

# 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

District 4 Human Resources Development Council  
2229 5th Avenue, Havre, MT



Human Resources Development Council

## Mission Statement

To partner with low income people in their effort to achieve economic stability and to advocate for social and economic advancement.

**406.265.6743**

**FAX: 406.265.1312**

**WWW.HRDC4.ORG**

**DISTRICT 4 HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**JUNE 30, 2015 AND 2016**

**ASSETS:**

|                                     |             |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Cash and Cash Equivalents           | \$ 326,863  | \$ 222,154  |
| Grants Receivable                   | 231,455     | 210,410     |
| Accounts Receivable                 | 45,743      | 41,415      |
| Notes Receivable                    | 521,500     | 521,500     |
| Interest Receivable                 | 20,574      | 15,574      |
| Land, Building, and Equipment (Net) | 543,449     | 551,698     |
| Other assets                        | 2,180       | 740         |
| Total Assets                        | \$1,691,764 | \$1,563,491 |

**LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**

LIABILITIES

|                   |            |            |
|-------------------|------------|------------|
| Accounts Payable  | \$ 236,834 | \$ 152,123 |
| Deferred revenue  | 4,285      | 5,000      |
| Accrued vacation  | 71,903     | 77,633     |
| Notes Payable     | 684,959    | 729,057    |
| Total Liabilities | 997,981    | 963,813    |

NET ASSETS

|                                  |             |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Unrestricted                     | 693,783     | 599,678     |
| Total Net Assets                 | 693,783     | 599,678     |
| Total Liabilities and net assets | \$1,691,764 | \$1,563,491 |

**Board of Director's Roster**

| PUBLIC SECTOR                       | PRIVATE SECTOR                     | LOW INCOME                                     |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Frank DePriest, Commissioner Blaine | Tina Thomas, Quality Life Concepts | KasSaundra Franklin, Head Start Policy Council |
| Mark Peterson, Commissioner Hill    | Lynn Minnick, CPA                  | Valdean El Assad, Self-Employed                |
| Russ Tempel, Commissioner Liberty   | Yvonne Laird, Attorney             | Jeremy Malley, Board President                 |
| This spot is waiting for you.       | Brian Simonson, MSUN               | Dawn Bishop-Moore, Hays Postmaster             |

# From the Desk of the Executive Director

There have been many changes at District 4 Human Resources Development Council (HRDC) this past year. In November 2015 HRDC broke ground on Antelope Court. Antelope Court is a thirty unit Low Income Housing Tax Credit project that is 100% ADA compliant. This building project will assist with our community's need for safe, affordable, and handicap accessible housing. Antelope Court is anticipated to be completed in the spring of 2017.

In January 2016, after eighteen years of service, Kathy Bessette resigned from the Board of Directors. Executive Director Karen Thomas retired from HRDC in April after seven years in her position. In addition, also in April, after fifteen years of service Katherine Williams resigned from the Board of District 4 HRDC. Kathy, Karen and Katherine will all be missed for their wisdom and dedication to HRDC.

District 4 Human Resources Development Council separated their Adult Education program from their Employment & Training program in April of 2016, welcoming retired Havre High School Science Teacher Dan Koffler as the new Adult Literacy and Basic Education Program Director. Dan has rekindled the success of our Adult Education program in the few short months since he has taken over. Reaching out to and mentoring students to success. Dan has also rebuilt and strengthened community partnerships with area courts, public schools, and tribal agencies.

Additionally in April of 2016, District 4 HRDC welcomed new Weatherization Program Director Adam Gibbons. Adam has rejuvenated our Weatherization program with dedication to ensuring individuals and families with low-income are in warm, safe, and energy efficient homes.

I am very excited and honored to be the new Executive Director, selected by the Board, to steer District 4 HRDC through upcoming changes and challenges. I believe in HRDC's mission to assist individuals with low-income in achieving self-sufficiency. We have served Hill, Blaine and Liberty counties since 1965, and I look forward to continuing meaningful service for many years to come.

*Your humble servant,  
Carilla French*



***A special thank you to the Administrative Staff;***

*Fiscal Officer, Kathy Terbovitz*

*Payroll Clerk, Amanda Whitfield*

*Accounts Payable/Receivable Clerk, Shelly Jappe*

*Front Desk Receptionist, Gerda Mullner*

*Administrative Officer, currently vacant*

# What We've Done!

|         |  |     |  |
|---------|--|-----|--|
| 403     | Low Income Energy Assistance Apps Received             | 8   | Hot Water Heaters Replaced                             |
| 362     | Low Income Energy Assistance Benefits Received         | 20  | Furnaces Replaced                                      |
| 65      | Energy Share Applications Received                     | 10  | Emergency Furnace Repairs                              |
| 61      | Energy Share Applications Approved                     | 36  | Job Training Recipients                                |
| 167     | Hill Co Electric Applications Received                 | 44  | HiSET Test Administered                                |
| 198     | Hill Co Electric Benefits Approved                     | 14  | HiSET Diplomas Achieved                                |
| 32      | Big Flat Electric Applications Received                | 17  | Youth Work Experiences                                 |
| 32      | Big Flat Electric Benefits Approved                    | 32  | Adult Basic Education & Literacy program participants  |
| 45      | Adult Work Experiences                                 | 21  | Placed in permanent employment                         |
| 32      | ABLE participants                                      | 752 | Individuals Utilized Adult Education Classroom         |
| 2,424   | Meals for Women and Children Sheltered                 | 310 | Crisis Calls Received                                  |
| 79      | Individuals Obtained Orders of Protection              | 67  | Emergency Transportation Provided                      |
| 201     | Households on Section 8 Waiting List                   | 31  | Women and Children Sheltered                           |
| 1,356   | People in Section 8 households                         | 769 | Nights of Emergency Shelter Provided                   |
| 452     | Households received Section 8 Assistance               | 7   | Families in Surrey Court                               |
| 1,941   | Food boxes distributed                                 | 18  | Households in HRDC's Low-Income Units                  |
| 2,158   | Children served by Food Bank                           | 31  | Homes weatherized - Blaine, Liberty, and Hill Counties |
| 2,920   | Adults served by the Food Bank                         | 3   | Homes weatherized on the Rocky Boy Reservation         |
| 106,661 | Pounds of food distributed                             | 4   | Homes weatherized on the Fort Belknap Reservation      |
| 195     | Dental exams performed                                 | 221 | Children Served in Head Start and Early Head Start     |
| 69      | Children received transition services to public school | 3   | Prenatal Women Served                                  |
| 39,519  | NMCDC meals Served                                     | 198 | Children's Immunizations Up-to-date                    |
| 4,168   | Hours of Building Use by the Community                 | 209 | Health Exams Performed                                 |

A SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OUR HELPING HANDS

**31,165 hours donated by 446 volunteers**

**Our Vision is all individuals and families will achieve their dreams through meaningful assistance at District 4 HRDC.**

# Northern Montana Child Development Center

Northern Montana Child Development Center provides comprehensive Head Start and Early Head Start services to 194 children ages birth to five, including prenatal moms. The Head Start children's ages range from three years old to five years old and Early Head Start children are age's birth to three years old. The program is primarily for low-income families (100% of poverty), however some slots are available for children from higher income families. We enroll all children on the waiting list that are in the 100% of poverty range before enrolling children in the higher income levels. The following chart shows the percentage of families/children enrolled in each eligibility category.

|  |                                   |  |                              |   |  |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------------|---|--|
| 100% of poverty (Less than \$24,250 for a family of 4) | 100% of poverty as a Foster child | 100% of poverty and on Public Assistance | 100% of poverty and Homeless | 101-130% of poverty (Between \$24,250 and \$32,252 a family of 4) | Over 130% of poverty (Over \$32,252 a family of 4) |
| 58%  | 2%                                | 7%                                       | 7%                           | 18%   | 9%   |

NMCDC had an average attendance rate of 88% this past year. Census data shows approximately 426 children living in poverty in Blaine, Hill and Liberty County combined. We serve 48% of those children. Of the 205 children enrolled, all but one resides in Hill County. While we are only serving 48% of the children in poverty in the tri county area, we are serving 91% of the children residing in Hill County that are living in poverty.

Head Start has a partnership with Havre Public Schools to provide services in regular classroom settings for children with special needs. We also work very closely with Quality Life Concepts to provide services to infants and toddlers with disabilities. At least 10% of the enrolled children we serve have a disability.

NMCDC offers program options to meet the needs of the children and families we serve. We have home base and center base for Early Head Start and center base for Head Start. The home based option is for Early Head start families in Hill County, Blaine County and Liberty County, that do not have a need for child care. A home based teacher goes to the home once a week and works with the parents drawing on the parent's expertise and knowledge to provide educational experiences for the child. The center based option offers classes four days a week for 3 ½ hours a day for Head Start children and for the Early Head Start children we are open four days a week from 7:30 AM until 5:30 PM. The EHS center based option is a licensed infant/toddler child care center. This option is for parents who are working, attending school, or completing a TANF plan and have a need for child care for 20 or more hours per week.

Additionally, the Early Head Start prenatal option serves pregnant mothers. While we do not provide direct medical services, we do assist mothers (and fathers as well as other family members) to assess their needs and plan for a healthy delivery. This includes home visits, prenatal educational materials and case management. We are particularly interested in serving teen mothers. Once the baby is born, he/she will be enrolled in either the home based option or the center based option depending on the family's needs and the availability of slots.

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Parent involvement is a very important part of a child's early education. We invite parents to spend time in the classrooms with their child, ride the bus, and volunteer in any number of ways. We seek parent input into their child's education through parent teacher conferences and home visits. Families also continue to work with their child at home in order to meet the child's individual education goals. Policy Council and Parent Committee members are actively engaged in program governance. Parents and community members provide invaluable ongoing support. All services revolve around providing high quality education for children ages birth to five and their families.



NMCDC staff use a variety of strategies to promote and support children's learning and developmental progress to prepare them for kindergarten. Each child has an Individual Child Development Plan based on individual observations and ongoing assessment. Kindergarten readiness is ongoing as we learn more about the expectations from Head Start to implement school readiness goals. We have critically looked our existing systems of collecting data and brainstormed ways to improve our methods used to reach our school readiness goals. Our school readiness goals are to support all areas of children's growth and development including social and emotional development, approaches to learning, development of cognition and general knowledge, development of language and literacy skills and development of physical well being and motor development.

The non-federal shares match, or in-kind, for NMCDC is \$410,349. NMCDC is able to meet that match due to the generosity of community volunteers. Parents of NMCDC children provide the majority of in-kind by being involved in the program and involved with their child's education. They contribute over \$200,000 and 15,000 hours of in-kind annually. Another major source of the match is due to the partnership between Havre Public Schools and NMCDC to provide special Education services to preschool children. The Havre Public School staff that work for the Special Education program at Head Start account for approximately \$70,000 of the required in-kind match. The medical community in this area is very also supportive of NMCDC and the children we serve and generates around \$17,000 a year in donated medical exams, dental exams, hearing screenings, vision screenings etc. This program would not be nearly as successful as it is without the support and generosity of the community and families we serve.

NMCDC embraces continuing education for the teaching staff. NMCDC has a total of 18 teachers, three of whom have a Bachelor's degree, four teachers have an Associate degree and five teachers have a Child Development Associate and four teacher that have a Child Development Associate and are enrolled in college classes. We have two teachers that are working on their CDA and will have achieved that goal within the next few months. The teachers with a CDA will have earned an AA degree within the next year. In addition to the education credentials of teaching staff, NMCDC also has four other staff with a Bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education or a field related to their job. NMCDC has a training budget of around \$50,000 per year. The training is in the form of college classes, on-site training, conferences and various other sources.



According to the National Head Start Association, every dollar invested in Head Start reaps a Return on Investment (ROI) ranging from \$7 to \$9. For Northern Montana Child Development Center with a budget of \$1,641,397 this would be a ROI in this community of \$11,489,779 to \$14,775,273.

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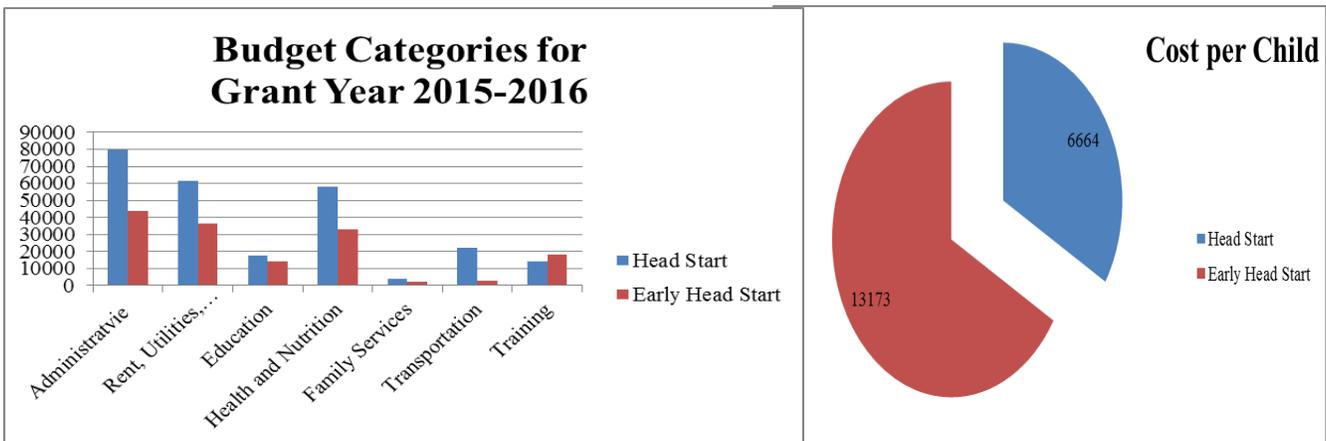
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The most recent agency audit was conducted September 2015, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States, the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards*, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and OMB Circular A-133, *Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations*. The federal program audited was Head Start. There were no material weaknesses or findings.

District IV HRDC employs around 50 Head Start and Early Head Start staff and had a federal grant in the amount of \$1, 670,361 for the grant year 2015-2016. Approximately 76% of the budget or \$1,276,655 is spent on wages and fringe benefits. The following chart shows the sources of funding for the Head Start and Early Head Start program.

| Program          | Office of Head Start Grant | CACFP    | Best Beginning Child Care Scholarship | Johnson O'Malley |
|------------------|----------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Head Start       | \$906,275                  | \$59,579 |                                       | \$767            |
| Early Head Start | \$764,086                  | \$26,736 | \$10,206                              |                  |
| Total            | \$1,670,361                | \$86,315 | \$10,206                              | \$767            |

The charts show budget projections for the grant year 2015-2016. The chart titled “Budget Categories” does not include salaries, fringe benefits or health insurance.



In the past year, Northern Montana Child Development Center was able to provide training to four family advocates so they could obtain their Family Development Credential. We have two teacher advocates that went to training so they were able to bring back that knowledge and train our staff. We will continue to provide that valuable training so our family advocates have a good understanding of working with families. We are one of the few programs in the state that offer this training to staff and one of the few programs in the state that have family advocates with family service worker credentials.

# Employment & Training Changes on the Horizon

District 4's Employment and Training is a multi-faceted program with the ultimate goal of meeting an eligible individual's education and training needs.

The Work Force Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program assists eligible individuals with a combination of supportive services, assistance with job applications, resume building, job skills training, along with many other avenues of assistance. The WIOA Program is able to assist both eligible youth and adults in their pursuit of employment and training.

The WIOA Youth Program is centered on eligible out-of-school individuals from ages 16 to 24. The goal is to educate, train and assist with finding employment to assist participants in reaching their dreams.

The WIOA Adult program offers services to eligible individuals 18 years and older. Some of the assistance available are employment training, college costs, and other incidentals.

The Work Readiness Component (WoRC) assists families with a combination of assistance and work readiness activities. WoRC will undergo some significant changes after the first of the year. These changes will expand services available to eligible families. Our new mantra, "Transforming from Barriers to Bridges", a goal for agencies to partner together and better serve our clients' needs. Staff are eagerly awaiting the new

program. The new program will have some exciting and innovative components. Stay tuned to HRDC's quarterly newsletters for more information.

Another very successful program offered is the High School Equivalency Testing (HSET) held at HRDC4 and at Fort Belknap. If you are interested in getting a High School Equivalency Diploma, HRDC is the place to be. Through the Adult Basic Literacy Education Classroom, Dan Koffler can assist with education gaps to guide students through the testing process. See the article on the Adult Basic Literacy and Education Classroom for additional information.

## **Employment and Training Staff:**

(WIOA) Greg Tilleman

(WIOA) Carrie Dickson

(WoRC) Alma Lopez

(WoRC) Cindy Koenig Conrad Office

(WoRC) Tassie Ross Conrad Office

## **VISTA Volunteer:**

July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

Michelle Van Meter

For more information about Employment and Training Programs call 406-265-6743.

# Adult Education Classroom A Letter from the Director

The HRDC's Adult Basic Literacy and Education classroom has undergone a myriad of changes throughout the 2016 fiscal year.

It was a year of transition and changes in personnel and in the implementation of the Work Force Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulations which affected the scope and focus of the program.

The purpose of WIOA is to better align the workforce system with education and economic development in an effort to create a collective response to economic and labor market challenges on the national, state, and local levels. This new focus broadens the scope of the Adult Basic Literacy Education (ABLE) program to meet the needs of an ever evolving labor market. Michelle Van Meter, an AmeriCorps Vista Volunteer, assisted the program throughout the 2016 fiscal year.

Michelle's efforts helped to promote the ABLE program in the community and increase its visibility on social media and in other community forums.

I was hired as the Instructor/Director in mid-April. This also represented a new direction for the program. Previously, the ABLE program was under the Employment and Training program with the Employment and Training Director administering both programs.

Since April, I am the Program Director and Instructor. (Chief Bottle Washer)

Being the director and instructor has been a challenging, but truly rewarding experience. My career in education has helped prepare me for the position, but different challenges have presented themselves that were not as prevalent in the traditional high school classroom. I look forward to continuing my efforts of recruitment and retention in the program and increasing its utilization and success.

I am extending an open invitation to stop in and check our classroom out. We are very proud of our changes to our new and improved classroom.

Sincerely,

Dan Koffler

# Housing

Let me take a minute to introduce myself. My name is Amberlei Odegard-Daulton and I am the Director of Housing at District 4 Human Resources Development Council (HRDC). I took over for Diane Getten almost three months ago. We also said goodbye to our long time housing specialist Val Clikeman. With all the recent changes in a lot of HRDC's programs, there have been some equally exciting changes in housing.

District 4 HRDC entered into partnership with Neighbor Works America to provide homeownership education. The first step to creating successful homeowners is education. Studies have found, educated homeowners stay in their homes longer, take pride in their properties, and have one-third less foreclosures. NeighborWorks Montana partners with HRDC to offer in-depth classes on all aspects of homeownership.

All classes meet HUD requirements and are taught by National Center for Homeownership Education and Counseling Certified educators. Completion of a certified homebuyer class is a requirement for many specialized loan products, including NeighborWorks Montana loans. To receive a certificate, participants must attend all sections of the course. Courses are at least eight hours in length and are offered over the span of two days. HRDC does provide dinner each night.

Topics covered in these classes include:

- Assessing Readiness to Buy a Home
- Budgeting and Credit
- Financing a Home
- Selecting a Home
- Maintaining a Home and Finance

## **Section 8 Housing:**

Section 8 enables eligible participants to live in safe, decent, and affordable housing. The

participating low-income families do not pay more than 30%-40% of their adjusted monthly income for housing costs.

All programs require an application and placement on a wait list. Length of time varies for each program. Families are selected for participation by application time and date without discrimination.

Section 8 currently has 255 vouchers, but currently only 211 of these vouchers have been filled. This is mainly due to lack of available rentals in the communities we serve. Some exciting news that will allow people to be homed faster, is the state recently granted permission for us to issue our own vouchers. Previously we had to wait for the state to release our vouchers before we could lease any new section 8 clients. This allows us to offer housing more quickly to more people.

We also offer a family self-sufficiency program and we currently have 10 people participating. Family Self-Sufficiency is a supportive program designed to assist participants in housing section 8 – Housing Choice Voucher Program to become financially self-sufficient. This means that the goal is to no longer rely on public assistance. We are encouraging and helping many of our current clients start this exciting program.

## **District 4 HRDC Rentals:**

With the brutal hailstorm that ripped through Havre, our rental properties are having a face lift. All properties have had the roof replaced (some are in the process of completion) . Some properties have had windows replaced while others have had siding replaced. Our four-plex was recently approved, through another HRDC program, to have all windows replaced. Stop by and have a look!

# Energy

## Warming Hearts One Home at a Time

### LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) was established to provide assistance to eligible households to offset the rising costs of home energy costs. Especially those costs that are excessive in relation to household income.

The program was designed to reach this goal through the provision of Emergency Assistance payments, Heating Assistance payments, and Weatherization of the eligible household's home. LIEAP benefit awards are established to assure the highest level of assistance is provided to those with the lowest incomes and the highest energy cost in relation to income. In addition, the family size is considered in the award calculation.

Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) added a new addition to the income exclusion section. Clients can now exclude ALL out-of-pocket health insurance premiums paid by a member of the household. Household members may excluded income premiums for Health Insurance; Dental; Vision; Pharmaceuticals; Medicare; Cancer Care; Catastrophic Coverage, Nursing home only; Hospital only. Applicants must provide verification of payments.

This implemented change has enabled our office to assist clients that would have been denied services prior to this addition. We continue to educate applicants of this beneficial change, especially those that may have been over-income in previous years.

#### Example of how health insurance effect the LIEAP household for one:

Original GROSS wages: \$23,000 (**OVER-INCOME – INELIGIBLE**)

Total out of pocket health insurance premium paid by applicant over the past 12 months:  
\$3,600

$\$23,000 - 3,600 = \$19,400$

LIEAP ADJUSTED INCOME FOR ELIGIBILITY IS \$19,400 (**HOUSEHOLD IS NOW ELIGIBLE**)

### ENERGY SHARE OF MONTANA

Energy Share of Montana is a private nonprofit organization. Our primary purpose is to help Montanans faced with energy emergencies meet their needs and move towards self-reliance.

The Energy Share program has a volunteer committee that makes all the decisions for the approvals and denials of application. Our committee has increased from four members to seven members.

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District 4 HRDC Energy Program would like to say thank you to its Energy Share of Montana volunteer committee members for all their time and dedication to the program. The program could not exist without their valuable contribution.

Since 1997 Energy Share has sponsored an annual art contest for all fourth grade students in Montana. The purpose is to raise awareness among and educate elementary school children about Energy Share and why it exists. It is also Energy Share's hope that through its art contest more families will become aware of the need for and existence of heating assistance among the low-income in our state.

This year, for the first time, a local Hi-Line 4th grade student won the statewide art contest! Jazlynn Standing Rock, from Rocky Boy Elementary School won a \$75.00 cash prize and her teacher won a \$75.00 Wal-Mart gift card for art supplies for the classroom. A billboard of Jazlynn's artwork was displayed on Highway 2 across from Walmart for a month. Jazlynn's picture will also be used on thank you cards for those who have made donations to Energy Share of Montana. Visit our Facebook page to view a video of Jazlynn's school assembly winner dedication, [www.facebook.com/heat.assistance.havre/](http://www.facebook.com/heat.assistance.havre/)



### **HILL COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP INC. AND BIG FLAT ELECTRIC CO-OP INC.**

The Hill County and Big Flat Electric bill assistance programs are a monetary benefit disbursed by our program to Hill County Electric and Big Flat Electric customers to help them pay their electric bills. In 2016 the Big Flat Electric assisted 32 households with a \$175.00 benefit. An increase in funding with Hill County Electric was able to provide assistance to 167 households up from 119 homes in previous years and the benefit went from \$125.00 per household to a \$225.00 benefit.

#### **Energy Staff**

Teresa Wynia Program Director

Sarah Solomon Energy Specialist

# Weatherization

District 4 HRDC's Weatherization Assistance Program has experienced a wonderful year of exciting change and unprecedented growth. A new Program Director, supported by a driven Home Energy Auditor and dedicated strategic partners, has proven to be exactly what the Weatherization Program needed to rise to its full potential. Implementation of a clear vision, smart use of limited resources, partnership enrichment and establishing an uncompromised workmanship standard were the core components of change this year. The growth has created a well-trained, cohesive, customer-centric team that proudly improves homes and lives throughout the communities we serve.

The Montana Weatherization Training Center has been paramount in transforming District 4's Weatherization program into one that is clearly competent. Intense training at the Bozeman facility included courses that covered a wide scope of topics from weatherization basics to advanced diagnostics to workplace safety. The training centers unwavering commitment and continued technical support has allowed us to operate at new heights.

Utilizing our funding wisely has been instrumental to this year's growth. Equipping our team with state-of-the-art tools and a new vehicle plays to our goal of becoming the best Weatherization Assistance Program in the state. A 2017 Ram truck loaded with new equipment helps ensure quality, safe work done efficiently and cost effectively. The purchases support our workforce while paying respect to our generous funding sources by way of smart use of their monies.

Weatherization has worked diligently to

enrich the long-standing relationships we currently have with trade partners, funders, community members, and the State as well as to create new partnerships across Hill, Blaine, and Liberty counties. The new and revitalized relationships are allowing us to better serve our customers by enveloping them with professional excellence and a broader range of quality products at affordable prices.

A year of change and growth has been challenging, to say the least, yet refreshing and exhilarating beyond measure. Rebuilding a program that produces and guarantees world class work could not have been possible without the encouragement and backing from the State, our LIEAP counterparts, Agency administration, Board Members, and most importantly, the families and individuals we serve. We surely appreciate everyone for all their contributions to our program and look forward to sharing future successes with all involved.

Special thanks to Carilla French, HRDC Executive Director; Jonathan Ballew, State Monitor; Teresa Wynia, Energy Program Director; Kim Hickman, Kim's Heating and Air Conditioning; Bill Bilger, Bill's Construction and Remodeling; and last but definitely not least, Sam Snyder, my awesome Home Energy Auditor.

"The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new."

– Socrates

Adam Gibbons  
Weatherization Program Director

## Domestic Abuse Program

The Domestic Abuse Program has had program and staff changes in the last year and we are excited to share a little about each of us and new happenings that we are involved in. Our staff shares a common goal of helping victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Kara Fox is the new Program Director as of June 2016. Previous to this, Kara has been the Child Advocate in the Program since March 2014 but has worked for District 4 HRDC since 2011. She is excited to be in this new position and plans to lead the DAP staff in focusing on empowering victims and show them that even when something horrible has happened to them they can pick up the pieces and go on to be successful and most importantly, happy again.

Echo Nelson is the new Shelter Manager/Volunteer Coordinator as of February 2016. Echo is in charge of both the Men and Women's Violence Intervention Group classes focus on feelings and how to control them through communication instead of acting out emotions. Echo enjoys the busy atmosphere in the DAP Program and enjoys helping victims she encounters.

Lori St. Pierre is a new Victim/Witness Advocate as of July 2016. Lori is a graduate of Montana State University's Addiction Counseling Graduate Certificate Program. Lori is one of two people in the United States honored with the Outstanding Continuing Education Student Award by the University Professional and Continuing Education Association (UPCEA). Lori completed her MSU graduate certificate with a 4.0 grade point average. Lori enjoys helping people and making a difference in their lives. She also enjoys her co-workers which includes their support, help, encouragement, and friendship.

Kathleen Whitaker is our newest Victim/Witness Advocate as of September 2016. Kathleen is a "Jane of all Trades" and has worked in various fields throughout the years. Kathleen, like the other advocates was also a victim of domestic violence. However, Kathleen's experience took a different turn and her daughter became a victim of child abuse that was linked to Kathleen's abusive relationship. Her daughter was murdered in 2003 and because of this incident, Kathleen started a non-profit organization called the Dandelion Foundation which was to help survivors and grieving parents. She also had a private safe house targeted for children in Rimrock, Arizona, called Tons of TLC. Kathleen is very excited to be a part of the Domestic Abuse Program, she wants to help victims and feels that she has come "full circle" and a part of something bigger than herself, it is a passion and not a just a job.

Our program is a part of the Hill County Multidisciplinary Team and are working alongside other entities in our area to become an Accredited Child Advocacy Center which will be located at the Bullhook Community Health Center. A Child Advocacy Center (CAC) is where abused children and their non-offending family members can go following a report of sexual abuse. CAC's create a mentally and physically safe environment for children. They also provide a place where the multidisciplinary team (MDT) can convene, so the child does not have to go see each professional separately. This reduces the chance of additional trauma and the number of interviews of disclosures the child must give, reducing potential evidence collection errors and increasing the chance of successful prosecution. We are very excited to be part of this!

Additionally, we began a Domestic and Sexual Assault Support Group. Meetings are held Wednesdays 12:00pm – 1:00pm at HRDC. We provide a safe place to share personal experience in domestic violence or sexual assaults. Talking with other individuals who have gone through similar experiences is beneficial to healing mentally and emotionally. Victims are able to talk to advocates one-on-one as well.



This project is funded (in part) under a contract with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. The statements herein do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Department. 50 copies of this document were produced at an estimated cost of \$2.25 per copy. Distribution costs for 50 copies are estimated at \$1.20 each. The total cost for printing and distribution is estimated at \$172.50, 100% of which is through federal funding.



***THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DEDICATED EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS!***