



**Bitterroot Discovery  
Children's Museum**

*Discover what you can BEE!*

# IMPACT REPORT 20 24

## **Mission:**

Working to build a nurturing environment for children and their caregivers where they can explore the world through exhibits and programming rooted in hands-on discovery and the power of play.



## **Vision:**

We strive to be a resource dedicated to supporting all children, their families, and their community by creating a welcoming space for meaningful experiences, memorable connections, and learning through discovery.



# Overview

## Play is Powerful Prevention!

At BDCM, the work we're engaged in is Play! This year we have been actively supporting Ravalli County's youngest citizens and their caregivers to foster life skills, resilience, and healthy behaviors...all with the power of play!

Through engaging exhibits and programs, we're seeing family bonds strengthen, positive behaviors being modeled, and memories being made. We're growing spaces that promote emotional and social growth, strong communities, and empowered leaders. We're excited to continue this important work we've started, and invite you to join us on our journey!



## A Message from our President

As any true Montanan knows, "where there's a will, there's a way," and this year at BDCM, we've embraced that spirit wholeheartedly. In just twelve months, we've transitioned to our own 501(c)(3), developed and installed four unique educational pop-up exhibits, hosted successful family events, raised awareness across Ravalli County about the need for hands-on learning opportunities, and been part of countless "core memory" moments.

The smiles we've seen, the incredible community members we've collaborated with, and the acts of kindness we've experienced have been truly heartwarming. This work is only possible because of the amazing support we receive from our community. While there's still much to accomplish, we are inspired by the belief that, like bees in a hive, we can achieve great things when we work together.

--Anita Wotkyns



# FAMILY Events



- 200+ guests
- 24 community experts
- 344 hours of in-kind service



## Meet the Expert

hosted by

**Bitterroot College U of M**

Children and their caregivers explored different jobs at this open-house event. Local business professionals helped out, offering fun, hands-on activities and giving out tools to encourage learning, goal setting, and thinking positively about growth and success.

## 2nd Annual Great Bitterroot Gingerbread Journey

hosted by

**Hamilton Masonic Lodge**

We had a spectacular turn-out to this multi-faceted 2-day event. There were 18 fantastic fairy tale gingerbread creations on display, plus fun activities like holiday family portraits, gingerbread decorating, ornament making, and more! This event is truly becoming a community favorite.

- 400+ guests
- \$1,000+ "pay it forward" donations
- 800+ hours of in-kind service



- 57 guests
- Over 275 in-kind hours service

## Princess Tea and Wizard Show

hosted by

**Daly Mansion**

Who says learning can't be fun? With "Frozen" princesses and an actual wizard leading STEM crafts, activities, and putting on a chemistry-themed magic show, families were all smiles. And the scrumptious tea party was a sweet way to spend the holiday together.





# POP-UP Exhibits

## Pollination Investigation!

hosted by

Ravalli County History Museum

In partnership with the Smithsonian Gardens and the Ravalli County History Museum, this eye-catching look at the importance of some of our smallest community helpers had the community buzzing!

Over 4,000 guests visited his inaugural exhibit over a 9 month period. **Pollination Investigation!** provided an engaging space that sparked imagination as well as educated viewers on a topic of local importance, all while creating partnerships with local experts, educators, and thought leaders.

### Fun Fact!

30 unique pieces of hand sewn soft sculpture art were donated and are now part of BDCM's permanent collection!

## The SmART Room

hosted by

Explore the ARTS

Partnering with community leaders is an integral part of our strategy to engage with families.

**The SmART Room** introduced much needed early learning exhibits to an existing community art space, showcasing the value of accessible hands-on early education and its impact on the community. It is a common site to see preschool groups, families, and interested gallery visitors exploring in this colorful and thought-provoking exhibit.

### Fun Fact!

Art enriches STEAM learning by fostering creativity, problem-solving, and engagement through visual and emotional connections.



# POP-UP Exhibits

## Transportation Station

hosted by

**Karl Tyler Express Lube**

The interactive exhibit we created for the 2024 Ravalli County Fair found a temporary home to continue reaching kids and caregivers where they're at in their daily lives.

We feel that even everyday activities can be brain-building opportunities! With the **Transportation Station**, we are keeping gears turning in the minds of youth and encouraging caregivers to consider looking for unique ways to engage with their children.

### Fun Fact!

Every pop-up we create has been thoughtfully created with the help of local educators, craftsmen, and artists!

## Pet Care Place

hosted by

**Bitter Root Humane Association**

Our ability to collaborate with fellow nonprofit organizations has helped us build strong relationships with leaders, peers, volunteers, and community members dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of Ravalli County residents.

A great example is the **Pet Care Place** at the Bitter Root Humane Society. By supporting and highlighting the work of our community partners, we amplify their impact and ours. Together, we are creating a connected nonprofit network that benefits the community today and inspires the next generation of leaders for tomorrow.

### Fun Fact!

Our pop-up exhibits started as a way to introduce ourselves to Ravalli County and expand our outreach.

While we've enjoyed engaging with the community this way, having multiple exhibits under one roof will offer a richer, more connected experience and give us flexibility for future programming and educational events.

# COMMUNITY Outreach



Weekly themed activities to focus on the joy of family, friends, and community

## Strengthening Families Month

in conjunction with Bitterroot Cares Prevention Coalition, Ravalli County History Museum, DPHHS, local public libraries, and businesses



Transportation themed learning, as well as information on car and road safety



Celebrating heritage, diversity, and culture through hands-on family fun



## Street Fairs, Festivals, and celebrations

including Bitterroot Day, Daly Days, Apple Festival, Creamery Picnic, O'Hara Commons events, Parade of Trees, Festival of Trees, Scarecrow Festival, and more!



# A Look into 2025

## Goal 1:

Strengthen our foundations by refining the mission, enhancing board development, deepening our understanding of the audience, and building effective committees

## Goal 2:

Secure funding and resources through diverse channels to support the organization's scalable growth

## Goal 3:

Continued development of engaging exhibits and programs, prioritizing the community's educational needs, interests, and accessibility

## Goal 4:

Build a strong community presence through consistent communication, quarterly signature events, and strategic partnerships

## Goal 5:

Develop sustainable, organized operations supported by professional services, clear outcomes, and strong volunteer and community engagement

# THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

A2Z Personnel  
Bitterrodders Car Club  
Bitterroot Audubon  
Bitterroot Cares Prevention Coalition  
Bitterroot College U of M  
Bitterroot Early Learning Network  
Bitter Root Humane Association  
Bitter Root RC&D  
Bitterroot Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Blackfoot Communications  
Chapter One Book Store  
Daly Mansion  
Darcy Hansen State Farm Insurance  
DJs Electric  
Explore the ARTS  
Farmers State Bank  
First Security Bank  
Frost Dragon Delights  
Hamilton Masonic Lodge  
Karl Tyler Express Lube  
Montana Native Plant Society  
Parenting Montana  
Rapp Family Foundation  
Ravalli County Head Start  
Ravalli County History Museum  
TrailWest Bank  
Western MT Mental Health Center  
Wide Angle Photography



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