

RiverStone Health Connections



As April blooms, so does our commitment to a healthier, safer community. □

This season of renewal reminds us of the power of growth—both in nature and in the way we support one another. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness and work together to strengthen families and ensure every child has the safe, nurturing environment they deserve.

Let's spring forward together with purpose, compassion, and community.

RiverStone Health Service Spotlight

RiverStone Health's Yellowstone Valley Children's Advocacy Center is fueled by hope and optimism having served 837 children in the last five years for concerns of child abuse.

Of the 837 screenings, 712 were for concerns of sexual abuse and 184 were for concerns of physical abuse. Children who have experienced maltreatment are more likely to have mental health challenges, suicidal behaviors, physical health problems, substance abuse issues and interaction with law enforcement.

This can lead to higher risks for delinquency, adult criminality and violent behavior. Substance abuse issues and mental health problems have significant economic impacts on the mental health providers and the criminal justice system.

The estimated societal costs of child abuse in the United States per year for mental health care are \$455 million. Costs for the child welfare system are \$14 billion, for law enforcement \$24.7 million, and for the judicial system \$341 million.

More than 90% of child abuse cases in



Services like substance use recovery programs, access to affordable housing, livable wages and access to trauma-focused therapy help protect children from harm.

Early childhood programs can intervene before the child has experienced abuse or neglect and interrupt the multi-generational cycle of child harm. Proven prevention programs available in Billings include Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, Head Start, Aware, KidsFirst and Maternal Child Health.

Effective community preventive measures are a critical investment in future generations. Prevention not only strengthens families, but it also builds a stronger and safer community. Being

Montana are from neglect. Substance abuse and poverty strongly correlate to neglect, physical abuse and witnessing domestic violence. Child abuse occurs at all income levels, culture, religion and racial backgrounds.

The good news is that much can be done to help prevent the abuse of children. Community support can help stop child abuse and neglect.

informed on the issues and programs that help prevent child abuse is a great way to support prevention efforts.

For information on child sexual abuse prevention, The National Children's Alliance has launched brief education videos, follow the button below.

NCA's Prevention Series



Introducing: Wellness On Wheels

Join us as we hit the road with mobile healthcare!

Wednesday, April 30

12:15 p.m.

RiverStone Health Main Campus

Tours available after presentation



RiverStoneHealth.org/WOW

Partner Spotlight: CASA



Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF YELLOWSTONE COUNTY

CASA of Yellowstone County's mission is to advocate for a safe and permanent home for children in the Yellowstone County foster care system.

Court Appointed Special Advocates

CASA volunteers complete training before being appointed to a case and commit to advocating for their CASA kids for **at least two years**. This ensures ongoing support and consistency for the children they serve. On average, the role requires **5–10 hours per month**, making it manageable even for those

(CASAs) are trained community volunteers who serve as both advocates and mentors for children in foster care. They provide a consistent, supportive presence while speaking up for the child's best interests in court, school, and all aspects of their life. CASAs help children navigate the challenges of foster care, empowering them to thrive until they can return home or find a permanent, loving placement.

Currently, **65 children in Yellowstone County** are on CASA's waitlist to receive a volunteer advocate. Each CASA is appointed to one child or sibling group, so they can focus on the unique needs of each child and provide stability and hope by serving as a consistent, trusted adult in their lives.

who work full time. With flexibility and good time management, many professionals successfully balance their CASA responsibilities with their careers. While the organization operates within Yellowstone County, many volunteer Advocates come from surrounding areas.

This is no ordinary volunteer role—CASAs come from diverse backgrounds but share a common commitment: dedication and a heart for working with children.

Want to make a big difference in your community? Become a CASA volunteer and make a lasting impact on a child's life!

Contact CASA at 406.259.1233 or via email at volunteer@yellowstonecasa.org

[Website](#)

At RiverStone Health, you are at the center of everything we do with a focus on improving life, health and safety of our community. Serving the Yellowstone County community and south-central Montana for nearly 50 years, we are an essential provider of personal and public health services. Health, Education, Leadership and Protection – HELP is what we do.

We offer medical, dental and behavioral health; home health and hospice; public health services like immunizations, WIC, health promotion and restaurant inspections; and educate the next generation of health professionals. Our expertise spans all ages and stages of life.

If you would like to be a future partner spotlight, or learn more about RiverStone Health's work in the community please reach out to our Communications team at Communications@RiverStoneHealth.org or 406.247.3387.



RiverStone Health | 123 S 27th Street | Billings, MT 59101 US

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