

9/2/2025

Bitterroot Discovery Children's Museum
Hamilton, MT 59840

Dear BDCM Team,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Bitterroot Discovery Children's Museum and your efforts to provide hands-on learning experiences for families in our community. Your mission to inspire curiosity, creativity, and lifelong learning is essential, and I fully support your work to secure funding and establish a permanent home in the Bitterroot Valley.

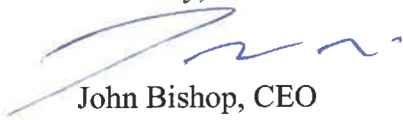
Research consistently shows that hands-on learning and family engagement are critical to early childhood development. Studies from organizations like the Harvard Center on the Developing Child and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) highlight that interactive, play-based experiences help children develop cognitive, social, and problem-solving skills that set the foundation for lifelong success. In fact, children who engage in hands-on learning activities with their caregivers show stronger language skills, higher academic achievement, and improved emotional well-being.

Additionally, research from the Council for a Strong America found that for every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education, communities see a return of up to \$13 in future savings, thanks to reduced crime, improved workforce readiness, and lower social service costs. Providing accessible, interactive learning opportunities—like those offered by BDCM—is not just an educational benefit; it's a long-term investment in our community's future.

As a community member, I have seen firsthand the excitement and learning BDCM has already brought through its pop-up exhibits and events. A permanent space would allow even more families to benefit, ensuring that all children—regardless of their background—have access to enriching experiences that promote school readiness, creativity, and lifelong learning.

I fully support BDCM's efforts to secure funding and a permanent location. I encourage local leaders, businesses, and community members to recognize the value of this project and invest in the future of our children. Thank you for your dedication to making a lasting impact on our community!

Sincerely,



John Bishop, CEO