

# 2023

## Annual Report

**BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN MONTANA'S COMMUNITIES**

*"My experience in the Summer  
Jobs Program helped me feel  
more **confident** in the workforce."  
-90% of AJAY SJP Alumni*





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## Vision

- All youth have an opportunity for mentoring and work with community employers in order to build social, work, and life skills through experiential learning so our youth and communities thrive.

## Mission

- Develop social, life, and work skills in youth through collaboration among communities, schools, mentors, and employers

# A Letter from the Board



*As we reflect on the past year and gear up for the upcoming Summer Jobs Program, we find ourselves filled with gratitude and anticipation for what lies ahead. Transitions prompt us to reevaluate our current position, chart our course for the future, and enhance our service to the community.*

*It's with heartfelt appreciation that we bid farewell to Gabrielle Rowley after over five years of dedicated service as our Executive Director. Under her guidance, the Summer Jobs Program saw remarkable program enhancements (like the introduction of free college credit) and the expansion into additional communities across Montana. Gabrielle's unwavering commitment, visionary leadership, and tireless efforts have significantly advanced our mission and expanded a foundation upon which we can continue to build and grow.*

*We are thrilled to welcome Nisan Burbridge as our new Executive Director. Nisan's transition from Program & Outreach Coordinator to this pivotal role brings with it a wealth of experience in both workforce and youth development. With her leadership, we eagerly anticipate the next phase of our journey.*

*Change brings both challenges and opportunities. Some changes we already had in motion like the launch of a new website and some are just beginning like leveraging new technology to better support our communities implementing their Summer Jobs Programs.*

*What is not changing, is our shared belief that our youth are our most valuable asset and that through collaboration and the dedicated commitment of all our partners, we are positively impacting our communities.*

*Your support remains crucial as we navigate these changes and strive toward our shared goals. As we embark on this new chapter, we extend our heartfelt appreciation to each and every one of you for your continued support. Together, we're excited to embrace the future.*

*Thank you,*

*The AJAY MT Board*

*Callie Aschim, Cullen Gilbreath, David Morine,  
Katie Whitmoyer, & Mike Viselik*

**“Our youth deserve hope,  
optimism and dignity.”**

**Brian Kahn**



# SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM IS MORE THAN A SUMMER JOB



The Summer Jobs Program (SJP) aims to help students improve vital skills, increase confidence, grow professional networks, set future goals, and boost self-efficacy. This program matches participants with summer jobs, offers paid work skills training, and provides mentoring. Moreover, participants can opt to earn free college credits. Our goal is to not only prepare youth for employment but also to equip them for their future endeavors.

## WHAT STUDENTS SAY

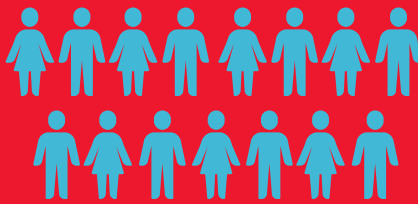
**90%**



Of students said they practiced new and formerly uncomfortable new skills.

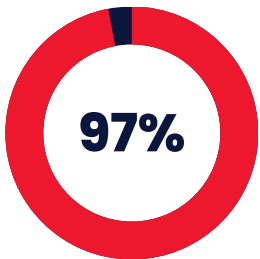
- COMMUNICATION
- TIME MANAGEMENT
- POSITIVE ATTITUDE MAINTENANCE
- CONFLICT RESOLUTION
- CUSTOMER SERVICE

**13 STUDENTS EARNED FREE COLLEGE CREDIT THIS SUMMER**

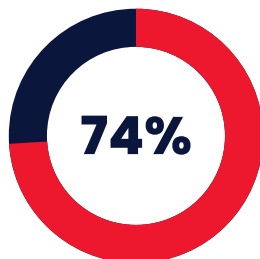


\*Credits offered by Miles Community College or Helena College.

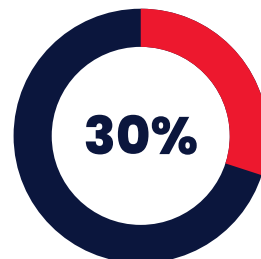
**75 STUDENTS SERVED ACROSS MONTANA IN SIX REGIONS**



Learned something new about work or work options



Feel more confident in applying for a job after participating in the Summer Jobs Program



Students continued their positions even after the program ended

**83%**



Agree that their mentors

helped them think about:

- goals related to school or college
- work and career options

## STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



*“This summer was full of new experiences. Besides the science side of it, I learned how to work on my team and the teams that collaborated with us. So, I definitely learned how to deal with many different personalities. I also learned that if I have a question, I need to just ask it and not worry about if it is stupid or not, because nine times out of ten my supervisor was just delighted about my question. This summer I realized I can help take charge if need be, which is something I didn't think I could do. This program has helped me grow so much! If I hadn't gone through this program, I would not have found the potential in myself that I just need help to find.”*

Nikole Norman

Helena Area Summer Jobs

Program Participant Summer Work Experience:  
Youth Forest Monitoring Program (YFMP)

This program is available through a partnership between the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest, Montana Discovery Foundation, Lewis & Clark County, Montana DNRC, State Historic Preservation Office, and Helena College.

## Summer Jobs Program - Regional Highlights: A Recap

**Helena Area** - AJAY MT partnered with Helena College to provide the work skills training through the Continuing Education department at Helena College in 2023

**Flathead** - Workforce Flathead provided mentoring through a group mentoring cohort model. Participants met each week to connect and discuss work over a meal.

**Bozeman** - AJAY MT worked with the City of Bozeman and Bozeman school district to launch the program. Gallatin College & West Paw, a private business, delivered the work skills training.

**Anaconda** - Discover Anaconda continues to be a dedicated partner helping to coordinate the local Summer Jobs Program. In our second year, we gained traction among community partners.

**Whitehall** - We piloted the program in our smallest community yet.

**Yellowstone County** - The local program committee secured some especially unique positions for the older participants to get professional experience. We partnered with Billings NextGEN, the Billings Chamber's group for emerging community leaders, to source mentors.

# Capacity Building

## FACILITATING WORKSHOPS ON "A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING POVERTY" BY RUBY PAYNE



### Goal:

Increase the number of educators and student service professionals across Montana trained in helping students of all economic backgrounds achieve academic, professional, and personal success.

### Impact:

Students of all backgrounds have the knowledge and skills to succeed in their academic and work worlds. In order to achieve our vision of all young Montanans having access to meaningful work and professional support, AJAY MT employs a variety of strategies.

### Strategy in action:

In 2023, AJAY MT presented a six-hour workshop to Montana State University Billings student service professionals. The workshop focused on how economic class affects behavior and mindset, resources that lead to student success, strategies to help students better understand common hidden rules of school and work, and effective interventions for under-resourced students. We also presented a one-hour workshop at the Montana College Access Network conference.

# 100%

**OF ATTENDEES SAID**

*"This workshop was a worthwhile professional development experience"*

*"The ideas, strategies, activities and materials presented are practical and useful" for them in their work.*

*"This workshop put philosophy into action - the information is transferrable to any situation."-Framework for Understanding Poverty Attendee*

# Financial Statement



## DONORS

Income	2023
Foundations & Grants	\$65,500
Individual Donations	\$29,854
Sponsorships & Partner Support	\$19,667
Miscellaneous Income	\$1,995
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$117,016</b>

Allen and Jeri Mae Rowley, Alan Siegle, Barbara Gilbreath, Bo Bruinsma, Bob and Judi McCullough, Brad and Allison Brown, Callie Aschim, Caroline Pharr & Chapin Storrar, Christine Roberts, Cori Erickson, Cory Eklund, Cullen and Tara Gilbreath, Dan Kayser, Dave Hunter, David and Kayleigh Morine, Deborah Goffena, Diane Fladmo, Ellen Feaver, Elvira Roncalli, Gabrielle Rowley, James and Laurel Hagenbarth, Jean Schulz, Jessica Dorrington, John and Kathy E. Prendergast, Josie Caton McCabe, Julie Wood, Kate Silver-Heilman, Katie Whitmoyer, Kelli Street, Kelly Cresswell, Kevin Kovacich, Linda Carlson, Lisa Richidt, Mary Ellen & Mark Earnhardt, Michael Green, Mike Halligan, Mike Veselik, Nancy and Alan Nicholson, Patricia and Jay Eklund, Patricia Chase-Lansdale, Patricia Cotter, Patricia McGurran, Paul and Jerri Dostal, Philip Austin, Rhonda Frankel-Fein, Rick and Jane Hays, Robert Brown, Rodger Foster, Sandra Jankowski, Schwab Charitable Trust, Shelby Rogala, Susan Dostal, Thomas and Robin Bottorff, Thomas Burkhart, Tiffany Lyden, Tim and Mary Barnard, Wesley Feist, William and Marsha Davis, and Zach Brown

## ORGANIZATIONS

American Legion Baseball, Barnard Construction Co., Inc., Billings Community Foundation, City of Helena, Dennis & Phyllis Washington Foundation, EdChoice, Gallatin Foundation, Gianforte Family Foundation, Helena Area Chamber of Commerce, Helena Area Community Foundation, MacKenzie River Pizza, Sample Foundation

*\*In-Kind \$6, 250.00 donations*

Expenses	2023
Personnel	\$80,825
Contract Expenses	\$13,026
Operations	\$9,571
Program Materials	\$8,159
Travel	\$1,725
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$113,306</b>

## SPONSORS

Reach Higher Montana, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana, Opportunity Bank of Montana, Home2 Suites by Hilton Helena, AFFCO, Browning Kaleczyc Berry & Hoven, P.C., Allegra Marketing|Print|Mail Helena, Wood's Power-Grip Co, Inc, Crowley Fleck, Montana Radio Co, Walmart

*Thank You!*