

## A Message from our Executive Director

By Geoffrey Birnbaum, Executive Director

To misquote John Lennon ***“There are faces I remember all my life.”*** We choose ***“Faces”*** as the theme for our first ever Roots and Wings Annual Campaign. I love this theme because it represents so many things about the work we do at the Youth Homes.

Just a few days ago I had dinner with a Youth Home alum that is 35-years old. We have stayed in touch over these years and her heroic story continues to this day. The daily work she continues to do to succeed is a story of courage and of hard work. When I mentioned the theme to her she immediately talked about the faces she remembered from her days at the Tom Roy Youth Guidance Home. The first folks she named were the staff she lived with each day of her two years there. This reinforces the

belief that Youth Homes is not about buildings and not about what we say. Rather, it is about the relationships we forge with kids who enter our care and what they say about what made the difference. When I see alums (and I see them often just crossing paths) they always talk about what made a difference for them and never fail to name a staff person who was there and who cared.

The ***“Faces”*** theme talks about relationship and talks about challenges. The challenges are about chaos, safety, inconsistency, poverty, isolation and loss. This is quite a mountain to climb for those so young.

There is no question they are challenged but they do not lack assets, like resiliency and hopefulness. They are willing to risk

to win their life back. They are strong and they are courageous.

***“Faces”*** is about what youngsters see when they join us. They see opportunity. They see inspiration. They see people and a community who care. Please join us in funding their day-to-day routine that makes the faces they need and the future they can only dream about real. Invest in these youngsters as they are our children and they deserve better. In our 39 years of service, we all have been paid back, far more than we have invested, in the strength and resiliency from those we serve.



Geoffrey Birnbaum  
Executive Director



## MISSION STATEMENT

To assist each child in finding security, a sense of belonging and a place to call home.

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## YOUTH HOMES

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Ramey Kodadek

# Youth Homes Run 4 Kids Team Raises \$60,000!

By *Laura Henning,*  
*Development Coordinator*

In the winter of 2007, former Development Director Kim Anderson had an idea – encourage community members to participate in the Missoula Marathon while raising funds for Youth Homes. Forty-one people answered the call and ran or walked the full or half marathon while raising an astonishing \$41,000!

Buoyed by this success, we decided to step up our recruitment efforts in 2008 for the 2009 marathon. Through newspaper ads, personal referrals and community we attracted 117 participants – nearly triple the number of the previous year! Thanks to the generous support of Montana Rail Link, team members re-

ceived free marathon entry and a red “Run 4 Kids” team performance running shirt. In exchange, we asked each participant to walk or run the half or full marathon in honor of a child and raise \$1,000 in pledges.

What we found is that many people worried more about the commitment of raising the \$1,000 than training for the race itself. However, the majority of participants jumped in with both feet to raise funds by asking friends and family for donations or by holding small fundraising events like a

quilt raffle. While some raised more, and some raised less than the goal, together **the team raised an amazing \$60,000!**

Although the amount of money raised was a great feat, it was equally inspiring to watch the team members as they completed the race. One by one, red shirts became visible across the Higgins bridge as the runners and walkers neared the finish line to the cheers of the crowd lining the street. The team ranged from professional racers like Jeremy Oury to Missoula Mayor John Engen, both of whom participated with our teens, as well as many marathon novices who were competing for the first time. The day ended with a post-race party at Caras Park, where we distributed prizes to the top three fundraisers, Cameron Axelson, Elisha Thomas and Rhonda Decker.

Thank you to all of you who made this event a success, especially **Montana Rail Link** for their sponsorship of the event as well as **Runner's Edge and Run Wild Missoula** for their continued support! **We look forward to an even more success in 2010!**

athlete Jeremy is. He is one of the people you see on the street and immediately know he is a serious competitor who is in absurdly good shape. Jeremy has competed in Ironmans, triathlons, bike races and marathons. You name it and likely Jeremy has done it and not just finished the event, but has come in as the winner or in the top five!

But Jeremy takes his passion one step further; he also does it for a good cause. We have been

## Dedication: Donor pairs physical performance with philanthropy.

By *Ramey Kodadek, Development Director*

Six months ago, Jeremy Oury, a long-time friend of Youth Homes, contacted me with an idea. He wanted to participate on the Youth Homes Run 4 Kids Team again this year, but with an added element. In addition to the Missoula half marathon, Jeremy would also compete at the ITU World Triathlon Championships in Gold Coast, Australia, an event he qualified for at the USAT National Cham-

pionships earlier this year. Jeremy was part of a group of 200 American triathletes who were selected to compete at the ITU World Triathlon against athletes from 60 other nations.

It's hard to explain what a dedicated and incredibly talented



Jeremy Oury  
in Australia.

**See Oury Next Page**

## Oury

fortunate that he has chosen to fundraise for the Bitterroot Youth Home, our seven-bed emergency shelter home in Hamilton. This year Jeremy asked me if it would be possible for him to run the half marathon with one of our kids I have to say. I chuckled and thought “No way! Who could keep up with him?” But we have an excellent runner in our Dan Fox Family Care Guide Homes Program, a young Blackfeet girl who’s a track superstar, and together she and Jeremy conquered the half marathon in a fast time of 1:44:41.

Then on September 12th, Jer-

emy competed in the ITU World Triathlon Championships in Gold Coast, Australia, wearing a “speed suit” with the Youth Homes logo prominently displayed. I’ll let the results speak for themselves: total time of 2:08:48, 33rd out of 106 in his age group, fifth American, 373rd overall out of 3,036. We have to mention Jeremy’s dad, Dr. Jim Oury, who finished 14th in the 70-74 year old category. Clearly extreme athletic talent runs in the family!

Jeremy’s excellent results did not stop with his finish time. He also raised \$9,000 for the Bitterroot Youth Home. These funds go to support the critical work



Jeremy runs with a Youth Homes teen.

BYH does by meeting the need of offering a safe and caring home where kids can go when a crisis erupts in their lives and their home is no longer stable. Unfortunately, while shelter care is a necessary service when a crisis occurs, it is one of the most underfunded programs in the child care system.

We thank you Jeremy, for caring about our kids, and we thank all of you who supported his efforts. If you would like to read more about Jeremy’s experience go to [www.youthhomes.com/jeremy-oury/](http://www.youthhomes.com/jeremy-oury/) to see his web page, blog, Gold Coast information, pictures and Firstgiving website.

## California Street Footbridge Adopted! - Shirley Miller Attention Home engages in community beautification project.

By Anna Green,  
*Summer Day Program Coordinator*

The California Street footbridge has long been an integral part of the Shirley Miller Attention Home culture, history and community. It is a place where our staff members take kids one-on-one to talk, a short cut to travel to Osprey games or downtown, or just a place where as a group we sit and relax.

We had two goals in our California Street footbridge beautification project. The first goal was to improve the physical environment of our neighborhood as it is a representation of our home and hence our tribe. We started by planting flowers in the planter, picking up trash around the bridge and river, and emptying the trash cans. We will continue the proj-

ect in the future by covering up hateful graffiti on and around the bridge. The second goal, and perhaps the most important, was to create a sense of community within the spirits of the kids we serve. The children that make up the tribe I like to call the “A-Homies” in many cases struggle to find a place where they belong.

Within the chaos of moving from place to place, many kids seem to lose the desire and perhaps ability all together to commit and be a part of any community. Our California Street footbridge beautification project aimed to change that. Allowing our kids to take part in beautifying our neighborhood helped re-enforce their place and part in our community. They took ownership over the space and so far they have done amazing work.

Upon venturing into the

daunting task of beautifying the bridge, the A-Homies and I took a walk to examine and discuss what type of work would need to be done first. Almost immediately the kids and I noticed the giant flower planter and its need for a little love. At close to ten feet around and three feet deep, it was a daunting task. However, the planter was the easiest to get started as other projects (namely painting) necessitated materials we had not yet received. So on a hot Wednesday morning, four kids, two staff, two shovels, two rakes, and one wheelbarrow went to work. The dirt in the planter was as hard as concrete and full of weeds and rocks. We spent four hours that day dumping buckets of river water on the soil and breaking it up with shovels until literally all of our hands were blistered and sore. We had by the end of that day, removed roughly four inches of soil from the planter. Only two feet, eight inches left to go until ground zero. The next



Anna works with the “A-Homies.”

See Footbridge on Page 6

# A PERFECT SETTING - Celebrating 29



On August 5th, our 29th “Youth Homes Annual Summer Party” was held on the scenic grounds behind Historical Museum at Fort Missoula. The new location provided the perfect setting for a great evening enjoyed by all. The night was spent mingling with friends, participating in bucket raffles and enjoying a delicious dinner provided by Rob and

Polly Smith of the Outback Steak House. Our alumni speaker, Amber Goodin, moved our guests with her courageous and emotional speech. and our emcee, Mayor John Engen, ended the night on a high note with a highly entertaining live auction.

The party was a success, raising just over \$20,000 for the Youth



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## “ARE YOU MY (I

The following is an excerpt from Youth Homes’ Alumus Amber Goodin’s speech at our Annual Summer Pa



Amber and Vince embrace following her speech.

I met Vince Colucci for the first time when I was about eleven years old. He had a s born set to his jaw. He scared the shit out of me. He seemed tough and didn’t talk mu

I had moved in with Kathy and Vince in November of my freshman year of high s closed minded and borderline judgmental. He seemed also to think he was right muc fairly liberal, not religious at all, and a young girl. He and I found ways to coexist nic anything of passionate interest to one or the other, Kathy would enter in as mediator him and me to be as different as possible. He never voiced emotion, while I was prone

Ironically, I became very interested in seeking his approval. It became something th before my eyes he had become my father figure. I remember when report cards came say “What are you going to do to bring it up?” After this happened a few times, and other similar events occurred hurt feelings because he never verbally gave that approval I sought. My stubborn streak had turned the sadness in his home.

One day, I decided to hug him. I didn’t know how it would be received and had even asked Kathy about it. She used to showing emotion. Yet, despite the strain, it felt good. Deep in me the girl who had so badly wanted her f pattern of occasional hugs, teasing each other about our differing views and small talk. Any hugs after that felt his hugs always felt unsure to me. His hugs always made me feel safe even though this man was, and in some wa

Now, having moved out of his house and into college, I realize how truly important Vince was, and is, in my life. ends, I look forward to seeing him and getting another hug. In essence, I draw strength from them. I enjoy the 4 year old girl, ~~he became~~ *he became a father.*

# years of our Annual Summer Party at Historical Fort Missoula

Homes!

This year we used empty backpacks as centerpieces that were graciously donated by KC and Shannone Hart of Fidelity Real Estate. We asked our guests to take one home and bring it back with school supplies. Days after the party, the backpacks were returned to the Youth Homes filled to the brim with school

supplies for our kids. This was an amazing start to begin meeting the needs of the nearly 160 kids in our care each day!

We thank all of our guests, volunteers and table sponsors for your support and for making the party another fun and successful evening. We especially want to recognize the following:



n, Fidelity Real Estate, First Interstate Bank, Frontier West, LLC, Merrill Lynch WS Group, Montana Rail Link, Montana, Bill and Dori Johnston, Boone Karlberg PC, Brownstone Capital, Copper Run, CTA Architects Engi- Fidelity Real Estate, First Interstate Bank, Flanagan's Motors, Frontier West LLC, Gallusha, Higgins and Gal- t and Lisa Hayhurst, Merrill Lynch WS Group, Montana Rail Link, Mural Family Foundation, Paul Ryan & As- **NKIND GIFTS** Big Sky Brewing Company, Blue Canyon, Bravo! Catering, Canyon Salon, Charlie and Porter, Good Food Store, International Wildlife Film Festival, Jaker's, Jax Hats, JMG Massage Therapy, Missoula Symphony Association, Misty's Tanning and Ultimate Salon, Montana CINE International, Mon- t, Pangaea River Rafting, Pattee Creek Market, Paul Silverman, Pepsi, REI, Runners Edge, Safeway, Scotty's of Montana, The Depot, The Highlands Golf Club, The Ranch Club, The Shack, Tom Swenson, Total Fest, **THANKS** Our Emcee, Mayor John Engen, Robert Brown and Staff at Fort Missoula, Rob and Polly for Girls and Susan Talbot Boys and Girls Home, Tom Roy Youth Guidance Home, Our Summer Party Com- d Whitney Schwab, Liesel Marron, **ALL THE VOLUNTEERS WHO MADE THIS EVENT POSSIBLE!**



## FOSTER) DAD?"

arty. To learn more about foster care, please contact Bill Neaves - 406.721.2754 ext. 204.

sturdy build that reminded me of a mountain though he wasn't overly tall. He had intense blue eyes and a stub- ch at all. But even early on, I was very curious about him. I wondered why he seemed so closed off and distant.

school. As I lived with him, I began to notice that Vince was stubborn, a man's man and at times seemed to be ch of the time and he had strong religious and political views. I, on the other hand, was social, at times loud, rely despite our differences. In fact, our differences were the least of our daily issues. Whenever we spoke about . She often said to us things like "now kids, let's play nice." She was our common ground, our glue. I believed to crying and showing physical affection.

at was of the utmost importance to me, though I was stubborn enough to pretend it wasn't. It seemed that right out, he would look at my grades seeing A's and B's yet passing them up to ask "How come you got a C?" and to d, I realized that I had started to harbor anger toward him. I realized shortly after that my anger was actually into anger in order to keep up the pretense that he was just Kathy's husband and a guy who allowed me to live

told me to go ahead and do it. It was an awkward hug between a frightened young girl and a man who was not rather to be around rejoiced in being held in the awkward embrace. He and I then settled into an unpredictable forced, unnatural to both of us, yet I still loved it when he'd hug me. Despite his strong and certain demeanor, ys still is, a virtual stranger.

We still don't talk much, and we certainly never talk on the phone. But when I go home for holidays and week- m even if they don't feel comfortable, because despite his stubborn nature and the stubborn nature of a fourteen

five days continued much like the first, hard labor with no visible reward yet not one of the kids complained. Sure they all needed periodic breaks and delicious cold beverages but in general the morale of the group stayed high.

On day five, after a temporary donation of more tools and man power, we reached the bottom of the planter and the smiles on the faces of our kids couldn't have been brighter. As we filled the void in the planter with buckets of soil and compost, the excitement continued to grow. They

felt proud of the work they had done and basked in the glory of compliments given by passerbys. People stopped and watched us work, thanked us for our time, and commented on how beautiful the planter was going to be. With each flower the kids held in their hands and then planted in the soil, I saw them feel accomplished. I was struck deeply by how the kids commented on the beauty of each plant and delicately cared for them as if the flowers themselves were small children in need of love and respect.

By the end of the planter

project, we all marveled at the beauty they had created. Not only had the A-Homies done something wonderful for their neighborhood, but they had done something wonderful for themselves too. I heard them telling their families and friends about their work and accomplishment. I was lucky enough to see how it boosted their self-esteem. It may not have been an easy project but it was rewarding. It also may not have solidified their sense of community but it was one little step in the right direction and that's all that matters.

# TRIBUTE GIFTS

*Making a gift in honor or memory of a loved one is a way to pay tribute to those you hold dear. To learn more, contact Ramey Kodadek at 721-2704 ext. 222.*

## IN MEMORY

### **Dorothy Cowan**

by Bill and Janet Crandall, Bonnie Faust, Carrie Merkel, Harriet Crowley, Jerry L. and Kathryn E. Zahl, Matthew Gibson, Meaghan M. Lee-Moriarity

### **Rachel Kelly Fletcher**

by Thomas A. Brennan, Evelyn Kelly

## IN HONOR

### **Al Haugh**

by Betty Winchell

## IN HONOR

### **Cathy Semmelroth**

by Theone Johnson

### **Heather Ondrak**

by Cindy Ondrak

### **Lucille Molinari**

by John Robinson

### **Shane McCorkle & Jessica Kehoe**

given through justgive.org

### **Susan Talbot**

by Deborah Frandsen

### **Heather Wilcox**

by Betsy and Warren Wilcox

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- Kalispell Daybreak Rotary  
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- Missoula Sunrise Rotary  
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- Rapp Family Foundation  
*\*For the Bitterroot Youth Home*
- Schall Family Fund of the Minneapolis Foundation  
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*\*For the Bitterroot Youth Home*
- United Way of Flathead County  
*\*For the Flathead Youth Home*
- United Way of Missoula County  
*\*For the Shirley Miller Attention Home*
- United Way of Missoula County  
*\*For the Tom Roy Youth Guidance Home*
- United Way of Ravalli County  
*\*For the Bitterroot Youth Home*
- University of Montana-School of Business Administration  
*\*For the Partnership for Children*
- US Bank  
*\*For the Youth Homes General Fund*

FOUNDATION GIFTS

Thank You Thank You Thank You

Thanks to Christine Caldwell and Lisa Hayhurst, for again hosting the annual Back to School party this year. Just to see the colossal pile of the many supplies and gift cards we gathered, we recognized the fact that each one of those gifts represents a smile on a child's face, a moment of happiness given to them and also brings with it the knowledge that someone cares about them. Thanks to all who attended and donated towards new school supplies for the 09/10 School Year!

The Flathead Youth Home would like to give special thanks to the 67 teams who participated in this year's sixth annual Glacier Challenge. Special thanks to our sponsors,

**6** The Kalispell Daybreak Rotary, Qdoba Mexican Grill, and Nomad Technologies.

The Dan Fox Family Care Program (DFF-CP) would like to thank all those who helped support our youth and made our summer diversity camps a success this year. Youth ranging from age 5 to 17 attended DFFCP camps this summer. Both of these camps serve to assist youth in the development of a healthy ethnic identity, acceptance of themselves and appreciation for diversity. With the generous support of people like you, we were able to help youth learn about their development, build self-esteem, learn the value of respect and strengthen relationships with peers and adults. For our young kids camp Cross Cultural Journeys,

Thanks to Matt Ellis, Jared Amoss and Jeff Griffin at the Missoula Osprey as well as Best Buy of Missoula for coordinating DFFCP's

Foster Care and Adoption Awareness night and Community Corner tickets in August. Our foster families and group homes had such a great time at the game. Also thanks to Glenn Wheeler and Sentinel Kiwanis for their Osprey Night and BBQ.

DFFCP would also like to thank Mayor John Engen for attending the foster parent appreciation dinner at Downtown Tonight. Your presence truly helped our families feel appreciated. Also, thanks to all of the local vendors who discounted meals for our families - El Cazador, Thai Spicy, Baskin' Robbins and McKenzie River Pizza Company.

As always, we do our very best job to thank all who help us with our efforts. If we have forgotten to thank you, please give us a call and let us know. 721-2704. Thank you all!

## Making Progress - Tom Roy Youth Guidance Home teen finds his way. *By Gabe Goeres - Therapeutic Youth Care Worker*



Painting of Roy by former Development Director, Kim Anderson

**R**oy has been in and out of the system since 2004. After several different placements, including a stint at Pine Hills

Correctional Facility, Roy came to live at the Tom Roy Youth Guidance Home. Academically, Roy has struggled staying focused on his school work, preferring to spend his time socializing with his classmates.

This past spring, Roy made the decision to drop out of high school and enroll with Emma Dickenson to receive his G.E.D., but he still wasn't making much progress on his educational goals. However, through Emma Dickenson, Roy discovered the Family Economic Security Project (FES)— a program that has him taking classes on financial literacy and undergoing vocational training in automotive essentials, in addition to paying him to get his G.E.D. Thanks to this program, Roy

has been inspired by all the opportunities ahead of him and is excited for his future.

Additionally, Roy struggles with his weight, because of this Roy has been able to participate in CrossFit, an intense workout regimen. Roy would often come home with a smile from ear to ear and tell staff stories of how much he was able to lift. It was obvious that his self esteem was beginning to grow as big as his muscles.

He has been employed through the Human Resource Council— working at a local auto shop. Roy has a very mechanical mind and is quite handy in the shop. Roy has also been able to relax and have fun on many trips taken with the Tom Roy Home. At Silverwood theme park in Idaho, Roy thoroughly enjoyed himself at the park and given the opportunity would have ridden the bumper cars continually for the entire time at the park. Roy is a very personable, respectful, and charming young man. We all look forward to the great accomplishment he will surely achieve in his future!

## Staff changes in the Development Team at Youth Homes

*By Ramey Kodadek, Development Director*



Ramey Kodadek

Laura Henning has joined the development team at Youth Homes as our Development Coordinator. She brings

nearly 20 years of non-profit development and marketing experience and we are excited to have her working at Youth Homes! Laura is a native Coloradan and came to Missoula three years ago. Laura is responsible for all data entry and database management, has taken over the development role for the Bitterroot Youth Home and supervises all volunteer opportunities, and in-kind donations. **Welcome Laura!**

Kim Anderson left the Youth Homes after eight years to spend more time with her family including their newest addition their son, Cooper, and to pursue her passion, art. We all miss Kim and thank her for all she did for the Youth Homes, but are also so happy for her and her family.

Two months ago I was promoted to Development Director. This month I will celebrate five years of working with Youth Homes, and I truly could not be more thrilled to be here! During my time at Youth Homes I have had the opportunity to work in several roles on both the develop-

ment and program sides of our organization and I am excited about my new position.

As Geoff wrote, **we have launched our first Roots and Wings Annual Campaign.** It is our hope that this campaign will serve two purposes; one for us to re-connect with you and to thank you for your support, and two that you will continue to make a gift to Youth Homes. Currently, we have five teams handling the commu-



Laura Henning

nity portion of our campaign with a **goal of raising \$50,000.** We are excited by this fundraising effort and hope that if you are contacted you will join us in making it a success!



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## Making a Difference - *The impact of your giving*

*By Chuck Wayland, Program Director, Dennis Radtke Home for Boys*



The Dennis Radtke Home for Boys

**B**ig changes are afoot at the Dennis Radtke Home for Boys, as the expansion of the facility from four to six beds is well underway. By the time you read this we will be moving furniture and airing out the fresh paint smell. In addition to

adding two new residents, the expansion will allow my position as Program Director to become full time.

While that is good for me (and the program), I am as excited, if not more, for my new office and conference space. I am “movin’ on up” from my small windowless storage closet that served me well to a deluxe office space with a beautiful view of the Rattlesnake mountains to the north. We will be able to conduct groups in this new space, away from the living room we currently use, where noise and

cooking odors that routinely emanate from the kitchen as dinner is being prepared serve as a frequent distraction. It can be hard to compete for attention with the smell of burgers and fries. Needless to say, I am looking forward to moving into the new digs.

While we are expanding the number of residents, our staffing numbers are not changing. So we will all have some adjusting to do in the coming months as we make the transition and get comfortable with the new work load.

## upcoming events

- November 14: “Griz for Kids” Football Game
- December: Christmas Angels Brunch *(date TBD)*
- December 5: Kids Holiday Party
- February 13: Bitterroot Youth Home’s Valentines Gala

You can always visit our website [www.youthhomes.com](http://www.youthhomes.com) for more detailed information