

## **FAMILIES FIRST EXPANDING PROGRAMMING TO THE FLATHEAD**

MISSOULA, MT—Families First Learning Lab is continuing their expansion in the Mission Valley region. A new Lake County Program Coordinator will develop education-focused workshops, classes, and connection opportunities for families in Lake County.

The part-time, 10-20 hour per week position, funded by a new grant from the Gianforte Family Foundation, will directly handle outreach, program coordination, and program management. Working with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), along with area schools, colleges, businesses, childcare providers, and others, the coordinator will strengthen partnerships, increase family participation, and help meet evolving community needs.

Families First Learning Lab (FFLL) empowers families by fostering family education and learning through play experiences. FFLL strengthens knowledge and skill-building through parenting classes and opportunities for parents to connect with peers and professionals to build a strong support network.

The nonprofit is partnering with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes to provide educational workshops for childcare providers as well. CSKT's Early Childhood Services help advance the development of children, families, staff, and the community by providing educational, nutritional, cultural, health, and social services based on individual needs.

According to Hannah Zuraff, executive director of Families First Learning Lab, "Our conversations have identified an opportunity to enhance existing services to better meet the specific needs of local community members throughout the Flathead Indian Reservation."

Zuraff continues, "By providing a dedicated person for the Flathead Reservation, Families First can work side by side with Early Childhood Services, Head Start, and multiple other community partners to provide complementary support, resources, and capacity to the children and families we serve."

Programs of particular focus for the Flathead region include Circle of Security, a parenting program designed to foster healthier parent-child relationships; Mending Broken Hearts, which focuses on culturally based healing among Indigenous people; one-on-one parenting consultations; and family education workshops.

Zuraff expects the part-time role to grow to a full-time position over time. Interested applicants should have some education surrounding social work, psychology, education, or related fields, familiarity with instructional programming, knowledge of the community, and a passion to serve families in need. For more information on FFLL or the new position, contact Zuraff at 406-721-7690 or email [info@familiesfirstmt.org](mailto:info@familiesfirstmt.org).

###