

## REESE CREEK COMMUNITY CENTER CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE SLATED

**BELGRADE, MONTANA**—The Reese Creek Community Center (RCCC) at 13695 Springhill Road is hosting a Christmas Open House on Saturday, December 17, from 3 to 5 p.m. Cookies, hot beverages, and caroling will be provided, and all are welcome to attend.

Steve Saunders, member of the RCCC Board of Directors, says, “This Open House event is to thank volunteers, provide an update on completed activities, and showcase how we are turning a historic one-room schoolhouse into a community center.”

Founded in 1863, Reese Creek is the oldest agricultural settlement in Gallatin County and one of the oldest in Montana. “The sense of community has been lost in a lot of areas,” says Saunders. “We originally thought we were restoring a building, but soon realized we were also restoring the Reese Creek community. People here want that.”

The Reese Creek School was built in 1904 and is one of just a handful of one-room schoolhouses remaining in Gallatin County. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the building served as a school until 1963 and was dedicated as a community center in 1965.

The nonprofit RCCC has been led by community volunteers, including descendants of the original Reese Creek homesteaders. For the past three years, efforts have focused on preserving the building’s structural integrity through remediation, re-alignment of trusses, and a new roof—all Restoration Phase 1 projects.

Additionally, during a “Day of Service” donation, DaySpring Restoration uncovered a unique barrel ceiling when a drop ceiling was removed, and that, too, has been restored; a well was donated by Diamond M. Drilling; all electrical work was brought to code thanks to Rusty Engel of Matzinger Electric; and roof and ceiling labor was donated by Chris Backus of Black Bear Exteriors. The work was accomplished through donated labor and monies raised through fundraisers, donations, and grants from The Montana History Foundation, Gianforte Family Foundation, and the Gallatin County Historical Preservation Board, as well as through an ongoing Memorial Brick fundraiser.

Local support for the center has been strong, with more than \$7,000 raised through a pie auction at the last fundraiser. Many local businesses have graciously donated food, goods, and services to support fundraising events, including Daniel’s Meats, WinCo, Safeway, Walmart, Town & Country, Map Brewing, Busby Auctioneering, Global Expeditions, Biosurface Technologies, Esther Leutwyler Dance Instruction, PeDe & Associates, and D and D Solutions, Inc.

Lesley Gilmore of Gilmore Franzen Construction, Gallatin Gateway, is creating final designs for a new ADA ramp, back deck, and rear entryway. This Phase 2 work will begin in early 2023. The addition will provide better building access and added space for community functions. Other improvements will include fresh paint, refinishing the original hardwood floors and interior walls, restoring windows, and modifying the front stairs for safe accessibility.

For more information, go to [reesecreekcommunitycenter.org](https://reesecreekcommunitycenter.org) or contact Steve Saunders, 406-580-1027 or [yeehawmt@gmail.com](mailto:yeehawmt@gmail.com).