learner and adapts well on the fly. One of his main focuses is to improve the lives of our clients. He is the definition of selfless, and is always willing to learn and collaborate with his coworkers on how to improve, with the best interests of clients always top of mind. What stands out the most is how he gives freely of his own time to learn about each individual client. He is able to navigate what works and what doesn't work. He has a huge heart for his fellow human beings and gives each the dignity and respect they deserve, and promotes independence. Joaquin gives time on his days off to make sure clients can engage in fun outings. He is always willing to help in any situation.

Learn more about this honor and the Developmental Disabilities Program Conference where it was presented at dphhs.mt.gov/News/2023/September/Lt.Governor,DPHSHonorDirectSupportProfessionals

The West Mont Dragons Are Back!

Thanks to the time and commitment of generous volunteers and the support of key staff, we are excited to announce that a handful of our Supported Living clients have joined to represent West Mont at the 2023 Special Olympics Montana (SOMT) State Basketball Tournament.

Please attend and cheer on our athletes and coaches! The tournament, which brings more than 600 individuals from across the state together to compete in solidarity, will be held in Helena November 9-11th. This amazing event is sure to energize participants and fans, creating lasting and fun memories for all.

If you would like to support our Dragons, please consider purchasing SOMT raffle tickets – raffle details coming soon!

More information about SOMT and the tournament is available at www.somt.org.



Coach Callahan Promotes Carroll College Women's Basketball and Celebrates One Year of Service

In other basketball news, our very own Coach Callahan is looking forward to another successful season working in support of Carroll College Women's Basketball. Coach Callahan is going on one year of service November 17th and would love for the West Mont community to come out for a game or two to see her and the fighting Saints in action.

The 2023-24 Women's Basketball Schedule is available at carrollathletics.com/sports/womens-basketball/schedule/2023-24.

CHRISTMAS WREATHS *For Sale*

AT WEST MONT FLOWER SHOP 3150 MITCHELL AVE HELENA
STARTING NOVEMBER 9TH, 2023 WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

Please call our shop to place an order (406) 447-3123

Wreath prices:

16 " Decorated - \$40, undecorated \$30

24 " Decorated - \$50, undecorated \$40

28 " Decorated - \$60, undecorated \$50

Delivery available for a charge

WEST MONT IS A 501(C)(3) THAT CARES FOR MONTANANS WITH DISABILITIES



A Look Back at an Eventful 2023...

Top (Left to Right): Color Fun Run, 50th Birthday Bash Fundraiser, Field Day at the Farm

Bottom (Left to Right): Fun-Raiser at the Carousel, Wake the Giant Music and Color Festival, Flynn Pavilion Ribbon Cutting



Longevity Awards

Every year we recognize the contributions of our dedicated team members by presenting awards to staff who have reached certain service milestones. This year we presented these awards at a "Longevity Award Breakfast." We had fun taking time to celebrate each awardee, and we invite you to celebrate them as well. We're so grateful for their commitment to our organization and our mission, and we're thrilled to honor them in this small way.



Left to right, top to bottom: Brittany C., 5 years; Jon S., 5 years; Pom M., 15 years; Russ S., 15 years.



Monica B., 20 years.

Not pictured: Ashley N., 15 years; Jon H., 5 years; Tiffany B., 5 years; Cary C., 5 years; Karla R., 5 years (in memory).

End the Bullying

If you were to ask our staff what they love about working with West Mont clients, you would hear a range of responses, and among them would probably be something like, "They help you see things with a new perspective." Our interactions with all people can broaden our understanding and help us see more than we are inclined to through our unique lenses of experience and privilege, but clients have a special way of getting us to pay attention and see things differently.

Our very own Saleena recently invited us to take a deep look at the problem of bullying. Her words, below, are a wonderful reminder that kindness and compassion go a long way in creating an inclusive and caring climate where individuals feel empowered and dignified; even supported and upheld.

Life can be hard. Look for the helpers. And listen when you hear brave people, like Saleena, who speak up when they see injustice.

Even though someone insults you don't let your emotions control you and don't let fear get in the way of life because you're out of this world and because out in the real world no one should have to be bullied! Stand up for your rights and what you believe in because you are you and you are special in your own way! This is a reminder of why we should end the bullying because I believe bullying should never be the answer no matter who you are. And no matter what life brings you, just know that we all have one main thing in common. We are all human beings, we're not perfect like we hope to be and most of all we all make mistakes that's what makes us unique in our own way. So to end the story just as a tip. If you feel that you're being bullied by someone who is bullying you just remember this they may be having a bad day and might not know how to express their feelings because they probably feel like they have nobody to express them to. And to end the story I would like to say thank you and am hoping my words of knowledge will be passed along to end the bullying.



relaxing on his couch and is missed by his friends and family.

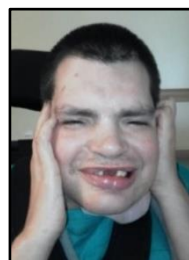
Debra “Debbie” Mudd Spranget, 1959-2023



Debbie was born, along with her twin sister, Dianne, in Tacoma, Washington, and grew up in Clancy near Helena. Through her career in broadcasting and her involvement in Farm in the Dell International as a board member, she advocated for individuals with disabilities in the Helena community. Debbie passed away after a courageous battle with cancer, and she is missed by all who worked alongside her and loved her.

Connie Fong, 1958-2023

Born to Terry and Donna Lee Fong in Fort Worth, Texas, Connie was a graduate from Great Falls High School and a long-time resident of West Mont, most recently at Townsend Group Home. She was a music enthusiast and loved to listen to tunes while dancing or taking a ride in the car. Connie loved attention and would sometimes get it by finding and pushing “buttons.” She was keenly aware of and sensitive to others’ emotions and expressed her own feelings with a high degree of emotional intelligence. Connie loved spending time with her family and is beloved by all who provided for her care.



Joseph “Joe” Evans, Died 2023

Joe expressed his appreciation for life with beautiful smiles and contagious laughter. Although he had many emotional and physical challenges, his resilience helped him find joy in life. Joe spent his childhood in state institutions and his teenage years with his foster parent Hollyann Frisch. He received services from West Mont later in life, and eventually moved to Missoula where he received care from Arc of Western Montana.



Steve Rhein, 1957-2023

Steve was born in Helena and was a proud sibling to three sisters and one brother. He was blind but very mobile, and independently moved himself around his West Mont group home, Lewis and Clark, and his West Mont day program site, VASTT. Steve’s caregivers took note of his intelligence and his love for interacting through games like sorting blocks and playing “tapping.” He enjoyed soda, popcorn, and going on rides or

Karla Rawson 1965-2023



Karla was a part of the West Mont team for 5 years. She leaves behind two daughters and six grandchildren, as well as loving friends who cherished their time with her. Karla will be remembered for the magic she made in the kitchen (her colleagues waited for Karla’s turn to cook) and the way she could use a meme or a gif to describe herself, another person, and every possible human emotion or life experience.

End-of-Year Charitable Giving Campaign to Support Community-Based Activities for Clients

West Mont has been trusted to care for Montanans since 1973. Our services touch the lives of more than 250 individuals with disabilities in the greater Helena area, and our impact is possible because of supporters like you.

As detailed in our "Message from the President," we are interested in creating more community experiences for our clients, especially as we head into the holiday season. With this objective in mind, we are kicking off our end-of-year giving campaign!

Here are three meaningful ways you can participate:

- (1) **Invite us to attend or volunteer at your event or make some activity recommendations that you feel would resonate with our clients.** We have a spectrum of interests and abilities, so please don't hesitate to engage with us. We will share all of your invitations and recommendations with our direct service providers and, as staffing allows, work to take advantage of the unique opportunities that are presented to us.
- (2) **Provide a tax-deductible cash gift via our Community Activity Fund (click the "Donate Now" button at westmonthelena.com).** This fund was created with the sole purpose of helping us give the individuals we serve opportunities to socialize, grow, and connect. All donations raised through this fund will be used to provide clients with fun and purposeful experiences that will enhance their quality of life and give them joy during this special season and into the new year. Examples of fund uses are purchasing tickets to local sporting events, concerts, movies, and anything else that may be needed to make experiences safe and fun for our clients.
- (3) **Add gift cards to your shopping list and drop them off at one of our three receiving locations.** Gift cards are tax-deductible, just like cash, and can be a wonderful way to connect our clients to the community. Our gift card wish list is below,

but feel free to think outside the box and make your contribution as unique as you are! All gifts and amounts are appreciated and can be accepted at our flower shop (3150 Mitchell Ave, M-F 8AM-3PM), administrative office (2708 Bozeman Ave, M-F 8AM-4PM), or First Interstate Bank (25 E Lyndale Ave, M-F 9AM-4PM).

Gift Card Wish List:

<i>1889 Coffee Shop</i>	<i>Montana Book Co.</i>
<i>Big Dipper Ice Cream</i>	<i>Painted Pot</i>
<i>Broadwater Hot Springs</i>	<i>Parrot Confectionery</i>
<i>Brooklyn Pizza</i>	<i>Piccolo's Music</i>
<i>Capital Sports & Western</i>	<i>Pizza Ranch</i>
<i>Carousel</i>	<i>Sleeping Giant Lanes</i>
<i>Cinemark</i>	<i>Taco Del Sol</i>
<i>Cohesion Dance</i>	<i>The Bagel Company</i>
<i>Florence Coffee</i>	<i>The Base Camp</i>
<i>Flying Giant Adventure Park</i>	<i>The Brewhouse</i>
<i>Grateful Bread Bakery</i>	<i>The Myrna Loy</i>
<i>McDonald's</i>	<i>The Windbag</i>
<i>McKenzie River Pizza</i>	<i>Uphill Grill</i>

Note: In addition to gift cards, we will also happily accept donated tickets to sporting events, concerts, or shows.

Our charitable giving campaign will run now through the end of December. Questions? Reach out to Janelle Egli at 406-447-3109 or jegli@westmont.org.



Show your support for Montanans with disabilities by sharing our campaign graphic on social media (available at westmonthelena.com).



National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Thank you for celebrating National Disability Employment Awareness Month with us throughout October. We loved recognizing the contributions of individuals with disabilities in our community with you!



If you see our Supported Employment clients in the community, please smile and say hello. If the opportunity arises, please also let them know that you appreciate the work they do to keep local businesses running and to build more inclusive workplaces.



A Special Thanks to Our Sponsors, Partners, and Supporters!

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BENEFACTORS AND ADVOCATES



Crafting Beers for 20 Years



PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS



L. Sri Vellanki and Andrew Pida



St. Peter's Health



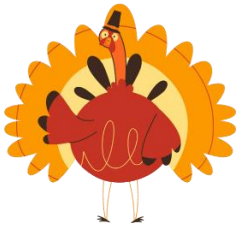


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Helena, MT 59601

Non-Profit Org.
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Thank you for sustaining our work!

Mail Your End-of-Year Donation to West Mont 2708 Bozeman Ave Helena, MT 59601



Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____



Select Your Donation Amount and Method:

- \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1000 Other \$ _____
- Cash Check Credit/Debit Card (complete section below)

Name on Card: _____ Card #: _____

Exp. Date: _____ CVC: _____ Date: _____ Signature: _____

I'll make a monthly donation of \$ _____/mo.

