

OUTREACH CLINIC EXPANDS HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION BEYOND MILES CITY

MILES CITY, MONTANA—"Healthy families are built on healthy relationships," says Marissa Morford, executive director of the Miles City Outreach Clinic. The clinic is expanding its free Healthy Relationships program beyond Miles City to surrounding towns, including Glendive, Terry, Forsyth, and Jordan.

The Outreach Clinic has offered Healthy Relationships programming for more than 8 years. Nurses and teachers, trained in the curriculum, present the one-week program to boys and girls. "The program includes both personal health and sexual health," Morford says. "It helps kids think through their behaviors and how to make the best choices."

The high school program is interactive and activity based. "They do personality tests, love-language tests, and talk about boundaries and toxic relationships," Morford notes. Nurses present the program onsite at the clinic as well, to girls and boys through college age, tailoring the curriculum to each group.

"All teens want to talk about relationships. They can have a lot of confusion, from what they see on social media, and this program is so well received by the kids," Morford says. "It's dynamic learning."

A girl recently completing the class commented, "This class was great! I love how you guys handled everything. The part about sexual assault really helped one of my friends in the class, I've been trying to get her to a counselor and now she is considering it."

Morford hopes to train teachers, administrators, counselors, resources officers, and youth pastors. "Many people are interested in their school-aged children getting the Healthy Relationships training, but we need more teachers in these 11-15 surrounding communities," she says. "We would like to train as many people as possible, as far away as Glendive."

The Outreach Clinic is a medical office, staffed by nurses and professionals under the direction of a medical director. Its free, confidential services include pregnancy testing, ultrasound exams, fertility education, counseling on pregnancy options, online trauma classes, and support after abortion.

"There can be so much hurt and healing with pregnant moms; it's sometimes one trauma upon another," Morford states. "We look at their relationship—is it healthy, how do we make it healthy? Our purpose is to help move them into a healthy family. We have to start with the relationship."

The Healthy Relationships programming is funded by the Gianforte Family Foundation and the Nibs and Edna Allen Foundation. To learn more or participate in the program, contact Morford at 406-233-3098 or visit the clinic at 516 Pleasant Street in Miles City. Hours are Monday-Wednesday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

###