

# The Community Action Pages

## 3rd Annual Play Date at the Zoo

HRDC's Play Date at the Zoo took place on Thursday, June 16. It was a record-breaking year for this event, now in its third year. Within the first hour, more than 1,200 people had walked through the gates of ZooMontana, with the grand total topping 5,500 for the evening.

This fun-filled, hands-on event provided a place for families to spend quality time together and get information about community resources. The event offered free zoo admission, free food, games, face painting, scavenger hunt, and more. Nearly 40 organizations were on hand to provide information about their services. In addition, HRDC featured a book giveaway for families, where thousands of donated books were available for children to take home.

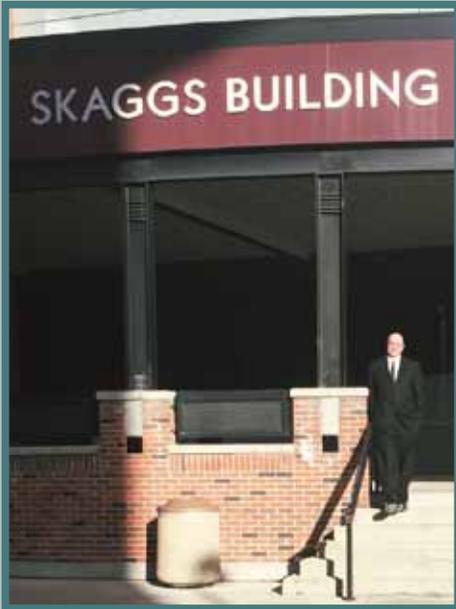


City of Billings' Mayor Tom Hanel spoke to the amphitheater crowd and proclaimed June 16 "Strengthening and Supporting Families Day." Following that, there were dance and theater performances, a magician, and several animal encounters courtesy of ZooMontana.



The event was an outstanding success, and HRDC owes a tremendous thank you to all the sponsors, vendors, and volunteers who came together. HRDC is already planning for next year's Play Date at the Zoo. If you're interested in sponsoring this event, please contact Liz Harding at 406-247-4707 or [lharding@hrdc7.org](mailto:lharding@hrdc7.org).

# WoRC Program Success Story



Ty entered the WoRC program in September 2015. Ty was enrolled in a pharmacist program, taking pre-pharmacy school classes and wanted to enter the Pharmacy program at University of Montana that would begin in August 2016. In order to be one of the few ac-

cepted into this program from the hundreds that apply, Ty needed to complete many pre-requisite requirements. In addition to passing the classes he was currently taking, he needed to complete a lengthy application and pass the PCAT (Pharmacy College Admissions Test). Ty passed the test and submitted his application, and due to his hard work and dedication, he was accepted to the UM

Pharmacy program.

In addition to going to school full time, Ty also managed to work as a Certified Pharmacy Technician at Wal-Mart. Although he was only working minimal hours, he was doing so to provide medical insurance for himself and his family. On many occasions, his paycheck would net \$0.00 as what he made went completely to insurance costs. Ty and his wife have two children and his youngest, a son, has a cleft pallet. Ty and his family have had to travel several times a year to Great Falls for surgeries and follow ups. In addition, Ty's oldest, a daughter, was born premature.

Ty works very hard and due to this, he has been successful in the WoRC program and utilized it so that he could continue his education and continue on the road to self-sufficiency. This included attending every meeting, providing all necessary paperwork, and - in addition to meeting the requirements of our program - achieving a 3.60 GPA (Grade Point Average) throughout this last semester at MSU-B – Billings. Ty was assisted in the program with supportive services for vehicle fuel helping him to complete his activities. Ty has been an inspiration and has remained positive and upbeat. Congratulations Ty!

I would like to express what being in the HRDC Adult education program meant to me. I was on a dead end road headed nowhere. Without a education it was impossible to get a good job. Going back to school helped me gain confidence. When I received my diploma I have never been more proud of myself. My future is so full of opportunities and possibilities for myself and my family. I've also shown my children how important having your education is to have a happy, successful life.

Being able to have Penny Hudson as my teacher words can't ever describe how she helped me believe in myself to finish school. Penny never gave up on me, she's the most caring, kind and understanding teacher I've ever had. Thank you so very much Penny, I will never forget what you've done for me.

Letter written by one of the students who earned their HiSET.

## Alternative Education



Earning a High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) certificate is the first step in breaking the poverty cycle. HRDC offers one-on-one, self-paced tutoring for low-income individuals ages 16 and older who are pursuing a high school diploma, or who have been unsuccessful in achieving their GED. Pictured above are six of the eight students, with instructor Penny Hudson, who earned their HiSET in May 2016.

# The Home Center - Open the Door to Your New Home

Anthony and Lanea Hope say they always wanted to own their own home, but weren't quite sure how it would happen until they heard about the Saving For Tomorrow Program. Within one year of being accepted into the program, they are proud to be the new owners of a beautiful 4-bedroom house near their children's schools.

The Hopes were very committed to reaching their \$1,000 goal, and diligently saved while completing the mandatory financial capability courses, Homebuyer Education class, and working individually with the HUD housing counselor, Carrie Sharp.

Carrie is not only a HUD certified counselor, but trained financial coach as well. Lanea really enjoyed working with her, "She was great in helping us to see where we were spending our money, what could be changed, and what price range we should be looking at in regards to the house. She helped us understand the need for reserve funds, for just in case instances like the furnace going out."

Anthony and Lanea attended the eight-hour Homebuyer Education class in February of this year and found that it prepared them for the home-buying process,



"We were able to see before we committed what we would be responsible for and we were able to make an informed decision on whether we were not only financially, but mentally, ready to buy our home."

Upon reaching their savings goal, they were able to leverage the \$4,000 match along with a Homestart Grant through Stockman Bank for down payment funds. Tami Hartman assisted them with the grant application and mortgage pre-approval. Karen Campbell, Realtor, helped them find a home they could Love AND afford.

## Upcoming at HRDC

### Phillips 66 "Meet in the Park"

•Staff from HRDC's programs participate at South Park to share information with neighborhood residents

Thursday, September 8, 5-7:00 p.m.

### Home Improvement Show

•HRDC's Energy Assistance staff will be on hand to provide information on available services

Friday-Sunday, September 9-11

### United Way Day of Caring

•A team of HRDC staff will volunteer their time and give back to our community in yet another way

Thursday, September 15

### HRDC 50th Anniversary Open House

•Visit HRDC's main office to celebrate 50 years of Community Action in Billings

Thursday, October 13, 4-6:00 p.m.

### Suited for Success

•An event geared towards men re-entering the work-force, with work attire and resources available

Thursday, October 20, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.



District 7  
 Human Resources  
 Development Council  
 7 North 31st Street  
 PO Box 2016  
 Billings, MT 59103

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## How you can help...

HRDC has many needs in fulfilling its mission that cannot always be met with our limited financial or human resources. Your gift to HRDC changes people's lives in enduring ways.

For more information on how you can help, please contact Liz Harding at 406-247-4707 or [lharding@hrdc7.org](mailto:lharding@hrdc7.org).

### Ways you can help:

- **Volunteer** (especially for events like Suited for Success and Play Date at the Zoo)
- **Tax-deductible monetary donations**
- **Donation of items on our Wish List**

#### WISH LIST ITEMS

- Toiletries & hygiene products
- Men's dress socks
- Gift cards to Wal-Mart, Target, or ShopKo
- Diapers (sizes 4, 5, 6) & wipes
- Twin & crib size bedding
- Office supplies