

PARENT COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM

https://www.bps.k12.mt.us/programs_departments/parent_community_outreach

T: (406)338-5025~ Nikki Hannon, Director

**Preparing for
2020-2021**

CHILD CARE



During the first quarter of academic year 2020-2021, our child care center will be closed as a safety precaution against COVID-19. We will re-evaluate opening in alignment with the district's decision to either continue with Scenario 1 protocols (ie. Distance learning) or Scenario 2 protocols (ie. Blended Learning).

We realize that our closure has caused a hardship for some staff members. We want to remind staff under the certified/classified MOA (relating to COVID-19) states, *“An employee whose child’s school or childcare provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19 and is unable to obtain alternative childcare shall be entitled to work remotely when possible. Employees satisfying the above conditions who are unable to perform their regular duties remotely may, at the discretion of the District, be temporarily assigned to other duties or change their schedule which they are qualified to perform and may be performed remotely.”*

We are also looking for resources to assist our staff in obtaining alternative childcare. On August 11th, Governor Steve Bullock announced he will direct \$50 million to increase child care options for Montana families and bolster the state's child care infrastructure in response to COVID-19. Of particular importance to our staff is the ***“\$10 million for families with special circumstances requiring in-home care. Applications will be available online on the DPHHS [Child Care Resource and Referral Agency \(CCR&R\) website](#) page beginning on August 19.”***

Our child care center is also receiving funding from the state to address our increased needs due to COVID-19. We will use these funds to prepare for our reopening.

TEEN PARENT PROGRAM

While we are Distance Learning during first quarter, we will continue to offer the same supports and resources to our teen parents as though they were in the classroom. We will provide supports via email, phone, and virtual weekly check-ins. If we receive requests for material resources (ie. Diapers, children's books), we will provide these items via “porch delivery” while maintaining social distancing protocols.

As this program does not have its own budget, we will continue to seek support through donations and networking with partner programs. One of the grants we received from the State for the child care center will be used to establish a Baby Diaper pantry for our teen parents. We established a Baby Clothes closet for our teen parents two years ago and are excited to expand this service to include diapers.



Pictured above are some of the items we were able to purchase for our teen parents and their children thanks to the \$500 donation from the Indigenous Adolescent Girls' Empowerment Network (IMAGEN) COVID-19 relief funding. We have been invited to do a “lightning presentation” during IMAGEN’s next webinar to share who we are and the work we do in Browning.

HI-SET & ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

Hi-Set will be offered via Distance Learning during the first quarter of academic year 2020-2021. We anticipate that some students will not have access to online learning; therefore, we will also provide paper packets as needed. Our tutor will be available via phone, email and google meets office hours. In special circumstances, one-on-one tutoring will be offered by appointment, following all social distancing protocols.

We are also planning to offer monthly webinars featuring local resources. Stay tuned.

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Addressing Homelessness

*One of our biggest challenges going into the new school year will simply be identifying students experiencing homelessness. In the past, we were able to use a screening tool as part of the registration process that gave us a “jump start” on who may be eligible. Without doing paper registration, we will need to identify students by: 1) Calling those students enrolled in the program the previous year to determine if their living situations are still the same; 2) continuing to educate staff regarding how to identify students and refer to our program; 3) intentionally reaching out to community partners to also identify and refer eligible students; and 4) launching a public awareness campaign that will encourage families to self-refer to our program.

*We continue to make adjustments to our Youth Homelessness Demonstration Project grant as requested by HUD. Fine tuning this funding is quite the challenge to navigate but we are definitely closer to seeing the money.

*The Montana OPI invited the āissāoŋmmoŋtsiiyŋ • ā program to offer a professional development webinar on “Serving Native American Students Experiencing Homelessness.” I partnered with the Hardin School District homeless liaison, Elizabeth Old Chief, and presented to a group of about 20 Montana educators. It was very exciting to share our work and best practices with other districts in Montana. This webinar took the place of our previously scheduled presentation at the 2020 MBI Summer Institute.

I was also recently interviewed by Patricia Julianelle, Senior Strategist for Program Advancement and Legal Affairs, with SchoolHouse Connection. SchoolHouse Connection is a national non-profit organization working to overcome homelessness through education. They provide strategic advocacy and practical assistance in partnership with early childhood programs, schools, institutions of higher education, service providers, families, and youth. They believe education is the only permanent solution to homelessness.

The interview will be shared as part of a video series, “Challenges & Solutions in Serving Students Experiencing Homelessness in COVID-19.”

Clothing Closets~

Clothing Donations~ We hope to continue to be able to accept donations of gently used items from the Heart Locker in Kalispell. We would like to be able to keep the school-based clothing closets stocked in the event that students in need make these requests. Due to COVID-19, we have not allowed the public to access our donations stored at PCOP; rather, we gather a nice selection and allow the student to pick up their “mystery grab bag” from our front “porch,” or we have done a “porch delivery” ourselves.

Shoes~ Shoes were the most needed item last school year. We would like to continue to offer our students experiencing homelessness with a new pair of shoes, regardless of whether they are distance learning or not. Kids still need shoes.

Coats~COVID-19 doesn’t care about the weather...again, regardless of what Scenario we operate within, kids will still need coats this winter. We will continue to collect new and gently used children’s coats throughout the school year. We will not be able to host a Coat Store as we have in the past, but we can definitely deliver or meet them on the sidewalk.

Food Pantries ~

The food pantries were pretty much cleared out this past spring in response to COVID-19. We are actively seeking funding to restock, and even expand, our four school-based food pantries. We have once again applied for the Town Pump Charitable grant. This grant has allowed us to stock the School-Based pantries for three years in a row.

We have also applied for a Food Pantry Assistance grant through the State of Montana. This grant would allow us to expand our pantries with freezers so that we can offer frozen goods and have a place to store donated meat for holiday food baskets.

We continue to partner with the Montana Food Bank Network in order to continue the weekend backpack program. This program has operated alongside the summer lunch program since school buildings were closed. Thank you, Lynne Keenan for taking this on during such a challenging time!

Back to School~

Just because “back to school” looks different than it ever has in our lifetime, that doesn’t mean kids aren’t excited to “return!” Regardless of whether they are in-class or on-line, they want the excitement of a new pair of shoes, back-to-school clothes (unless pajamas will be acceptable on google classroom! Well...maybe for a dress up day during Red Ribbon week!), and school supplies.

One supply that we will be providing to our students experiencing homelessness will be headphones! Many of the students we serve live in extremely crowded situations and may find it hard to find privacy or even concentrate with other family members at home.



Above: masks donated from sewing warriors from across the country