



Alliance for Youth

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY'S VULNERABLE YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Our Vision and Mission

Vision: An engaged and empowering community where youth and families can find hope, heal and thrive

Mission: Alliance for Youth, Inc. creates social change to advance healthy youth and family development within North Central Montana communities through educational and collaborative approaches.

- ▶ A community working together can accomplish far more than any single group
- ▶ Providing Youth and families resources, skills and opportunities which will improve their ability to make choices supporting healthy development
- ▶ We need to honor the voice and value the involvement of those we serve
- ▶ If we break the cycle, we improve the future
- ▶ Trauma-informed approaches are essential to nurturing trust, hope and healing

Who We Are

Alliance for Youth (AFY) advances strategies to ensure the healthy development of youth—our most valuable resource and our future! AFY is a responsible steward of public and private funding and invests in evidence-based strategies that improve risk and protective factors in Cascade County, Montana community, school, family and individual environments.

Through strong stakeholder partnerships, the AFY team continues to champion prevention and reduction of underage drinking and illegal drug use, abuse and dependency; as well as championing improvements in mental and emotional health, delinquency, juvenile violence, school drop-out and early childhood trauma.

Our Programs

Substance Abuse Prevention Alliance (SAPA)

A substance abuse prevention coalition working to make Cascade County a more vibrant and healthier place to live.

Youth Resource Center

Low Barrier Drop-in center meeting the basic needs of youth 13–20-year-olds.

Parenting Support

Free resources, classes and online support for parents to be a positive influencer of their children's behaviors.

Emotional Health

Programs and resources for children and adults to help identify and cope with emotional health issues.

The Sober Life

A healthy outlet where people in recovery can fulfill their need for connection. By people in recovery, for people in recovery.

Youth Advisory Board

A youth working group that challenges the culture of alcohol and drug use within the community.

#LetsTalk App

Youth mental health and suicide prevention resources, right at your fingertips.



Youth Resource Center (YRC)

THE YOUTH RESOURCE CENTER MISSION STATEMENT: WE MEET THE BASIC NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITY'S YOUTH AND CONNECT THEM TO SERVICES THAT PROMOTE POSITIVE CHANGE.

THE YRC DROP-IN CENTER IS A FIRST POINT OF CONTACT THAT PROVIDES AN INFORMAL, SAFE ATMOSPHERE TO ATTRACT AND ENGAGE YOUTH WHO ARE DISADVANTAGED AT RISK AND/OR HOMELESS.

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=XZF8KC4_ZPC](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZF8KC4_ZPC)

Key features of the YRC include:

- ▶ **Low- or No-Barrier:** Foster a welcoming, safe, non-judgmental environment, with limited requirements, conveniently located near public transportation.
- ▶ **Meet Basic Needs:** Provide easy access to food, laundry, shower and clothes. Provide access to Internet, phones, and lockers for storage of belongings. Referral and transportation for basic healthcare, mental health appointments and first aid.
- ▶ **Trauma-Informed Care:** Despite the informal atmosphere, staff is trained and ready to provide crisis intervention, conflict resolution and supporting services. It is especially important that staff be trained or have access to services specifically for LGBTQ and/or tribal youth, who are disproportionately represented among youth who are experiencing homelessness in our state.

Key features of the YRC include:

- ▶ **Positive Youth Development:** Staff is trained to develop the youth's competence, confidence, connection and contribution.
- ▶ **Youth Focused:** Create a positive and healthy peer network for youth, access to caring adults and engage in youth-centered programming.
- ▶ **Service Coordination:** Operate as a central hub for services, such as medical, dental, behavioral health support, substance abuse treatment referral, housing search support and advocacy. Staff can help with documentation and facilitating school re-engagement or connection to adult basic education or workforce development programs. Drop-in center operates in tandem with mobile "street and school" outreach programs, family engagement services, emergency shelters and transitional housing.

The Youth Resource Center Fills Huge Resource Gaps

- ▶ The Center Offers:
- ▶ Safe supportive environment
- ▶ Transportation assistance
- ▶ Connection to employment, education/training & housing
- ▶ Life skills
- ▶ Extensive referral network





Volunteer Army

- ▶ Volunteers are vital to the YRC. Without an army of dedicated individuals, we would not be able to support the growing need.
- ▶ Community Ambassadors
- ▶ YRC has a revolving training and orientation protocol. We found that informed volunteers are engaged volunteers.
- ▶ It's not just about a 'Pulling a shift'
We encourage volunteers to come to the center to "do life" with the youth they have developed relationships with.

Recognizing the Importance of **Relationship**-The heart of what we do

As staff or a volunteer, we are leaders in our community. We will inherently have power within the relationship we form with youth. Power is defined as the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events. There are four types of power – power over, power with, power to, and power within. We focus our efforts on ‘power with’.

‘Power with’ is built on shared power that grows with trusting relationships, and collaboration. It is built on respect, mutual support, solidarity, influence, empowerment, and collaborative decision making. Within the ‘power with’ relationship, we would like to see the following – instead of relying on rules, we show respect. Instead of pointing out problems, we leverage strengths, instead of having to be in control, we are a guide who supports people in their own experience. It is our responsibility to develop a ‘power with’ relationship with the people that we work with. It is our responsibility to support the people we are working with by giving their experiences the same credibility as our own. We support the person by supporting them on their own journey, helping to build their self-efficacy. Ways that we can do this is to:

- ▶ Support individuals to identify their strengths using unconditional positive regard.
- ▶ Support the individual to discover their goals through asking open-ended questions Explore with them what resources they have, or can access, that could help them achieve their goals.
- ▶ Consider what other support they might need from possible referrals and professional services

Cross-pollinating Volunteer and Service Opportunities

Back 2 School Blast

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Substance Abuse Prevention

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Parenting

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The Sober Life

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Youth Resource Center

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Family Promise
Opportunities Inc.
Great Falls Association
of Realtors
United Way of Cascade
County
Youth Court Services

Interfaith Alliance
LDS Church
YWCA
Youth Dynamics
Ambres Bridge
Little Shell Tribe
IFHC

Univ. of Providence
MSU College of Great Falls
Great Falls Public Schools
Central Catholic HS
Great Falls Public Library
Chamber of Commerce
Local Restaurants

Church programs and
financial support
Great Falls Rescue
Mission
Alluvion
Benefis
Great Falls Clinic

Cross- pollinating Service Opportunities with Partners

How did we start...?



Organic community grassroots steering committee.

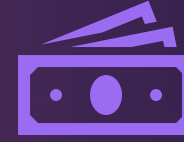
We built the YRC out of an outcry in the community. Reaching out to other organizations locally and statewide



Asking for specific donations from similar organizations with same mission such as your vision. Asking businesses, schools, civic organizations in the community to do food drives, sock drives and other collections



Asking for Non-food items: hygiene products, socks, hats, gloves, sports equipment, shoes/boots, gift cards, laundry pods, dryer sheets and bus passes



Financial support: Donor and Capital Campaigns

Making the ASK, in and out of your community

We built the YRC by reaching out locally and statewide

- ▶ Asking and communicating inside your community and if there is a lack/need, go outside the community for broader scope of research such as State, National for specific program help.
- ▶ Ask elders in your community for input and ideas. Create a culturally sensitive model that maximize all aspects of your community (building a culture of honor). We asked those who had come before us for wisdom. We sought out support from anyone interested but stayed true to what we had capacity for.
- ▶ We engaged with the ones who wanted to 'Father and Mother' those who were abandoned (emotional investment)

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QUESTIONS?

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Thank you for allowing me to present...Lisa



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