

PARENTING CLASS GRADS RECOGNIZED AT NEW LIFE CHURCH JAN. 16

HARDIN, MONTANA—A traditional cap-and-gown ceremony will celebrate graduates of the Raising Highly Capable Kids class at Hardin’s New Life Church on Monday, January 16, at 6 p.m. The 13-week parenting class, offered through Resilient Kidz and supported by the Gianforte Family Foundation, is part of an 18-month pilot program and the first in Montana.

Assistant Pastor Ryan Schoppe has been facilitating the class with his wife as part of an effort to help the community identify and tackle its most pressing issues. The church also offers classes in healthy marriages and addiction recovery, and will present the parenting class again, beginning January 23.

“The diversity of the group is amazing, but by week 12, it’s like one huge family,” Schoppe says. The 12 graduates range in age from their 20s to 60s, and include Native American, Hispanic, and Caucasian parents and grandparents, both married and single.

According to Schoppe, “We’re trying to provide a suite of services at the church. Beyond the class itself, the church surrounds class participants with a community. We connect people to people, who are then able to rely on each other when difficulties arise.” Many of the new graduates will stay involved, Schoppe says, either by taking a second class or volunteering to help with food or childcare at the next parenting course.

“There’s a huge need and a huge benefit,” Schoppe explains. “We don’t just look at problems, we look at the root causes. One of the things we identified in our community is a need to support our parents.” The courses are intended to equip individuals and families with better skills and to ultimately build stronger communities.

The church serves Hardin and surrounding areas, including members of the Crow Tribe. “We serve the entire community,” Schoppe says. “We will go out to the community and meet people where they are.”

The January graduation will include a procession, presentation of certificates, and remarks by New Life officials and a representative from the Resilient Kidz national office in Colorado, followed by a reception.

For more information on the graduation, upcoming classes, or to volunteer, contact Ryan Schoppe: r.j.schoppe@gmail.com; 406-679-2021.

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