



# Newsletter

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[www.sunburstfoundation.org](http://www.sunburstfoundation.org)

## New FC Kitchen in Kalispell

It's been a dream for some time and finally has become a reality. The Family Concepts team in Kalispell now has an awesome kitchen that families can use when meeting for a meal or fixing snacks for children. The timing of the kitchen's completion was ideal as it was just about finished before Karen Dean who had been the Family Concepts program supervisor for many years retired in December. Staff and board members celebrated with Karen using the lovely kitchen that Don Fleck had designed. The



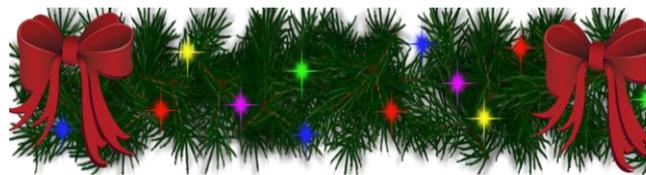
growing number of families served by Family Concepts in Kalispell will put the new kitchen to a lot of use.

Following Karen Dean's retirement Maya Negron and Rani Brennon will take over the

supervision of the Sunburst Family Concepts program in our seven sites: Kalispell, Polson, Libby, Hamilton, Helena, Eureka and Thompson Falls. One of their first goals is to organize more training in best practices for staff which will enhance what can be offered to families and also make Sunburst more competitive when applying for grants and state contracts.

## Holiday Celebration!

A great time was had by all at the Sunburst Christmas Day party in Kalispell. Consumers, staff and board members shared a delicious meal and opened presents. The decorations made the scene a wonderful, warm and cheerful place to spend the holiday. Staff Kathleen Edwards who organized the gathering said, "The party was a beautiful success!! All the gifts were under the tree on time, and distributed by our littlest consumer present--she played an elf for us. The clients were pleased; I believe the board did an awesome job of fulfilling wishes. There were thank yous and smiles, lots of aahs and positive comments. Marcia and I made sure the consumers understood the presents were due to the generosity of our Board of Directors. There was a ton of food (and I was worried about there not being enough), and lots of full tummies by the time it was over." Board member Carol Lechner who worked with Kathleen leading up to the event extended sincere thanks to the board for all they did in gathering gifts and helping with donations towards the celebration. The Christmas celebration at the Kalispell site has become an annual tradition.



**Assisting in US Welcome** Back in June when a Cuban family crossed into the US near Eureka seeking asylum, border officials contacted Sunburst staff to see if they could help the family. It was a steep learning curve for the border officials as well as Sunburst staff as there had never been Cubans entering through that border port before. Sunburst in Eureka gathered resources from churches and volunteers to help the family before they were settled into their new home in Helena. On December 19<sup>th</sup>, another Cuban family crossed into the US near Eureka. Again Sunburst was contacted and helped the couple to negotiate filing their initial paperwork and applying for assistance as they begin a new life in the US. The couple will move to Helena as the refugee office there can provide on-going support.

## Community Cooperation Leads to Good Time

Sunburst advisory board member Dave Leeman in Eureka have been organizing monthly community square dances for the last two years. In December, Sunburst teamed up with the local home school association and 4-H to put on a community dance that included western swing, contra and square dances. There was a lot of excitement as dancers of all ages took to the floor. The success of the event has encouraged everyone to consider doing more dances.



## Latest News from Mission

Sunburst's St. Ignatius office recently hired a new Service Coordinator. Kat Incashola reports that Mary DuMontier comes to Sunburst with a wealth of knowledge and experience, a fantastic attitude and a wonderful personality. Kat was impressed how "Mary came out of the gate ready to hit the ground running."

St. Ignatius is also seeing changes in other ways. Colette Moore, Sunburst's account manager, is in the process of training to take over pay roll. She has been learning the ropes under Don Fleck, Sunburst's Administrative Director. Having Colette do the bimonthly payrolls will give Don time to work on developing program budgets which is part of the current year's strategic plan.

## Attention Sunburst Writers!

Attention all Sunburst consumers and program participants! In February we will have the second annual Sunburst writing contest. Begin polishing up your best pieces of writing now so that you can submit them for the contest. Last year nine writers from Kalispell, Eureka and Polson were selected to have their pieces included in the published chapbook. Details for the contest will be posted at all sites and in the February Sunburst newsletter. So start writing!



*Our Writings #1*

## Polson Continues to Explore Arts

Consumers and staff in Polson have continued their exploration of marketable arts. Recently they completed two weaving workshops with Mary Sale. Mary is a writer and weaver born in Missoula and now living on the shores of Flathead Lake. She is past president and gallery director of the Sandpiper Art Gallery. Mary shows her work at the Sandpiper Gallery in Polson and Kalispell Regional Hospital where her work is part of the permanent collection, and also is the hand weaving instructor at Salish Kootenai College Art Department. Her instruction at the Sunburst site in Polson was a great opportunity for workshop participants to learn about different styles of weaving. Their goal is to make things that can be sold at galleries, bazaars and the Polson farmers market. Support for this program is from the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation which has brought in professional artists to give workshops over the past year. Workshops have included silk painting, needle felting, leather tooling, ceramics and weaving.

