

HEAD START HAPPENINGS

HEAD START ACQUIRES NEW FACILITY

Head Start, Inc. has entered into an agreement to purchase the St. Francis School/Holy Rosary Church facility at 521 Custer Ave. in Billings, giving the program the opportunity to expand services and offer full-day preschool to more families in Yellowstone and Carbon Counties.

The preliminary agreement is the first step in a lengthy process to acquire property, and is supported in part by a new \$919,000 grant from the Office of Head Start. The program is submitting detailed documentation and analysis to the federal government to justify the purchase as necessary for the community and the best means to serve young children and families at risk.

New federal regulations require Head Start programs to transition to full-day classes as a means of improving outcomes for the most vulnerable children. Facility constraints in Billings make that move impossible for Head Start, Inc. without additional space.

Head Start, Inc. hopes to move some classrooms to the new space in time for the start of classes in August 2017. Over the next five years, more classes will move to the new space until all 22 Head Start, Inc. classrooms are full-day. Laurel and Lockwood sites transitioned to full-day classes at the start of the 2016-17 program year.

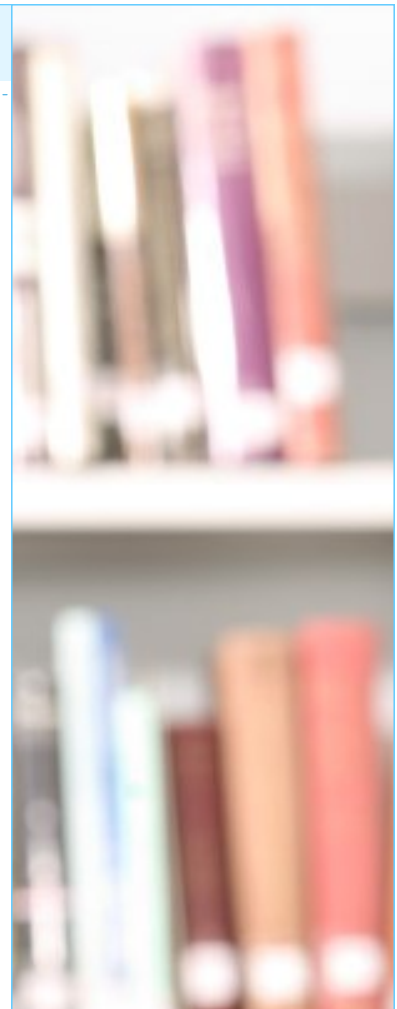
Head Start, Inc. is grateful for the extensive community support it is receiving for the new facility, including financing for the project from Stockman Bank.

CHILDREN CELEBRATE LUNAR NEW YEAR

International students from Montana State University-Billings visited Head Start, Inc. during the week of January 30 to help the preschoolers celebrate the Lunar New Year. This year is the Year of the Rooster for many Asian cultures, and Head Start students spent the week trying traditional Asian meals, studying the Asian culture, and learning songs and letters in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean.

Families were welcomed to participate in the celebration, joining their children in the classrooms to make steamed dumplings and try authentic Asian foods for lunch.

The Asian Cultural Celebration marks the third in a series for Head Start, Inc., beginning with the Native American and Latino cultures, and ending in a celebration of the Polynesian culture in the Spring.



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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

45

HEAD START ANNIVERSARY CHALLENGE IS ON!

To commemorate 45 years of serving Billings and the surrounding communities, Head Start, Inc. is challenging every parent in our program to volunteer 45 hours to Head Start this year. For every 45 hours of volunteer work completed, a parent will receive a raffle ticket to be entered in a drawing for a year of free gas and groceries!

To date, Head Start parents have volunteered nearly 1,000 hours to the program — and there is still time to do so much more!

Parents can volunteer in the classroom, on the bus, or in our kitchen. Projects are available in the spring to help with playground clean-up and planting in the garden. At the start of every classroom study, teachers send home an activity calendar with things you can do in the home to help your child learn—every hour spent on those activity calendar counts as a volunteer hour in the program.

Interested in volunteering and entering the raffle? Talk with your Family Advocate, classroom Teacher, or contact our Community Relations Director Megan Martin at 869-1220 for more information.

There is still plenty of time to get entered and lots of ways to give back. Let's make our 45th year a year to remember!



READING CHALLENGE STARTS IN MARCH

The annual Head Start, Inc. Reading Challenge will be held from March 1 - March 29, 2017 at all Head Start sites.

Each winter, for one whole month at Head Start, we challenge families to engage in a reading activity with their child for 20 minutes a day for 20 days during that month. The purpose is to encourage regular reading, storytelling and doing activities at home that enrich reading and expand a child's vocabulary.

This year's theme is "Books Are My Super Power!" and the kick off day is March 1st. Watch for all the details

and materials in the March 1st Wednesday folder in your child's backpack.

Students who complete the challenge will receive a new book and have their name entered in a chance to win a grand prize at the Yellowstone Art Museum reception on March 30.

Get involved and make books YOUR SUPER POWER!

Join us on March 2 from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the North Park site for a Read & Eat Family Literacy Event to launch our Reading Challenge!

HEAD START PARENTS JOURNEY TO HELENA

Head Start families are making the journey to the Montana Legislature in February to express support for early childhood education and services. Head Start Day at the Capitol will be held on February 10, featuring Head Start families from across the state and program displays filling the Capitol Rotunda.

Parents will have the opportunity to visit with local legislators, learn about funding priorities and legislation moving through the process, as well as share their opinions on issues facing low income children and families across the state.

Issues of importance include funding for early childhood education, the impact of proposed cuts in Child and Family Services, the need for improved access to health and mental health services, and more.

Parents from Head Start, Inc. and other programs across the state have been planning Head Start Day at the Capitol for months, learning communication skills, advocacy skills, and event planning and logistics.

Head Start, Inc. also offers an open invitation to state, county and local elected officials to visit our program.

PROGRAM ENROLLMENT FOR 2017-2018 BEGINS

The enrollment cycle for program year 2017-18 is underway, beginning with children who will be returning for a second year of Head Start services next year. Open enrollment begins in March for students and families new to Head Start, Inc.

The 2017-18 program year will offer more opportunities for full-day classes, defined as seven hours per day, four days per week. Classes will begin in late August and end in early June.

Head Start, Inc. admits children on a needs-basis. A child must be at least 3 years old by September 10, and not older than 5 years old, to enroll in Head Start. To be eligible for Head Start services, a family must have an income at or below the federal poverty line, be homeless, or be a recipient of certain forms of public assistance. Children in foster care are also

eligible for services. Families seeking to enroll children must provide proof of age and income in order to begin the application process.

In addition to minimum eligibility requirements, Head Start evaluates the risk factors and needs of each family, to ensure the program is serving children and families in greatest need of services. The program enrolls at least 10 percent of its students with a diagnosed disability or special need. Limited transportation services are provided on an as-needed basis.

Families interested in applying for enrollment can contact 245-7233 to set up an application appointment. Parents of children returning for a second year of Head Start should speak with their Family Advocate to reenroll for 2017-18.

Head Start Parents: Home visits with your child's teacher begin in February. All parents are entitled to two home visits and two parent-teacher conferences yearly. This is a great chance to hear about your child's progress!

YOUNG ARTISTS ON DISPLAY AT THE ART MUSEUM

The Yellowstone Art Museum is once again opening its doors to Head Start families and children and displaying artwork made by the preschoolers in the Museum during the month of March.

As a part of its arts education program, the YAM invites Head Start classrooms to the museum for an educational tour and a hands-on art project. The works made by the children are then hung in the gallery for a month, culminating with a reception on March 30 for children and families.

To support the project, Head Start classrooms read books throughout the month of February on art, including an arts-related book that each child can take home and keep at the end of the month. Children learn about creativity, color mixing, and shapes, as well as new and expanded vocabulary.

Community members visiting the YAM throughout the month of March can see the Head Start art on display.



EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

- ⇒ Congratulations to the **Nutrition Department** for completing culinary training on knife skills and techniques.
- ⇒ Welcome to **Josh Prevatt**, who has joined the Head Start team as a Family Advocate at the North Park site, and congratulations to **Margaret Cloutier** who was recently promoted to a Family Advocate position.

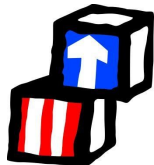
HELP WANTED

- ⇒ Head Start is hiring! Current job postings are available at www.billingsheadstart.org/employment-opportunities/
- ⇒ Substitutes needed! We need individuals interested in serving as subs in our Education, Nutrition, and Transportation departments. Contact 245-7233 for more information.

Head Start, Inc.
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Serving Yellowstone
and Carbon Counties

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- ◇ February 7 Cooking Classes begin, North Park
- ◇ February 10 Head Start Day at the Capitol
- ◇ February 10-13 PROGRAM CLOSED
- ◇ February 17 Billings Public Schools ChildFind, North Park
- ◇ March 1–29 Head Start Reading Challenge
- ◇ March 2 Read & Eat Family Literacy Event , North Park
- ◇ March 9 Children’s Dental Education, Laurel & Lockwood
- ◇ March 13 Johnson & Johnson Health Classes, North Park
- ◇ March 15 *Incredible Years* Classes begin, Lockwood
- ◇ March 16 Children’s Dental Education, North Park
- ◇ March 20 NO SCHOOL; Staff Work Day
- ◇ March 30 Head Start Reception at Yellowstone Art Museum

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

every school day counts.