

## West Mont Cheer Squad Celebrates 10-Years

February 2017 marked the ten year inception of the West Mont Cheer Squad. The idea for our own cheer squad began at Special Olympics where our athletes saw local cheerleaders performing for the crowd. As our clients watched, they reminisced about their high school days and how they had



L-R: Ginny Heinert & Susan Pesta; below L-R: Renee Vulk & Lora Michalski



always wanted to be cheerleaders. Thus the idea was born and two long-term West Mont employees, **Susan Pesta** and **Ginny Heinert** made it a reality in February 2007. Ginny recruited her daughter **Renee**, a cheerleader at Carroll College, to help coach our cheerleaders. In 2009, another West Mont employee, **Lora Michalski** came on board to coach. The cheer squad began with 14-clients participating and of that original group 9 are still actively involved. The other five original members either moved from Helena or passed away.



Over the years, the group has grown to 22 participants. They have been featured in TV spots, in the newspaper, and in the Apostrophe magazine. They have helped kick-off United Way Campaigns and Special Olympics. They have performed for the state legislators, National Down Syndrome Day, at West Mont's Harvest Days events, and more. They get together most Tuesday nights to practice and every few months they learn new routines. Although members have their favorite cheers, they are always ready to learn more. After all of these years, Susan, Ginny, Renee, and Lora are still involved.

### West Mont Clients and Cheer Squad Help Commemorate World Down Syndrome Day at the Capitol

West Mont clients and cheer squad spent many hours practicing for their performance at the state capitol for **World Down Syndrome Day**. World Down Syndrome Day (WDS) is observed on March 21 every year. It is a global day to help raise awareness of what Down syndrome is, what it means to have Down syndrome, and how people with Down syndrome play a vital role in our lives and communities. (continued on page 4)

## SMA Architects Awarded PAR Bid for Farm & Gardens Project

West Mont is delighted to announce that **SMA Architects** was awarded the contract to assist us with the **Community Development Block Grant Preliminary Architect Report** for our **Farm & Gardens** group home located at 3240 York Road Helena. Assisting with the grant writing will be **Robie Culver, Stahly Engineering**. SMA will review the existing group home and gather all relevant information pertaining to the need for renovating the current facility or constructing a new residential structure. They will also evaluate alternative locations on the property and create a priority list along with cost estimates and comparative analysis of options.

We are excited to be moving forward on this project. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the **Lewis and Clark County Commissioners** for sponsoring our PAR Grant application and thanks to **Laura Erickson, Lewis and Clark County Development Coordinator** for all of her assistance.

Engraved bricks are still available for purchase with all funds raised going towards the Farm project. All bricks will be displayed at the Farm. Additional information about engraved bricks is in the adjacent box.

### Support Our Farm, Buy a Brick

West Mont is selling engraved bricks to raise funds for the Farm project. Bricks are available in 3-sizes: \$50 for regular, \$150 large, or \$250 for an extra large brick. Your purchase is tax deductible and will displayed at West Mont Farm & Gardens. For more information, contact the main office at 406-447-3100



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

“Things may come to those who wait, but only the things left by those who hustle.”

~ *Abraham Lincoln*

Riley Relfe, A2Z Staffing, came up with a wonderful idea to have a contest for employee of the year and give the award on **Employee Appreciation Day**. The following is an edited version of what I submitted on behalf of one of our employees.



l-r: A2Z's Riley Relfe presents the award to Jodi Hines

Every once in a while an employee comes along who epitomizes all of the incredible qualities you wish everyone in the workforce would have: a positive, can do, attitude including an ever-present smile and pleasant word for all co-workers; excellent attendance, loyalty and commitment to the company; always looking for something else to do when all other assignments are completed - and done right the first time; and, ready to step in and help when someone else is struggling. At West Mont we are fortunate enough to have such a person. Her name is **Jodi Hines** and she is a **Direct Support Specialist Assistant (DSSA)**.

When Jodi was in High School enrolled in a combination of Special Education and regular classes she was always impressed with what a difference her teachers could make. So, she decided she wanted to work with people, too, and that there was no reason to let her developmental disability stand in her way. After graduation she had a job at a fast food restaurant, was employed at a nursing home, and then at a popular restaurant for eight years.

Then, ten years ago Jodi was in Helena visiting relatives for the summer. Her grandmother suggested Jodi contact **West Mont's Farm & Gardens** about volunteering. Jodi loves animals, helping others and working outside, so it seemed like a perfect fit and indeed it was. After several months we were so impressed with her sense of responsibility and teamwork that we created the DSSA job description and offered her a part time job. Other than a break for not quite a year to join family in Arizona, Jodi has been a mainstay at the Farm. She has duties at both the group home and the vocational program and works side-by-side with the Program Managers, Assistant Program Managers and the Direct Support Specialists.



l-r: Riley Relfe, Kris Bakula, and Jodi Hines

As Jodi once told a reporter for the [Apostrophe](#) magazine, “I don't see myself as disabled. I can do the things that anybody else can do. I can teach myself to go further than I think I can.” And, her empathy for our clients is certainly heartfelt. “I see what they go through every day and it makes me feel closer to them. I understand where they are at. They can help themselves, but I can help them along.” Jodi would gladly work more than 20 hours a week at the Farm, but Social Security has earning caps which limit her monthly income, so it has worked out nicely to have her on staff part time all these years.



Integrity and work ethic are qualities we can all learn from working with Jodi. For these, and all of the reasons listed above, it was my honor to nominate Jodi Hines for the A2Z Employee of the Year. Thank you Riley and all of the great staff at A2Z staffing for selecting Jodi as this year's winner. The presentation on March 3<sup>rd</sup> was fantastic, complete with the cake and award, and a day all of us will never forget.



Kris Bakula

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For more information, please contact our Main Office at: (406)447-3100 or e-mail us at: [wmooffice@westmont.org](mailto:wmooffice@westmont.org)

# West Mont in the Spotlight

## Mark Your Calendar for the 25th Annual Harvest Days



Join us for West Mont's 25th Annual Harvest Days. Family Fun Day is scheduled for Saturday September 9, 2017 and the Black Tie Blue Jean Benefit "Champagne Brunch" is set for Friday September 15, 2017. Yes, you read that right, this year the Black Tie Blue Jean event will be a champagne brunch and we will be held at the Best Western Premier Helena Great Northern Hotel.

*More details to follow in our next newsletter.*

### In Memory of Mike Greely



West Mont was saddened to learn that **Mike Greely** passed away unexpectedly on January 26, 2017. Among his many accomplishments, Mike served 3-terms as Attorney General of Montana. What people may not know is that for many years Mike was a volunteer at West Mont serving on the Development Committee. Although he retired from the committee several years ago, we continued to miss his smiling face. Mike is survived by his wife, Marilyn, three children, two grandchildren, and his loyal companion, Rudy. Thank you for your work on our behalf.

### West Mont Welcomes New HR Generalist

West Mont is pleased to announce the recent addition of **DeeAnna Walker** to our staff. DeeAnna was hired as our new **Human Resources Generalist**. A little over three years ago, DeeAnna began working in the developmental disabilities field and soon realized that this industry was something she was meant for.



DeeAnna was born and raised in Helena. She has two boys, one in college and the other is a high school sophomore. Her loyal companion Wylie rounds out her household. She loves spending time with her family and enjoys all of the outdoor adventures that Helena provides. Welcome aboard!

### The Tomatoes are Looking Good!

Spring is in the air and the clients and staff at **West Mont Farm & Gardens** are very busy. The first batch of bedding plants have been started and recently, the tomatoes were replanted into large bags. Vine-ripened tomatoes are on the horizon.



West Mont was thrilled to receive a generous **\$1,500** check from our friends at the **Helena Art Center**. From L-R are **Linda Cantrell, Marlene Perrin, and Cindy Rose** with West Mont's **Kris Bakula**. West Mont was also excited to receive an unexpected **\$5,000** check from **Fresh Life Church in Kalispell**. We were selected as part of their giving back to communities campaign. **Thank you again Helena Art Center and Fresh Life Church!**

"There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up"  
~ *John Holmes*



**Helena Civic TV** recently did a segment on the West Mont Cheer Squad. L-R: **West Mont's Lora Michalski and Susan Pesta, Helena Industries Katie Gallagher, and Cheer Squad member Kari.**

# West Mont in the Spotlight

Cheer Squad (Continued from page 1)



Susie Hull & Steven Betts

Why March 21? This date was selected to signify the uniqueness of the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome which causes Down syndrome. Says West Mont's Susan Pesta, "This day celebrates the awareness of not **Special Needs**, but **Human Needs**." The event was held in the Old Supreme Court Chambers at the capitol. West Mont clients were on hand to present the colors and sing the national anthem. Following that, our cheer squad performed three routines including one with **Steven "Elvis" Betts**. Steven and **Susie Hull** were designated to be highlighted at this year's event. West Mont is very proud of the job that everyone did.

The event was hosted by **West Mont, the Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS), the Montana Council of Developmental Disabilities (MCDD), Helena Industries, and PEERS Unlimited**. Speakers included **Lt. Governor Mike Cooney, Deborah Swingley, Director of MCDD, Sheila Hogan, Director of DPHHS, and West Mont's Susan Pesta and cheerleader Amy Rash** who introduced Sheila.



Lt. Governor Mike Cooney

The West Mont Cheer Squad are our inspiration. They demonstrate to everyone the abilities of people with disabilities. Recreational/social activities are critical to a happy and fulfilling life. We are grateful to the **United Way 2016/2017 Campaign**. West Mont will receive **\$3,987** in funds reserved for the purchase of new uniforms and equipment needed for Special Olympics. Thank you United Way!

Donations to support our Cheer Squad and our Special Olympics athletes are always needed and greatly appreciated. Please contact our main office at **406-447-3100**.



Amy introducing DPHHS Director Sheila Hogan



Susie performing



In addition to cheering, the **West Mont Cheer Squad** opened the event with the national anthem



Steven "Elvis" Betts is "All Shook Up" with the West Mont Cheer Squad



Junior and Kari just before their performance



From left to right: **Stephanie, Susie, and Jeff**

# West Mont in the Spotlight

## Supported Living Services - Helping People Live Independent Lives

Although many people are aware of West Mont's residential, vocational/employment, and nursing care services, you may not know that we also provide **Supported Living services (SL)**. Supported Living services are for people with physical and/or developmental disabilities living in their own home. West Mont staff provides the support, supervision, and training to provide our clients with the necessary skills to live as independently and safely as possible.



**Amanda** receives SL services & also works at **West Mont Flower & Trading Company**.

Living skills taught may include planning nutritious meals, cooking, household maintenance, shopping, laundry, personal hygiene, budgeting, and money management. Clients are also taught safety tips such as how to access emergency services if needed, how to recognize and avoid interactions with people who may take advantage of their vulnerability, wearing safety vests if walking at night, etc.

Other services can include job support. Although clients may be working in a community based job, they still might need on-the-job assistance and coaching which can be provided on a short or long-term basis. If needed, our staff can work with the client side by side or they can provide a lesser level of support. All services are personalized and include assisting clients with social skills, activities, and appropriate behavior with an emphasis on community integration. Recreational and social activities may take place with the individual or in a group setting. Clients are taught manners, how to be a team player, and to respect others. Clients may also participate in the West Mont Cheer Squad and on our Special Olympics teams.



**Carol** receives SL services and is also actively involved on our Cheer Squad

Supported Living Services are funded by the **Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Disability Division**. The level of all services and the categories of services are determined by the dollar amount of the client's approved cost plan, the qualifying individual or guardian, a Case Manager, and West Mont. Currently, West Mont serves 36-clients in the Supported Living program. **Susan Pesta, V.P. of Supported Services & Agency Relations** oversees the division. The **Program Manager, Tabby Morley** has been with West Mont since 2009. She was an Assistant Program Manager at West Mont's Humbolt Apartments prior to being promoted to program manager. **Ryan McAlpin** is the **Assistant Program Manager (APM)**. Ryan joined West Mont in 2011 and, prior to becoming the APM, he was a Direct Support Specialist II in Supported Living. Supported Living Services provide clients with the tools they need help them enjoy life to its fullest!



**SL Services client, Rudy** recently began working at **Capital City Health Club**. He also does volunteer work at **Fort Harrison**.



L-R: Both **Kathleen & Ashleigh** receive SL services & are Cheer Squad participants



**Tabby Morley**

## Want to Make a Difference in Someone's Life?

Our employees do this every single day and you can too! Do you like helping people? **West Mont is HIRING!** No experience necessary as we will provide all of the training. We offer a **full benefit package** including personal leave, health insurance, life, dental, and vision insurance, retirement matching, Health Savings Account (HSA), longevity incentives, flexible benefits, room for advancement, and the opportunity to make a difference. Check out our website at [www.westmont.org](http://www.westmont.org) or contact **DeeAnna Walker** at our main office (406) 447-3115 or email [dwalker@westmont.org](mailto:dwalker@westmont.org). **APPLY TODAY!**



# Enjoying a Very Merry Winterfest and Holiday at West Mont

West Mont Flower & Trading Company's 4th Annual Winterfest was another rousing success, generating \$1,000 more than the previous year. Thank You

**Officers from the Sheriff's Department** for volunteering your time to provide free fingerprinting and safety tips for all of the kids. They were a huge hit with everyone! Thanks also to **Montana Radio's Greg Pace**. Greg once again donned his Santa outfit and enjoyed listening to the wish lists from kids and clients. Congratulations to the clients and staff at this vocational program. They continue to produce beautiful and unique arrangements and recently took **2nd place for Best Flower Shop** in the **Independent Record's "Best of Helena"** supplement.



A couple of weeks later, Greg returned as Santa (thank you **Montana Radio** for giving him the day off!), and continued spreading Christmas joy with Mrs. Claus, **Arlene Flynn** accompanying him. They visited group homes and vocational sites, ably assisted by **Chuck Flynn** who chauffeured the Claus's around and helped deliver presents. We are also very grateful for all of the gifts and monies donated for client Christmas gifts as well as the end of year donations. **Thank you** for helping us make the holidays special for our clients. To our **fantastic staff** that worked the holidays, **thank you** for your dedication. You can see by the smiling faces that Winterfest and Santa's visits made for a special Christmas.



# West Mont in the Spotlight

## More West Mont Holiday Cheer



Staff at Tara Group Home/Apartments



Ron's Place Staff & Clients




Hillside Staff



LOCATIONS

Blaine Work Services  
406-447-3120  
Caldwell House  
Cedar Apartments  
Farm Group Home  
Farm Vocational:  
406-227-7565  
Hillside Group Home  
Humbolt Apartments  
Lewis & Clark Duplex  
Melodee House  
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## Don't Forget Mom on Her Special Day

West Mont Flower & Trading Company had a record Valentine's Day thanks to your generous support.



We are honored that you chose us and we look forward to serving you again next year. This year **Mother's Day** is on **Sunday May 14, 2017** and we are here to make your shopping easier. We hope that you will consider West Mont Flower & Trading Company for your special purchase for mom.

We offer a wide selection of beautiful flowers and unique floral arrangements at very competitive prices. Be sure to check out our website: [www.westmontflowers.org](http://www.westmontflowers.org) or [facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/westmontflowers) for our **Mother's Day Specials**.



Our shop is located at **3150 Mitchell Ave. Helena**. We are open **Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM - 4:00 PM**. Please note that we are **closed on Saturday and Sunday**. Our phone number is **406-447-3123** or feel free to **email us at [ftc@westmont.org](mailto:ftc@westmont.org)**. All proceeds from our sales go back into supporting this vocational program for people with disabilities. Thank you again for your support.

## IT'S TIME FOR THE 24th ANNUAL MOTHER'S DAY POTS & PLANTS SALE

Plan to come out to the **Archie Bray Foundation** on **Saturday May 13, from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.** as they once again team up with **West Mont Farm & Gardens** for the annual **Mother's Day Pots & Plants Sale**. Browse the Archie Bray Gallery



while you enjoy their wood-fired pizza. Join in on kids' clay activities, face painting, and watch the "glaze-it-yourself" pots emerge from the raku firing. Make sure to visit West Mont Farm & Gardens booth to purchase your perfect Mother's Day

flowers, bedding plants, and more. We will have bud vases on sale starting at just \$5.00. Admission to this event is **free**. Proceeds from all sales benefit the Farm's vocational program and the resident artist program at the Archie Bray Foundation. *See you at the Bray!*

