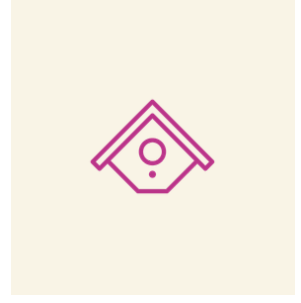
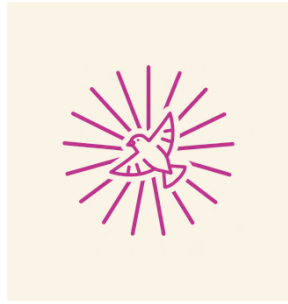


# 2025 Annual Report



A Year of Impact Across Northwest Montana



# Housing youth & building brighter futures!

Donate here!



IN-KIND DONATIONS  
Please call ahead

Monday - Friday  
09:00 am - 03:00pm  
204 7th Ave W  
Kalispell, MT, 59904

## GET IN TOUCH!

P.O. Box 8384 Kalispell, MT, 59904  
admin@sparrowsnestnwmt.org  
www.sparrowsnestnwmt.org  
(406)309-5196



# YOUR GUIDE

## TO WHAT'S INSIDE!

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### What is our mission?

Sparrow's Nest of NW MT is dedicated to ensuring safe, supportive housing and resources for unaccompanied homeless high school students in Northwest Montana, enabling them to graduate High School and become productive, contributing members of our community.



# Executive Director Message

Thank you for taking the time to review our 2025 Annual Report. Each year we look back on the students we served and the impact of our humble organization. In 2025, 15 homeless high school students called Sparrow's Nest home bringing new stories and life into our 8 bedroom facility. It is not a coincidence that year after year we serve 13-15 deserving young people. With limited bed space and varying lengths of stay our annual numbers served is a testament to the dedication of our program staff. They work tirelessly to identify youth in need of our services and provide them with housing and stability. At time of admission each resident participates in individualized case planning to reach their goals. Some residents are with us for weeks, others for years, but regardless of how long they are in our care each student is able to gain valuable life skills which enables them to successfully transition out of our care and back into the community. I think back to each student who has come through our doors with pride, knowing that because of the Sparrow's Nest their future is brighter. It not only confirms my own passion for this work but brings a sense of hope for all of the students that we will serve in the future. Thank you to our community, donors, and dedicated staff and Board members for making this important work possible.



**Rachelle Buckley**  
*Rachelle K Buckley*  
Executive Director  
Sparrow's Nest of NW MT

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



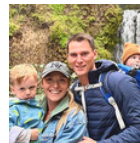
**Linda Kaps**  
Board Chair Person  
SD5 School Board



**Sean Frampton**  
Board Secretary  
Frampton Purdy Law Firm



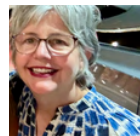
**Kelly Ruby**  
Board Treasurer  
Glacier Bank Operations



**Jake Berry**  
Board Member  
Engle Volkers Realestate



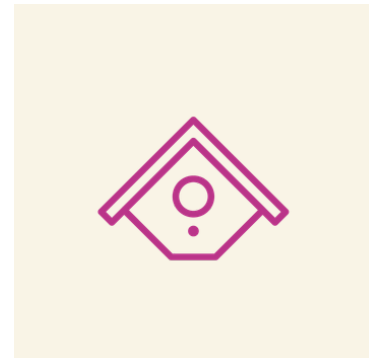
**Tina Blair**  
Board Member  
Fair-Mont-Eagan Superintendent



**Mary Obermiller**  
Board Member  
Obermiller Law Firm

### How they help?

Our board not only provides proper governance and financial oversight, they also work collaboratively with our staff to ensure that client care and safety is at the center of what we do.



## About our Program!

Our program first started in 2013 as a grassroots effort initiated by churches, schools, and concerned parents in the Flathead Valley who learned the extent of student homelessness after Kalispell Public Schools hired their first homeless liaison. At that time, between 268 and 347 students in the Flathead Valley were identified as homeless during the 2013–2014 school year, according to the Montana Office of Public Instruction. Independent groups began working to break the cycle of homelessness, from Kalispell volunteers on the Flathead High School Parents’ Council who welcomed students into their homes, to Whitefish community members and St. Charles Catholic Church who organized rummage sales to raise funds for the cause. These efforts came together when Sister Judy Lund of St. Matthew’s Parish in Kalispell connected with Linda Kaps, a guidance counselor in Columbia Falls, and together they formed the Flathead Homeless Youth Committee, later known as Sparrow’s Nest of Northwest Montana

In 2014, Sparrow’s Nest formally launched operations with the support of this group and the organization’s first AmeriCorps Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA), who conducted needs surveys and helped secure 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. That same year, Sparrow’s Nest opened its first home in Whitefish, welcoming its first resident, Estevon Torres, who lived there until graduating in 2017 and now resides in Oregon with his wife and children. In 2018, Sparrow’s Nest received a debt-free home in Kalispell donated by the Tanko family, further expanding our reach.

Sparrow’s Nest remains the only voluntary program in Montana that ties housing directly to education, breaking the cycle of homelessness through academic support, life skills, job readiness, and empowering students to build brighter futures.



First Executive Director Jeremy Dear-Ruel & Sister Judy Lund



# Programing at a glance

HOW WE ARE MAKING AN IMPACT IN NW MT!

## Safe & Stable Housing

Our fully staffed, state-licensed facility operates 24/7/365 to provide residents with the consistent support they need to achieve their graduation and life goals. Each resident has a private room that they can personalize for maximum comfort.

## Educational Support

Our program offers personalized support by helping residents enroll in school, providing the tools they need to stay engaged once enrolled, and offering dedicated one-on-one guidance to keep them on track.

## Access to Services & Resources

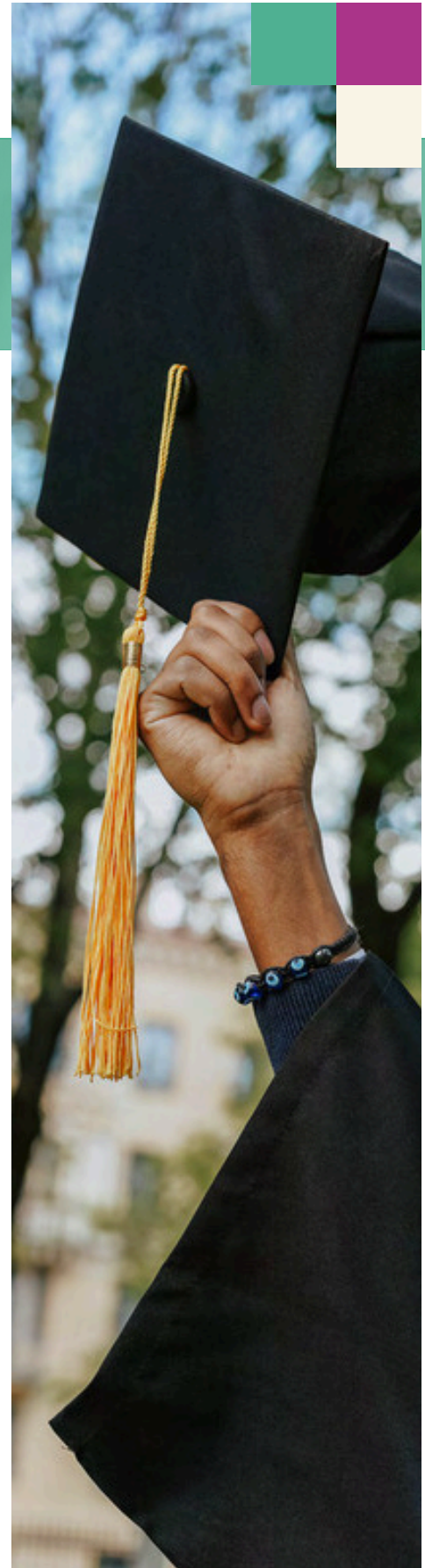
We support residents by coordinating access to healthcare & food security, and connecting them with local community resources. All out-of-pocket expenses for these essential services are fully covered by the program.

## Employment Support

We help residents prepare for employment by coordinating visits to Job Service, offering resume support, connecting them with local businesses that regularly hire our participants, and providing transportation to interviews and trainings. All students 17+ are required to maintain employment.

## Case Management

Our program includes an Individualized Living Plan (ILP) that outlines each resident's graduation goals, transition plan, and steps toward financial stability. We support residents in building savings, tracking their progress, and gaining the tools they need to transition confidently and successfully into independent living.



# Who Qualifies for help?



## Identified Homeless

Students must be verified as experiencing homelessness under the McKinney-Vento definition, which includes lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This ensures services are provided to youth who meet federal criteria and are in need of safe, stable housing.

## Interested in Independence

Students must make sure they are utilizing their resources to prepare for their eventual independence. Students are encouraged to engage in new experiences that can teach them new life skills.

## Highschool Students

Services are available to unaccompanied homeless youth who are currently enrolled or willing to enroll high school. This ensures each resident is supported in maintaining academic progress while accessing safe, stable housing.

## Maintaining Employment

Students must be employed or demonstrate a willingness to seek and maintain employment. This expectation supports the development of financial stability and helps youth build the skills needed for long-term independence.

## Be Respectful to Fellow Residents

Students must demonstrate a willingness and ability to follow all Sparrow's Nest program rules, expectations, and house guidelines. This commitment helps ensure a safe, respectful, and stable living environment for all residents.





Executive Director Rachelle Buckley &  
Board Secretary Sean Frampton

# BREAKING THE CYCLE OF HOMELESSNESS!

At Sparrow's Nest, we believe every young person deserves a safe place to live, grow, and prepare for adulthood. What makes our programming unique is that we are the only residential living facility exclusively focused on serving unaccompanied teens, and we do so completely tuition free. We have never, and will never, charge our residents, their families, or the state for the expenses incurred while they live under our roof. While we provide housing, Sparrow's Nest does not assume legal guardianship. Instead, we work closely with parents, relatives, and legal guardians to maintain strong family connections and ensure that families remain fully informed throughout the process.

Many of the teens who arrive at Sparrow's Nest have not seen a medical provider in years, even though they often have urgent health needs. Our staff works diligently to create individualized living plans for each resident, identifying the services they require and the best ways to support them. Within the first ninety days, our program manager connects residents with community resources so they can establish primary care, dental, vision, and mental health services. This early intervention lays the foundation for healthier, more stable futures.



Employment is another cornerstone of our program. Every resident 17+ is required to secure gainful employment, and for many this is their very first job. We guide them through the process of building resumes, submitting applications, and preparing for interviews. Local job service professionals provide hands-on support, and many businesses in town repeatedly hire Sparrow's Nest students, creating a cycle of opportunity and community integration that benefits everyone.

Equally important is financial literacy. We help residents open their first bank accounts, learn to save, and plan for the expenses they will face after graduation. Together, we discuss housing deposits, down payments, and transportation needs, including how to save wisely for a vehicle if necessary. Because state licensure requires residents to transition out within ninety days of graduation, our program manager and coordinator work closely with each teen to ensure they have a stable plan in place before leaving. This preparation is critical to breaking the cycle of homelessness and empowering our teens to become successful, independent members of the community.



### Open 24/7/365

We are with our students every step of the way! Our staff offer round-the-clock care & supervision to ensure each residents has their needs met!



### Safe, Stable, & Supportive

Our program is staffed with qualified, trained, and motivated individuals who are whole heartedly dedicated to our mission and residents!



### Making Our House a Home!

It is essential each student who enters our home has a sense of normalcy! Frequent outings with staff help our residents build lasting connections with fellow housemates.



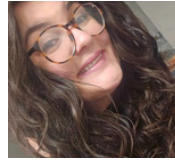
## Who do we work with?

Montana state licensure has very strict requirements regarding who can interact with our students. While we know our donors always have the best of intentions, the safety of our residents is our highest priority. Every person who works directly with our youth must be federally background checked and employed by Sparrow's Nest. For this reason, volunteers cannot interact with residents, though we are able to connect residents and guardians with services and outreach programs in the community.

# People Behind the Mission!



**Rachelle Buckley**  
Executive Director



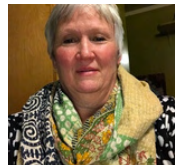
**Alexis Anttonen**  
Development Director



**Rob Brekke**  
Program Manager



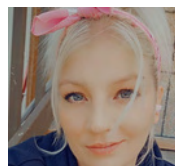
**Molly Burki**  
Program Coordinator



**Susie Bertrum**  
House Staff



**Nicholas Petrove**  
House Staff



**Ashley Fournet**  
House Staff



**Carl Bell**  
House Staff



# Program History



## 2014

Sparrow's Nest was formed by a group of concerned teachers & parents. Through their advocacy and outreach efforts they paved the way for our mission, ensuring the longevity of our program, making lasting connections with our community!



## 2016

Sparrow's Nest of NW MT earned its formal 501(c)(3) designation this year, officially establishing our nonprofit status. We also welcomed our first Executive Director, Jeremy Dear-Ruel who expanded our mission and impact!



## 2017

Our first resident and graduate, Estevon Torres, completed his education at Columbia Falls High School, marking a major milestone for our program. He now lives in Oregon with his wife and children, and we couldn't be more proud!



## 2018

The generous Tanko Family donated a former church to Sparrow's Nest, allowing us to transform it into a welcoming home for up to eight students. This incredible gift became our permanent facility!



Past Sparrow's Nest resident  
graduating L.E.C





## 2019

We welcomed Executive Director Rachelle Buckley, whose background in fundraising and foster-care & family court brought powerful expertise to Sparrow's Nest. Her leadership continues to strengthen our mission!



## 2021

Our program continues to focus on serving more students and their families, ensuring that every resident has access to the stability, resources, and encouragement they need to thrive.



## 2023

Jacob Lopez, our longest-standing resident, lived in our home for more than three years before graduating from high school and successfully transitioning from our program. He now lives in Arizona, building a brighter future!



## 2025

Over ten years later, our program continues to serve about fifteen students each year, and we are now quickly approaching our one hundredth resident served, reflecting steady growth, and consistent impact!



Previous Board Member Clint McClure & Program Manager Rob Breke





## 100% Community Funded

Since launching formal operations in 2016, Sparrow's Nest has been sustained entirely by the generosity of our community. Donors, businesses, and foundations make it possible for unaccompanied teens to focus on their studies without the burden of housing insecurity. Our staff works closely with each resident, creating customized living plans that address both immediate needs and long-term goals. Sparrow's Nest receives no state or federal funding, so support from foundations and donors is vital to our mission and allows us to meet the hidden struggles facing Montana's unaccompanied youth.

Revenue	Total
Direct Public Support	\$75,223.74
Events	\$190,622.50
Foundations & Grants	\$96,894.00
Monthly Support	\$48,866.34
Churches	\$12,782.50
Business Donations	\$21,554.82
Small Fundraisers	\$1,297.31
Indirect Public Support	\$5,332.01
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>\$452,572.91</b>

In 2025, our program was honored to receive a \$500,000 gift from the estate of Diane Lynne Scales. With this incredibly generous contribution, we established a permanent endowment fund held by Whitefish Community Foundation. Her legacy now strengthens the longevity of our program and supports our mission of housing youth and building brighter futures for generations to come. Thank you to Tanko Law Firm for your careful guidance and bringing Diane's vision to fruition. Please reach out if you would like to learn more about the endowment, or how you can make a contribution.





# Behind the Numbers



To operate in full compliance with state licensure, our facility must remain staffed 24/7/365, ensuring our residents receive the consistent care and supervision they need. This requirement makes payroll one of our most significant ongoing costs. Every member of our team is qualified and trained to support our residents with professionalism, compassion, and stability. Their work is the backbone of our program, allowing us to provide safe housing, individualized support, and a nurturing environment for the youth we serve.

Expense	Total
House Expenses	\$29,538.83
Business Expenses	\$55,102.35
Payroll Expenses	\$357,857.84
Marketing & Communications	\$13,503.71
Insurance	\$17,779.00
Student Expenses	\$9,734.26
Events	\$1,688.00
Contract Services	\$16,768.79
Utilities	\$8,464.98
Total Expenses	\$483,500.79



## In-Kind Donations

In-kind donations are a wonderful way to support our students and help keep our program expenses down. If you ever have questions or would like to make a donation, please reach out, we're always happy to connect. We often say that anything you use in a regular home, we use eight times more! Your generosity directly supports our house, our students, and the youth we serve every day. If you feel called to donate or want to support our organization, we would love to hear from you.





## Commitment to Education!

One of the core pillars of our program is a commitment to education. Not only are our residents dedicated to completing their secondary education, but our program is committed to giving them the resources necessary to graduate on par with their housed peers. We ensure they have access to transportation to class by coordinating with the appropriate school authorities. We also track each student's academic progress to make sure they remain on track for graduation, and we help facilitate tutoring and study opportunities whenever needed.

We communicate frequently with guidance counselors and teachers to understand what resources our residents may need based on their individual circumstances. Our program staff attend I.E.P. meetings and make sure our students have the tools and accommodations necessary for their education.

We cover all graduation-related costs and essential student expenses so students don't have to worry about financial barriers while preparing for life after graduation.

While we are dedicated to seeing each student through graduation, our program goes beyond that. With our 90-day transition period after graduation, our staff immediately begin working to secure housing and support the next steps toward independence.

Graduation is incredibly important, not only for their futures, but for their independence and self-reliance. It gives students a sense of pride in their accomplishments and hope for what lies ahead.





Prior Development Director Jamie Pollard & Sister Judy Lund

## Thank You

### Sister Judy Lund!

Sister Judy was instrumental in the founding of our organization and has long been an extraordinary example of philanthropy, compassion, and community spirit. Her dedication to grassroots outreach has consistently raised essential funds for our program, and she continues to demonstrate how one person's commitment can inspire an entire community to come together in support of youth experiencing homelessness.

Through her advocacy and her connection with the Sinsinawa Dominicans, Sister Judy has helped bring in more than \$180,000.00 in grant funding. This amount does not include the many additional donations she has secured through her personal fundraising efforts, which have had a profound and lasting impact on our ability to serve students in need. Her work has strengthened our mission, expanded our reach, and ensured that young people have a safe and supportive place to call home while they pursue their education.

We offer our sincere gratitude to Sister Judy Lund for the tremendous difference she has made in our program and in the lives of the youth we serve. Her generosity, leadership, and unwavering belief in the power of community have shaped our organization in meaningful and enduring ways. Congratulations on your retirement, Sister Judy, and thank you for the love, joy, and hope you have brought to our community. Your legacy will continue to shine through every student whose life has been changed because of your work.

## Our Deepest Gratitude Oro Y Plata

We want to extend our deepest gratitude to a foundation that is truly close to our hearts. Although the Oro Y Plata Foundation sunset this past year, the impact they made on our organization and on so many charitable causes throughout our community remains extraordinary. Their long-standing commitment to addressing homelessness has touched countless lives across our state and created meaningful change that will continue to ripple forward for years to come.

Our program was personally gifted more than \$175,000.00 in grant funding through their generosity. The support we received from the foundation, and from member Jane Wheeler, over the last five years has made an immense difference in our ability to serve students experiencing homelessness. Their belief in our mission helped strengthen our program, expand our reach, and shape our organization into what it is today.

We offer our heartfelt thanks to the Oro Y Plata Foundation for their years of dedication, compassion, and support. Their legacy lives on in the youth whose lives have been changed because of their generosity.



Executive Director Rachelle Buckley & Warming Center Executive Director Tonya Horn at Oro Y Plata Sundowning BBQ





sparrow's nest

# BUSINESSES GIVING BACK

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# Churches & Institutions of Faith



Executive Director Rachelle Buckley Speaking at Mountain View Mennonite Church

- Bethany Lutheran Church
- Bethlehem Lutheran Church
- Christ Lutheran Church
- Christian Women's Fellowship
- Church of Creston
- Community United Methodist Church
- Cross Roads Christian Fellowship
- Faith Free Lutheran Church
- First Lutheran Plains
- Mountain View Mennonite Church
- Our Saviors Lutheran Church
- Presbyterian Women
- Queen of the Most Holy Rosary
- Saint John Paul II Catholic Council of Catholic Women
- St Richards Council of Catholic Women
- St. Matthew's Parish
- St. Patrick's Episcopal Church

# Supporting Foundations & Groups

- 14060 Knights of Columbus
- B. Stephen Schloss Foundation
- Baracker Flynn Foundation
- Bayne Foundation
- Bur-Bash DAF at WCF
- Community Foundation of New Jersey
- Era Lambros Community Foundation
- Ila B. Dousman Fund Inc.
- Krummholz Fund
- Lakeside Community Club
- Mark Jungerman and Molly Miller Family Fund
- Northwest Montana United Way
- Oro Y Plata
- Quinn Family Fund
- Raymond James Charitable Fund

- Rediger Family Foundation
- Renaissance Charitable Foundation
- Rotary Club of Kalispell
- Schwab Charitable
- Shennan Family Fund
- The Angora Ridge Foundation
- The Bear Stone Fund
- The Cobb Foundation
- Sinsinawa Dominicans Inc.
- Whitefish Community Foundation
- Whitefish Mountain Resort Fund
- William T and Susana D Huston Family Foundation
- Woodhouse Family Foundation



Era Lambros Foundation Donating to SNNWMT



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Jim Murphy  
Adele Goldberg  
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Mary Huston Coulter  
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Alette Jackson  
Alice Reedquist

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Eric Oehlerich  
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Anne Taylor  
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