



The Pollinator

winter 2023-24



**Healthy Acres
Healthy Communities
Foundation**

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Pictured above: 4-H Ambassador Autumn Schelvan, Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium Executive Director Jen Marangelo, MSU Extension Agent Jerry Marks (our building's namesake), and Missoula Conservation District Board Chair Tim Hall cut the ribbon at our Grand Opening.

Welcome to the Gerald W. Marks Exploration Center!

What a journey it has been to achieve the opening of our new home! We are excited to welcome you to the Gerald W. Marks Exploration Center and Rocky Mountain Gardens at 1075 South Avenue West on the Missoula County Fairgrounds. Thank you to all of you who supported this immense community effort!

In early October we received the keys to the new building and access to the Rocky Mountain Gardens. Although we have been preparing for this move, it still felt rushed and a little chaotic, as all moves do. On October 18, we held our first event in the building, our second annual Harvest Fundraiser. Our passionate supporters of horticulture, nutrition and agriculture raised over \$23,000 for further development of the Rocky Mountain Gardens, including shade and play structures to be constructed.

On December 5, we hosted our official Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting. Many community members attended the festive occasion and joined the passport tour leading them through our specialized educational spaces, including the Honeyberry Culinary Classroom, the Lupine Lab and Plant Clinic, the Balsamroot Conference Room, Clover Boardroom, and the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium. **If you have not had a chance to tour the new facility, please contact Jean Jenkins at jenkins@healthyacres.org, 406.370.0441.**



Laying the groundwork

While we were moving boxes and furniture this fall, others were moving dirt and plants into our 2.5-acre education garden. Thankfully the weather was cooperative for our first fall planting. Over three days in late October, groups of volunteers assisted staff in planting more than 2,400 bulbs in the Color Garden. Additionally, Loni Waters of Garden City Florascaping installed the garden pathways and several of the plants for the Waterwise Garden, and Bill Caras of Caras Nursery began laying the stone walkway through the Ornamental Garden, preparing it for spring planting. We look forward to getting our hands dirty and continuing the installation in spring 2024.

TO SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER FOR SPRING PLANTING, please email Stephanie Potts, Rocky Mountain Gardens Outreach Coordinator, at spotts@missoulacounty.us or call 406.258.4260.



SAVE THE DATE:

Sqelix™ "Salish" Storytelling
January 30, 2024, 6-8 p.m.
**Gerald W. Marks
Exploration Center**

Join our Blooms & Brews guest speakers Aspen and Cameron Decker, representing Humanities Montana, with a program about Native storytelling and connection with the land, focusing on Salish place names / Montana geography, art and the Salish seasonal round. Watch for upcoming event registration information at missoulaeduplace.org. Thanks to our sponsor Boyle, Deveny and Meyer PC, all registration fees go directly to support the programs of the Missoula County Department of Ecology and Extension.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

from the **Healthy Acres
Healthy Communities
Foundation**



Thank you for helping us build A Place to Grow!

On November 30, the Healthy Acres Healthy Communities Foundation and Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium held a donor appreciation celebration. With nearly 100 of the over 300 donors involved in the campaign for this new facility attending, the atmosphere was one of gratitude. Without the generosity of private donors, businesses and granting foundations, this amazing new facility would not have been possible. We are all very thankful for our generous community members and their shared passion for education and creating opportunities to connect with our natural world. Thank you for helping us create a destination for all ages to enjoy!



Pat and Sharon Sweeney taste test samples created in the new Honeyberry Culinary Classroom by Kelly Moore, MSU FCS Agent, and Molly Attwater, (pictured) MSU EFNEP educator.

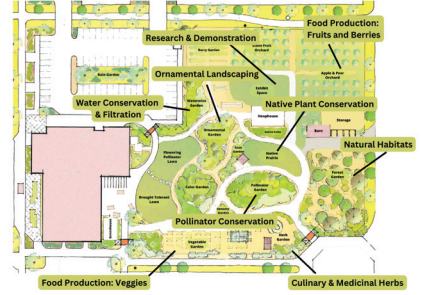


Supporters enjoying our new lobby and second floor Honeyberry Culinary Classroom at our November 30 Donor Appreciation event.

Become a member today!

Cultivate your connection to the natural world.

Rocky Mountain Gardens & Exploration Center



Receive:

- **Early notification** of events, classes, and plant sales.
- **Reduced fees** for programs and classes.
- **Member-only discounts** at local businesses and nurseries.

Support:

- **Garden maintenance.**
- **Free admission** to the gardens for all visitors.
- **Programs** of the Missoula County Department of Ecology & Extension.



Thank you to our membership sponsors!

Join here:



Legacy Giving

Gifts to support our work make a lasting impact on our children, our culture and our community. Healthy Acres Healthy Communities Foundation is a nonprofit 501c3. Please consider making a bequest by naming HAHCF in your will and/or trust. If you are 70½ or older, IRA contributions can be made directly to HAHCF, are not taxable to the donor and HAHCF will receive the full amount of your gift. For more information on how you can be a part of securing a vibrant, healthy future for generations, contact Foundation Coordinator Jean Jenkins at 406.370.0441 or jenkins@healthyacres.org.



The Healthy Acres Healthy Communities Foundation is dedicated to creating an engaged community that cultivates vibrant, thriving urban and rural lands for future generations by providing philanthropic support to the programs of Missoula County Department of Ecology and Extension in the areas of land management, youth development, and family and consumer sciences.