



SPARROW'S NEST OF NORTHWEST MONTANA — 2019 ANNUAL REPORT —



DEDICATED TO PROVIDING SAFE, SUPPORTIVE HOUSING AND RESOURCES FOR UNACCOMPANIED HOMELESS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE FLATHEAD VALLEY, ENABLING THEM TO GRADUATE AND BECOME PRODUCTIVE, CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY.

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

As 2019 began, Sparrow's Nest of NorthWest Montana breathed a sigh of relief. The remodel of our Sparrow's Nest house was completed and filling up. It was a long and interesting process trying to navigate and obtain the proper permits, licensure and insurance for an organization that doesn't quite fit into any government entity that oversees nonprofits such as Sparrow's Nest. But no matter the circumstances; we remain dedicated to fulfilling our mission of housing homeless, unaccompanied high school students.

There is much to celebrate as you read our first annual published report. From winding down on the remodel, to celebrating our students as they receive their diplomas and transition to the next phase of their lives, all of this reinforces how important our work in 2019 is and how important all of our grantees and donors are in the success of an organization such as ours. Sparrow's Nest is in this for the long haul, but we must continue to unite as a community that cares about its youth to remain a viable and successful organization. Financial security does not come easy and we continue to count on our amazing sponsors to help us remain a thriving nonprofit.



LINDA KAPS *Chairperson*

My confidence in Sparrow's Nest of Northwest Montana, our amazing executive director Rachele Morehead and our dedicated Board of Directors continues to grow with each passing year and with whatever the future holds.

To all of the friends of Sparrow's Nest, our grantees, sponsors and donors, thank you for your hard work, generosity, and time to make this amazing organization a success!



“Sparrow's Nest of Northwest Montana is an incredible opportunity for high school students in this community. It is a place that cares for the current and prepares you for the future.”

Graduate Testimonial

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thank you for your continued support of our mission. Without generous donors and community sponsors like yourself we would not be able to impact the lives of youth experiencing homelessness in our community. The new year has brought a few changes here at Sparrows Nest including a change of Executive Director. I am so excited to take on this new role as Executive Director of such an amazing organization.

Raised in beautiful Whitefish Montana, I knew from an early age that I wanted to serve my community. Over the years I have worked for multiple non profits and community organizations where I experienced first hand the challenges our homeless community faces. Using my social services background and passion for serving my community I

am looking forward to growing and sustaining Sparrows Nest of NW MT for years to come.

2019 was a year of impact for Sparrows Nest of Northwest Montana. With an established home in Kalispell MT we have been able to serve more youth experiencing homelessness through safe and supportive housing and provide additional services to grow our reach beyond the nest. With our expansion of case management, formation of a youth action board, and partnerships with the Flathead Valley Foodbank, we served more high school students in the last school year than we have in any other year.

Thank you to the community for providing us with the opportunity to lead an innovative program that uses education as a platform for breaking the cycle of homelessness. Since opening our doors in 2016, this supportive housing program has made an impact in the lives of over 20 students. In the past year, we watched four of these individuals walk across the stage to receive their diploma.



RACHELLE MOREHEAD
Executive Director



My name is Shantell Newman and I am a previous resident of Sparrows Nest. Sparrows Nest has done so many things for me. One of the things that I absolutely love about Sparrows Nest is how welcoming they are. They always made me feel wanted and loved even when I knew I was being a brat. No one ever said no when I came to apologize or wanted to talk. Everyone, overall is very sweet and loving. Sparrow's Nest got me through high school! They were always there for me, every single one of them. Even when I made it clear I wasn't enjoying that person at the time; they still tried and never gave up. Sparrows is amazing, there's nothing I would compare it to, because there is nothing quite like it.

Shantell Newman, Flathead High School Graduate Class of 2019

FOOD PROGRAM

Through partnership with the Flathead Food Bank and Linderman Education Center, Sparrow's Nest of NW MT is able to provide weekend food security to youth enrolled at Linderman by picking up 200 lbs of food each Friday and delivering it to the school. The students are then able to take food home with them on the weekends to ensure healthy eating habits and food security. We are able to reach over 15 students each week with the weekend food program.



Sparrow's Nest has a 90% graduation rate. Almost every student who comes into our care ends up walking on stage to receive their diploma and moves into adulthood with the skills necessary to become productive, contributing members of society.



STAFF

Rachelle Morehead, *Executive Director*
Cassie Schroeckenstein, *Case Manager*
Teresa Litchfield, *House Manager*
Max Curtis, *Development Director*
Caitlyn Pitcher, *Administrative Assistant*
Summer Pfeiffer, *Assistant Manager*
Nikkole Swan, *Relief Staff*
Shaelin Jensen, *Relief Staff*
Jacina Dezell, *Relief Staff*
Kym Tranel, *Relief Staff*



BOARD MEMBERS

Linda Kaps, *Chairperson*
Counselor at Columbia Falls High School
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Megan Griffith, *Board Member*
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Blake Robinson, *Board Member*
Glacier Bank Construction Loan Manager



PROGRAM HISTORY

Informally, our work to address homelessness among high school students began in 2013. Independently, churches, schools, and individuals noticed an alarming trend of students disclosing that they were living on their own, commuting long distances between school districts, or sleeping in cars at freezing temperatures. In Kalispell, Stacy Schultz and Marcia Bumke, who both volunteered on the Flathead High School Parent's Council, had daughters bring home friends with nowhere else to go. In Whitefish, Laura Kochis and the St. Charles Catholic Church staged rummage sales to start raising money to kickstart a non-profit and help these students. Finally, it all came together when, by chance, Sister Judy Lund of the St. Mathew's Parish in Kalispell accidentally called Linda Kaps, a guidance counselor at Columbia Falls, who relayed similar stories

about the students she was assisting. Together, they knew they needed to do something.

Formally, Sparrow's Nest of Northwest Montana began in 2014 with this group and the work of Kat Lennis, the organization's first AmeriCorps Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) who conducted needs surveys and ensured that the group was recognized as a 501(c)(3) non-profit. During this time, the organization also received a donation of a building from a local family, the Tankos. In 2016, Sparrow's Nest hired its first Executive Director, Jerramy Dear-Ruel. The same year, the group opened its pilot home on a lease in Whitefish, while completing the renovation on a permanent facility in Kalispell. The permanent home opened in 2018 and is owned outright without any debt.

CAUSES + IMPACTS OF HOMELESSNESS ON HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Investing in a program that connects housing to education is one of the best ways to help support high school students facing homelessness. According to the study *Education Leads Home*, published by School House Connection; the Institute for Children, Poverty and Homelessness; and America's Promise Alliance, individuals without a high school diploma are 4.5 times more likely to experience homelessness as an adult. Wyoming has been measuring graduation rates on this issue for over a decade. We believe the similar demographics, transportation obstacles, and climate issues are reflective of the barriers our students face. Their research concluded on average, housing instability related to poverty reduces an individual's chances of graduating from 78.6% to 65.4%. Once students become homeless, their chances of graduation shrinks to just 53%. We here at Sparrow's Nest typically observe four main causes of teen homelessness. The perpetual cycle of homelessness due to unsafe living conditions with a parent or legal guardian is unmistakably the most common reason youth move into our home. Along with the aforementioned

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APPROPRIATE HOUSING FOR TEENS
CAN INCREASE THEIR CHANCE OF
GRADUATING BY OVER 25%



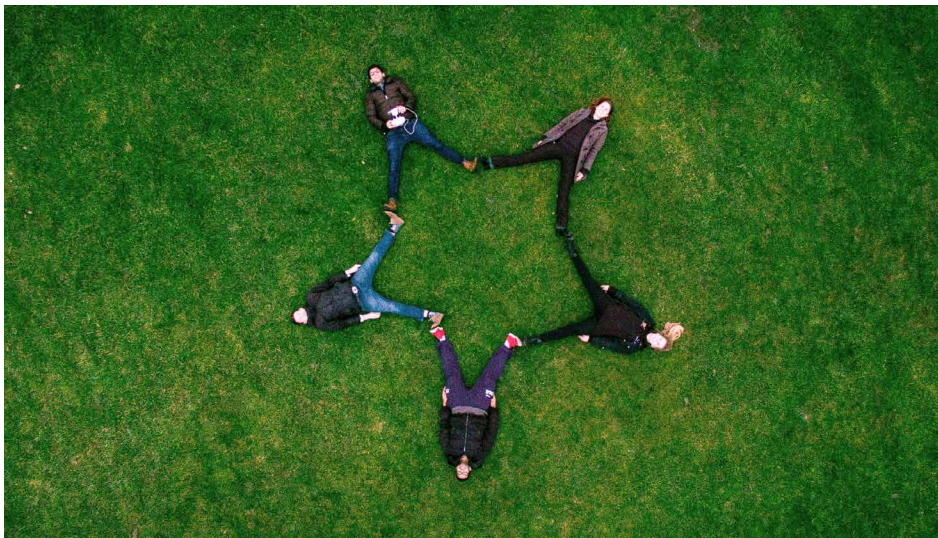
cause, a break down of family structure stemming from parents or guardians incarceration, abuse, or use and abuse of drugs is a main factor of youth moving into Sparrow's Nest. Aging out of the foster care system is a problematic issue for youth turning 18 with one more year of secondary education before graduation. Oftentimes, youth have few options if their foster families choose to rescind living agreements, leaving them without options for stable housing. Lastly, Sparrow's Nest has seen and helped youth experiencing homelessness due to gender identity or sexuality that don't align with their parents beliefs. Whatever the cause of teenage homelessness may be for each particular case, Sparrow's Nest is dedicated to supporting youth who are determined to graduate high school.

SUCCESSES AND GOALS

This year Sparrow's Nest has achieved several notable highlights. Aligning with our mission, four students of Sparrow's Nest walked across the stage to receive their diplomas; more than any other year since operation began. We have Maintained a 90% graduation rate amongst our residents with expectations to increase the percentage in the next year. Last year, Sparrow's Nest housed our first transgendered resident. She graduated despite all of the hardships she had to endure and is currently living and employed in Hot Springs. We served our first two students from Bigfork,

one of whom transferred from Bigfork high school to Flathead high school and graduated this past may and the other of whom chose to continue her education in Bigfork while working two jobs and commuting to school every day. This demonstrates that Sparrow's Nest is raising valleywide awareness to further assist students experiencing homelessness. We are not solely focused on providing assistance to current residents; our organization is committed to continuing to serve previous residents as well. An example of our dedication is the fact that Sparrow's Nest was able to transfer

the title of a donated vehicle to one of our most involved previous residents to ensure reliable transportation while he is navigating adulthood. This vehicle ensured him to maintain a steady job while he decides where life will take him. Finally, Sparrow's Nest was able to create a full time development position formerly held by Jamie Pollard and currently held by Max Curtis. With the creation of this new position, Sparrow's Nest will continue to grow and serve more students than ever before. With these successes in mind, Sparrow's Nest will continue to expand it services within the Flathead Valley.



annual events held throughout the Flathead Valley. Sparrow's Nest would not be able to provide safe and supportive housing to youth experiencing homelessness without the continued support of our generous communities and volunteers. Monetary donations are the most valuable way to ensure the success of the organization.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND HOW TO HELP

Community members are able to aide the organization in several different ways. Volunteers are always needed to lend a hand in the office by writing thank you cards, organizing, or filing and entering data. Alternatively, they can help with life skills classes and assist residents with cooking and making meals. Volunteers are always encouraged to participate at our



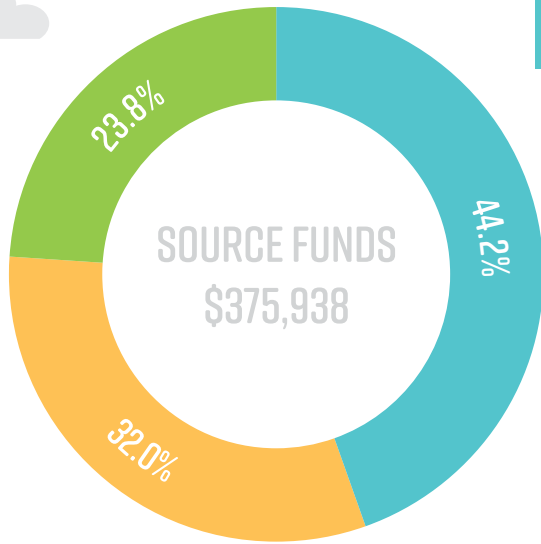
Sparrow's Nest maintains a 90% graduation rate with plans to increase in the next year





FINANCIALS

July 1st, 2018 to June 30th, 2019



\$166,149

Grants + Foundations

\$120,197

Fundraising Events

\$89,592

Donations

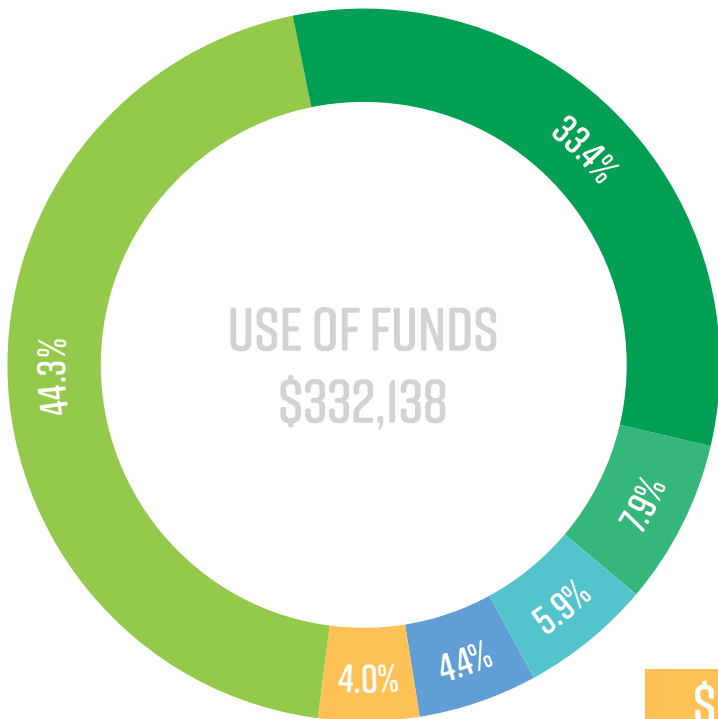
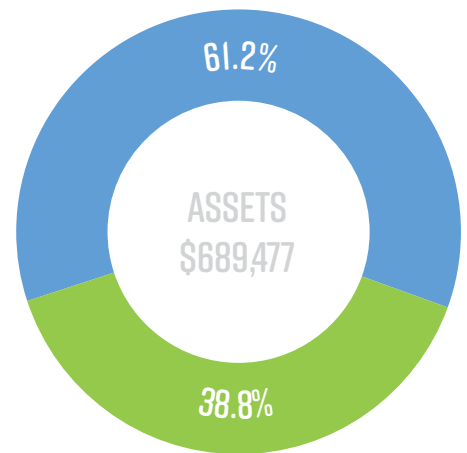


House + Vehicle

\$421,710

Checking + Savings

\$267,767



\$147,284

24 Hour Staffing

\$110,884

Administration

\$26,324

House + Student Expenses

\$19,723

Contract Services

\$14,523

Insurance

\$13,400

Purchasing of a Van

Net Profit

\$43,800

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Glacier Unitarian Universalist
Church
John Paul II Catholic Church
Mountainview Mennonite Church
Our Saviors Lutheran Church
Presbyterian Womens Group
Risen Christ
St. Matthew Council of Women
St. Matthews Parish
St. Patrick's Episcopal Church
St. Peter Lutheran Church
St. Richards Catholic Church
Trinity Lutheran Church

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Towne Printer
Uptown Hearth
Valley Glass
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SUPPORTING FOUNDATIONS

Applied Materials
Cross Charitable Foundation
Flathead Rotary Foundation
Flathead Valley Community
Foundation
Floyd Foundation
Gianforte Family Charitable Trust
Headwaters Health Foundation
Lakeside Community Club
NMAR Charitable Foundation
Oro Y Plata
Roundup for Safety
Sinsinawa Foundation
Soroptimist International of
Whitefish
The Gallagher Foundation
The Llewellyn Foundation
The Sample Foundation
Town Pump Charitable Foundation
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Weyerhaeuser Giving Fund
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SUPPORTING CHURCHES

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Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Canvas Church
Central Bible Church
Christ Church Episcopal
Christ Lutheran Church

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Bigfork High School
Blacktail Grocery
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