

Spring 2023

NEWSLETTER

WHERE COMPASSION MEETS ACTION



THE RIPPLE EFFECT

"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." - Mother Teresa

The work we do at Florence Crittenton initiates change in the many families we serve. Indeed, the ripple effect on future generations through our clients is seemingly endless. With your help, we are breaking cycles of abuse, poverty, and substance use and building strong, resilient families and children. Thank you for being involved with the Florence Crittenton family!

Read more inside about the work we are doing, including our Project Sunshine, of which we are so grateful you are a part!

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MISSION STATEMENT

Florence Crittenton provides innovative, comprehensive services and nurturing programs that engage and empower children, young adults and young families to thrive and build productive lives.

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WHO WF ARF

Florence Crittenton is a leader in family and early childhood services. We provide effective intervention and prevention services to families of young children. With the support of partners like you, Florence Crittenton offers a comprehensive array of services, including therapeutic residential care, home visiting, community parenting classes, outpatient treatment services for mental health and substance use disorders and early education and childcare oopportunities for children o-5.



Dear Friends.

Happy Spring to all! The sun is finally shining and it looks like there might be a small sliver of hope that the warmer weather is on its way. With the warmer weather comes the hope of summer fun and time out on the water on our Montana lakes and rivers.

This time of year also makes me also think of the young families we serve at Florence Crittenton...the hope of new beginnings and the ripples of change across our communities as these families embark on their new journey.

We have been busy at Florence Crittenton, planning for our new building, serving families across all of our programs and advocating for those families that are still in need of support. The 2023 Legislative Session has brought to light many key issues for human, social, and behavioral services in our communities. Florence Crittenton staff have been diligent in sharing our perspectives and testifying when requested or appropriate. We are grateful to the many people who dedicate so much of their time learning about the issues, communicating with their constituents, and making the best decisions they can. Every time I have the chance to testify or speak to legislators, I am happy to remind them of the ripple effect this work brings to our state; that we can put our differences aside and see the hope and thriving lives that stem from one family making the brave choice to receive support and make changes.

I was reminded of this ripple the other day when a former employee reached out to say hello. She was commenting on the effect her time working here had made on her life and said, "The impact was so big for me, that when I welcomed my first baby, second baby, and third baby, I was a better mom because of what I learned working at Florence Crittenton. The girls taught ME so much, with grace, humor, strength, and a resilience I simply haven't found in any other group anywhere else."

To share this amazing woman's words one more time...
"To the staff that work hard to help repair generational trauma, social stigma, and pain of unfathomable pasts... thank you.

To the girls that taught me how to be a mom, that are still kicking butt and showing the world what they are made of... thank you.

To those of you who have ever donated to Florence Crittenton's lifesaving work... thank you for helping change more lives than you could possibly know. Mine."

With Gratitude,

Carrie Krepps, Executive Director





MYKELL & JORLYNN'S STORY

Mykell Fox is a former client of Florence Crittenton. She came to us in 2007, pregnant at the tender age of 16.

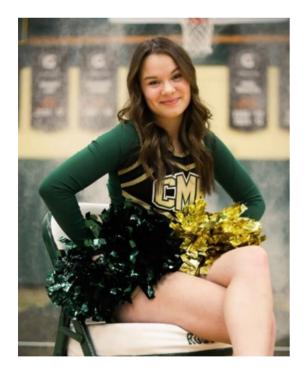
Coming from a small town where teen pregnancy was looked down upon as a failure, she was often told, "You'd better drop out of high school and get on welfare because you won't be more than another teen mom."

The father of Mykell's baby wasn't supportive and became controlling and abusive. She had limited support of her family, and knew she needed a more extensive support system.



Mykell and Jorlynn recently shared their story at our fundraiser Paint the Town Plnk

Mykell and her mom visited with their family counselor to discuss her options. The counselor mentioned Florence Crittenton Family Services in Helena. Feeling nervous, scared, and worthless she toured the home, after which she felt hope. Shortly after arriving at FC, the staff visited with Mykell about her short-term goals. She wanted to graduate from high school with her peers as well as from the program through Florence Crittenton.



Mykell had a baby girl she named Jorlynn. After attending parenting classes and learning the best ways to care for an infant, she became a competent mother that completed high school as well as learned how to manage and maintain a household.

Now 16 years old, Mykell's daughter Jorlynn is an honor roll student and a varsity cheer leader. Instead of her and her mom being another story of failure or a teen mom who just "called it quits," they persevered. In Jorlynn's words, "With the help of an amazing support system my mom was given at the home, she became the person who raised me and got me to where I am today. The person I call mom today chose to stay. She chose me."

The life lessons we offer at FC helped Mykell raise three beautiful daughters and become the people they are today. She and her husband are celebrating ten years of marriage this summer and she firmly believes that, "Without this amazing program, I don't think I would be the mother or the person I am today. Every person there was a piece to my puzzle, and I always knew I had someone in my corner, so I didn't feel so alone." Mykell is grateful for the support and attention she received while in our care, and for our work in giving young moms like her a fighting chance to raise their babies so they can grow up to be healthy and happy and have opportunities they might not otherwise have.

PROJECT SUNSHINE UPDATE



You've likely heard about "Project Sunshine," our capital campaign designed to support the acquisition and renovation of the historic Cooney Home property in Helena, MT.

The goal of this project is to establish a central campus in which we can colocate and expand our programs to meet the rising needs of families in Montana. Through acquiring and renovating this new facility, we will increase our capacity to serve more families, create new jobs, and develop a sustainable future for our organization and families we are so privileged to serve.

Partnering with Slate Architecture, the renovations have been thoughtfully designed with the intention of creating a space that not only adheres to our licensing and safety requirements but is also designed to function for decades of serving families in an operationally efficient manner. We are utilizing a phased approach to the renovations to ensure as little disruption to our families as possible. In May, we anticipate beginning the expansion of our early childhood center to most quickly address the critical need in our communities of increased capacity of affordable childcare. We will then move to our residential floor, and once it's complete, we'll move our clients from our Harris facility to the newly renovated space.

It is important to note that the Harris facility is owned outright by the Florence Crittenton Foundation. The Foundation's sole mission is to support the activities of Florence Crittenton Family Services. Once the Harris property is sold, the proceeds of this sale will go into our Endowment held by our Foundation, creating \$80,000-125,000 in distribution proceeds annually to pay for the ongoing maintenance and future updates of the campus in perpetuity.

To date, we've raised about 50% of the total project cost. Through the investment of public and private grant funding and generous individual contributions, we're getting closer to our goal every day. Thank you so much for being a part of this monumental effort! While it's certainly not a small undertaking, the completion of Project Sunshine will be a legacy that will positively impact generations through the programs we are able to offer as well as expand.

Over the last few years, our community has struggled with increased mental health and substance use challenges exacerbated by the pandemic as well as staffing, childcare, and housing shortages. While these challenges may have tested our ability to persevere, Florence Crittenton is dedicated to creating a sustainable future for our organization to continue providing life-changing services to families when they need us the most. Project Sunshine will be a monumental era in the rich history of our organization, and we invite you to be a part of this project and leave a lasting impact on families for decades to come. To learn more, please visit projectsunshine.info.

CELEBRATE MOTHERS DAY WITH US!

Treat the mothers in your life like royalty with a spa package! This year's Mother's Day Raffle will again feature a fabulous plethora of ways to pamper the mother in your life. Massages, coffee, pedicures, treats and swag will all go to a special mother who deserves a day or two of relaxation. More details to come, but scan the QR code and get your tickets early! or visit florencecrittenton.org.

Tickets are:

1 for \$20, 3 for \$50, 10 for \$150, 20 for \$250



BELIEVER'S CIRCLE

Be part of the solution to building a stronger community by joining Believer's Circle today! Florence Crittenton Family Services established the Believer's Circle in 2006 as a way for individuals to make regular contributions to create and change the future for young families across Montana. Currently, we have 41 members of the Believer's Circle that give regularly. This commitment provides reliable support throughout the year and allows us to manage cash flow and better manage accessibility to our programs, providing \$365,851.79since 2006. Thank you to those who make it possible to keep our programs up and running for the most vulnerable families in our state.

Deanna Albert
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Andy & Jeaneen Campbell
Jim & Joslyn Carney
Joseph & Georgia Chiarella
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Would you like to join the Believer's Circle? It's easy! Simply scan the QR code below or visit florencecrittenton.org and click on the donate now link. With your regular donation, you can be assured that Florence Crittenton will use it to serve the programs and families that need it most. These funds help many families achieve their goals, and provide long lasting change for generations to come.

A monthly gift of \$25 could provide birthday parties for the children of our clients for the whole year! A monthly gift of \$50 would allow a family to attend Love and Logic Parenting Classes, empowering them to address the every day challenges of parenting.



WHOSE VOICE IS THAT?

by Daniel Champer - Director of Clinical & Residential Services

It happens daily. One of my kids does a thing. I feel a thing. And then, I open my mouth and my dad comes out.

Now don't get me wrong, it's not all bad. There are moments when I feel a sense of pride and a connection to my father, and then to his father. There are moments when I feel silly and a little archaic. And there are moments when I just feel.



Many of us have encountered this brief experiment in time travel. The concept has made frequent appearances in comedy skits, commercials, and therapy sessions. It is often maligned and treated as an unwelcome intrusion of our past into our present. Whatever it is, it is both pervasive and persistent. The reason is rooted at the intersection of developmental theory and neuroscience.

Without fail, when this phenomenon occurs, I am transported back in memory. I smell the smells. I see the sights. I hear the sounds. And I experience the emotions.

All sensations that we experience enter through our body. Our senses capture information from the environment and route it through our brain stem and into our brains. However, every single piece of data that our body collects from our world must make a pit stop before it arrives in the part of our brains that contains our consciousness. Every smell, sight, sound, touch and taste checks into our limbic system on its way through our bodies. The limbic system acts as the emotional center of our brain. This means that we have a feeling about every single thing that we experience before we have a conscious thought about it.

When we experience sensations and situations that evoke the same or similar emotions, we are transported back to an earlier experience of that emotion. And we don't just think about the memory, we relive it. When I eat a Werther's caramel candy, I am instantly transported into my grandparents' living room. When I hear any country song from the 90's I am transported to a variety of stories and situations that I have previously experienced. An emotion is always invoked. Some of them are good, and some of them are not.

The limbic system lens through which all of our experiences are filtered also triggers reactions. When I experience a situation that produces a sense of fear, I instinctively react in the same way that I have in the past when I have experienced a similar feeling. This system produces reaction, while the rational and conscience parts of our brains allow for action.

And then we sprinkle in a little trauma. Trauma is an event or experience that disrupts our sense of normal. These events often contain an element of fear and a sense of being threatened. When we experience a traumatic event, our lives are always different after the event than they were before.

Trauma affects our limbic system and nervous system much in the way that a Polaroid camera captured Christmas in 1989. When we experience trauma, our brain instantly captures all of the details of the moment. Unfortunately, these details are much clearer and more visceral than that grainy square of memories that we stuff in a shoebox in the closet.

However, they have the same effect. When I pull out the photographs of my middle school years, I am instantly transported back in time. The pictures of baggy jeans, polo shirts, puka shell necklaces and bowl haircuts sprinkled with generic bleaching products evoke the emotions of the past.I feel the thrill of trying new things.I feel the comfort of supportive relationships. I feel the loneliness of rejection. And I feel the fear of failure.

These are all the reasons that sometime today, twenty years later, I will open my mouth and my dad will come out. These are all the reasons that when I experience fear sometime in the future, my response to it will most likely not be that of a middle aged, experienced attachment therapist. It will be the reaction of an earlier version of me that experienced fear connected to a formative and disruptive traumatic event.

Trauma acts as a Polaroid camera for not only the emotions and reactions of our past, but also the skills and coping strategies that we learned in whatever developmental stage we were in when the trauma touched our story. When we experience trauma-connected emotions, we react in trauma-informed ways.

So, the next time you feel rejected and act like a four-year-old; give yourself a little grace. When you interact with the middle school version of a coworker; give them a little grace. And when you encounter a Karen in Target, please do so with the understanding that they are communicating the pain of their internal emotional turmoil through the external expression of their behavior. It is in these moments that I hope I can open my mouth, and some kind and gentle words informed by my past will come out.

STATEWIDE TRAININGS

Florence Crittenton is delighted to share our expertise through our new training offerings. Director of Clinical and Residental Services, Daniel Champer, has spent the past decade traveling Montana training audiences from many professional disciplines, as well as interested community members and stakeholders. He enjoys teaching through storytelling gained from his experience in a variety of professional roles, as well as lessons learned as a farm kid and a mistake-prone human.

Daniel's areas of expertise include trauma, secondary trauma, attachment, resilience building, child/human development, mental health and wellness, environmental considerations to trauma, mental health, sexual reactivity, and suicide prevention. Daniel can also create training specific to the needs of agencies and organizations. He strives to make learning about all areas of mental health interesting, impactful, and meaningful to ALL groups of people.



For more information, please contact elizabethf@florencecrittenton.org

SAVE THE DATE!

SUPPORT OUR GIRLS WILL BE IN A NEW LOCATION!

Mark your calendars for the 12th annual Support Our Girls event coming up Thursday, September 21st. We will be shaking things up with the event moving to the beautiful Kleffner Ranch and some fun new surprises. Stay tuned for more details coming out in June on our website. Tickets will be \$75/person and will be available for purchase online beginning July 1st.

We look forward to seeing you there!

For more information on this event visit our website at florencecrittenton.org



SANTA'S HELPERS!

Florence Crittenton families had a wonderful Christmas thanks to our amazing community members! We were able to collect \$3,500 in beautiful gifts for the families in our programs. Some of our clients made their first-ever positive holiday memories! It is a blessing that Florence Crittenton moms and babies get to experience the holidays in a loving home with the kindness and generosity of the community felt all around them.

Thank you to St. Mary Catholic Community, St. John's Lutheran Church, First Christian Church, Kismet Nail Bar, Galaxy Roasting, Joe Mitchell State Farm, Advanced Spinal Fitness Chiropractic, Halo Salon, Great West Engineering, FAST Enterprises, Trailhead Christian Church, and the Soroptimist International of Helena for hosting Giving Trees! Thank you also to St. John's Lutheran Church for donating \$500 to Santa's Helpers!



We also extend huge gratitude to Toys for Tots for providing us with toys so that we could host our own Santa's Workshop store (see pictures below)! Our moms were excited to be able to shop for new books, toys, and clothes for their little ones. We were also able to invite families that we serve through home visiting and preschool to shop in our holiday store. It was a joy to see how excited our clients were to gift these goodies to their kiddos! Thank you to the Helena community for providing Florence Crittenton families with a joyful Christmas season.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Better Body Fitness of Montana has been a long-time advocate for the physical health of our clients. They have donated thousands of dollars in exercise equipment to keep our clients on the move, even in inclement weather. Most recently, they donated an Echelon Fitness Mirror that provides live and pre-recorded workouts online, and a Matrix Connexus that will facilitate a full spectrum of strength and cardio exercises in our new Cooney campus.



A huge thanks to Josh Crum and the crew at Better Body Fitness of Montana for their long term and significant efforts to be a part of our clients' healing!

PAINT THE TOWN PINK SHATTERS RECORDS!

Paint the Town PINK was its very best, which was a great way to celebrate its 20th anniversary! Thanks to incredible community involvement, we grossed more than \$400,000...Wow! More than 500 of Helena's finest came out dressed to the nines and were not shy in raising their paddles for the families we serve. We are proud to say that as a direct result of such a successful event, we were able to raise the salaries of our direct care staff by 20%! They are dedicated and tireless, and a substantial raise was MUCH needed and deserved, and will help us continue to hire qualified staff and increase our capacity to serve families! Thank you so much to our community for its generosity, and a big shout-out to our corporate and business partners, package donors, volunteers and guests for being a huge part of making that happen. We couldn't have done it without you!



PINK AUCTION DONORS

Dinners Done Right

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Domino's Pizza **Eaton Turner Emerald Salon** Em Nelson Designs **Exploration Works** Florence Crittenton Clients Fred & Carrie Krepps Gardenwerks **Grandstreet Theatre** Gym 406 Halo Salon Helena Athletic Club Helena Orthodontics **Home Beautifiers** Jamie Gilreath **Jeannie Etchart** Jim & Cindy Utterback Joan French Ken Weinheimer Kismet Nail Bar **Knotted Birch** Larry & Elieen Holman Leslie's Hallmark Lucca's Mariposa Massage Mark & Jennifer Baker Mark Meredith Mark Savoy Meadowlark Country Club Mitch Kowalski Montana City Grill & Saloon

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Yellowstone Country Club

10 Spring 2023



PRESENTING



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Legacy society donors have made a commitment to future families at FC by making a gift to our endowment or naming FC in their will.

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URGENT NEED FOR CAREGIVERS

Florence Crittenton has an urgent need for caregivers in both residential and early childhood programs.

Are you looking for a full or part time work in a supportive and rewarding environment? Full training provided.

Put your compassion into action today and make a difference for families in your community.



MORE INFO

Phone: 406 442 6950 Email: jodiel@florencecrittenton.org. Website: florencecrittenton.org or scan the qr code below.

