Did you ever stand at the edge of a diving board trying to muster up the courage to jump into deep water? Once you are in, it is refreshing and fun, but that journey up the stairs and out on to the end of springboard can be a real challenge! On Thursday, September 10th we did it. We jumped in with both feet and made quite a splash. Surrounded by community supporters, news media, past and current staff and board members, friends and neighbors we officially “opened the doors” to the new educational wing and commercial kitchen/cafeteria addition to our building. We are so excited to have full access to our state of the art kitchen, dedicated dining room, handicap accessible bathroom, counseling office and huge classroom. Because of the tremendous community support, generous donors, and outstanding contractors, we have something better than we could have imagined. Thank you for investing in kids and families and giving us the opportunity to serve.

Sincerely,
Rev. Matt Lundgren, Executive Director

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Director’s Report

What does it sound like to hear the pitter-patter of little feet? Both of my children recently left for college, so my house is quiet. But, if you were to stand outside my office on any given day after school, you would hear the feet of 100 children walk bye. It is music to my ears. However, in the daytime, it seemed quiet. Not that my staff do not make noise and the adult classes we offer mid-day are silent. But, in an effort to better serve our community need, this fall we launched a 5 day a week, all day pre-school for 4 and 5 year olds. We wanted to make full use of our newly capable space and accommodate the growth in our community, so we launched a joint effort with the Billings Family YMCA. It is a joy to see our space utilized and to hear the pitter patter of little feet more often.

Sincerely,
Rev. Matt Lundgren, Executive Director

Please contact Friendship House for more information.
406.259.5559
WWW.FRIENDSHIPMT.ORG

Friendship House of Christian Service

OPEN HOUSE NEWS

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FRIENDSHIP HOUSE NEWS

SUMMER ADVENTURES

Friendship House had an amazing summer! Our students not only participated in numerous activities including swimming, rock climbing, horseback riding and vacation bible school. They also spent their summer immersed in learning. In partnership with the United Way’s REadCycle program kids took home over 1000 books and read 617 books. Our curriculum this summer also included regular tutoring in Math and Reading that integrated social studies, history, and art. We added this to our summer program to reduce what is known as the “summer slide” and give our students an opportunity to start the school year prepared. The results are amazing. We saw students overall average growth was 8%. This is a great step in providing for our students academic success. In addition to our academic component, students also visited the Charles Bair Family Museum in Martinsdale, MT and the Museum of the Rockies in Bozeman, MT.

We also continued our mission to connect and create positive relationships with our students through mentoring. It is excellent to see the difference our teachers and staff can make in the life of a child in just 10 weeks. This summer we spent 500 hours with students from the Billings community and as we continue to refine our tutoring and mentoring curriculum and strategies, we are excited to continue to see more growth and development in our students.

VOLUNTEERS & PARTNERS SPOTLIGHT

A huge aspect of what Friendship House is (to put it simply) would not be possible without our dedicated volunteers and partners. Two volunteers that brighten the smiling faces of our little ones each day are Bette and Wanda. Bette and Wanda volunteered at Friendship House everyday this summer through our partnership with St. Vincent Healthcare’s Foster Grandparent Program. They would help in the classroom, on the playground, tutoring and mentoring kids. The kids affectionately call out their names, “Grandma Bette! Grandma Wanda!” Their mission: to help kids build their reading skills. And the amazing news is; they did it! These partnerships and volunteers are integral here at Friendship House, making a lasting impact on youth not just now, but for life. And the great news is, Grandma Bette and Grandma Wanda are back to share their gifts for academic year!

Pictured at left: Grandma Bette (top), Grandma Wanda (bottom)

If your congregation, civic group, service club or small group would like to hear an update on our work or opportunities to partner on exciting projects, please contact Matt to make arrangements at (406) 259-5569.

FRIEND OF THE SUMMER

In late August we celebrated Friend of the Summer to recognize 10 students for their exceptional efforts of being a “friend” of Friendship House. The Magic City Optimist Club provided cake, ice cream, and plaques with the child’s picture that they get to keep and hang up at home. Two students from each class were chosen by their teachers for a variety of reasons such as meeting their teachers academic or behavior goal set forth at the beginning of summer, always following classroom rules, being respectful to others, or being a friend to others. Friend of the Summer serves as both a reward and behavior tool that teachers use to highlight students and a huge confidence booster to many students who don’t often hear positive feedback elsewhere. Friend of the Summer is one of our many family events that we have to showcase the wonderful students in our program.

Thank you to our generous supporters, Magic City Optimists for making it happen!

DAY OF CARING

On Thursday September 17, Friendship House welcomed 31 employees from 7 different area employers to volunteer at Friendship House. This terrific event assisted in painting, new shelving, gardening, organizing, and washing the buses. This annual event, hosted by United Way of Yellowstone County, is a boon to non-profits to complete necessary projects that non-profits often do not have the people or the finances to complete. Thank you to HDR Inc., City of Billings, Alternatives, Wells Fargo, St. Vincent’s, Phillips 66, and Talen Energy. Your efforts make a difference to us, our youth and families, and our community!